

WITH THE CENTURY  
By President KIM IL SUNG

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# My Family

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My life began in the 1910s when Korea had suffered the worst tragic calamities. By the time I was born, Korea was already under the Japanese colonial rule. Korea was under the thumb of Japanese Emperor through a Japan-Korea Annexation agreement. The Korean people became slaves of Japanese Governor General of Korea. Korea, with her long, brilliant history, with rich natural resources and clear waterways, had become the stomping ground of Japanese boots and gun carriage wheels.

The Korean people seethed with anger and wept with sorrow over the loss of their nationhood. Countless patriots could not bear the tragedy that had befallen on Korea and opted to end their lives than to live under the Japanese yoke. They chose honorable death over shameful submission to the much despised Japanese.

Police and civil servants - and even school teachers - wore uniforms and carried samurai swords, and Korea was subjected to the most barbaric secret police state terrorism ever known to man. Under Emperor's direction, the Governor General commanded the military in Korea and yielded life and death powers over the Korean people. All Korean political organizations and scholastic entities were disbanded by the Governor General.

Our patriots were beaten with cowhide whips in Japanese torture chambers and prison cells. Japanese police applied the notorious Tokugawa Shogunate torture methods on our patriots; red-hot iron rods were mercilessly thrust into their bodies.

The Governor General issued edict after edict to enslave the Korean people: we were forced to color our traditional white attires; Japanese businessmen swarmed over Korea and took away our land and natural resources. They stole our national treasures and took them to Japan.

I have been to several nations that had been colonies and found no former colony that was forced to change family names and was forbidden to speak their native language; no colony was forced to give people's cooking pots and eating utensils to their colonists. No imperialists, with the sole exception of Japan, had perpetuated such inhuman acts.

Korea in those days was a living Hell, unfit for human habitation. The Korean people were, in all aspects, walking stiff; their spirits were dead, alive though their bodies were. Lenin's prediction that "Japan's hitherto unparalleled savage tortures of the Korean patriots and barbaric exploitation of Korea will continue, no matter what" was right on the mark.

The years of my childhood saw various imperial powers fighting over colonial spoils. In the year I was born, US Marines stormed Honduras, France made Morocco her protectorate, and Italy took Turkey's Rotus island. In Korea, the Land Examination Law was imposed by the Japanese to legitimize their land grab.



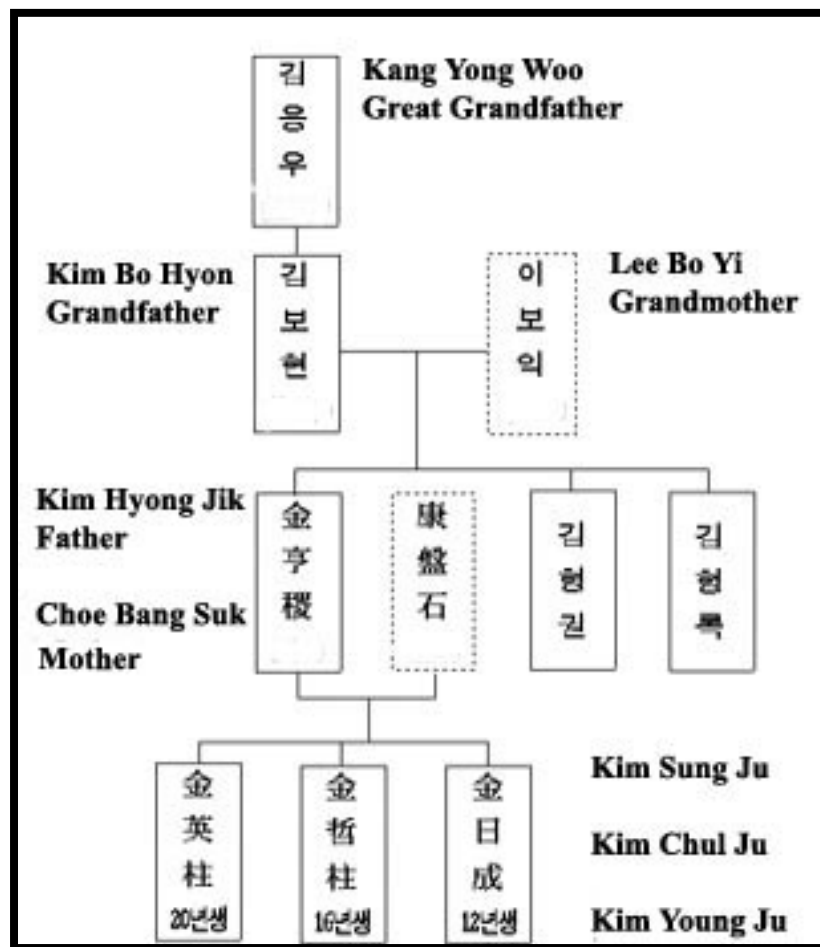
In short, it was my misfortune to be born in an era of evil events and to grow up seeing the worst of the Japanese savagery. These left indelible marks on my memory and shaped my future activities. My father told me how Korea got herself into the sad situation she was in, and I became angry at the elite of Korea who had let it happen. I swore then and there to devote the rest of my life to the task of driving out the Japanese colonists from Korea.

While other nations went about in mighty warships and rode shiny trains, our feudal leaders rode filthy scrawny donkeys wearing horse-hair hats and had wasted several hundred years in a stale state of stupor and suffocating economic stagnation. They kowtowed to foreign gunboat diplomacy and opened up the gate for foreign invasion and exploitation; Korea became an easy prey for the imperialists.

The Queen of Korea, still a sovereign nation in 1895, was cut to pieces in front of her own palace by foreign troops, and so-called King was locked up in a foreign legation for over a year in his own country. The King's father was kidnapped by a foreign power and Korea had to apologize for the incident. Guarding the palace was delegated to foreign troops. Who were to protect the nation and care for the Korean people in a situation such as this?

Though a tiny speck in the scheme of the Universe a family may be, it is an essential part of the world and it cannot live outside the world. The misfortune of Korea hit my family without mercy like a tidal wave. My family stood firm amidst the disasters and threats, weeping and laughing with the nation, and stood tall in the eye of the tornados sweeping the nation.

I was told that my great-great grandfather came from Chun-ju, North Chul-ra Province, in search of a better life in north Korea. My great grandfather, Kim Ung Woo, settled in Mangyong-dae in 1860. He was born in Jung-sung-ri, Pyongyang, and eked out a living farming. Lee Pyong Taek, a landowner in Pyongyang made him a caretaker of Lee's ancestral burial ground in Mangyong-dae. That was how we got to be in Mangyong-dae.



*Lee Wha Ran notes: Kim Il Sung's birth name was Kim Sung Ju, he adopted Kim Il Sung as his nom de guerre. Kim Yong Woo's father, an impoverished farmer, moved to North Korea from South Korea in mid-1800. Kim Yong Woo caretaker of a rich landowner's ancestral burial ground near Mangyong-dae. Kim Bo Hyon was a farmer. Kim Hyong Jik was a school-teacher and became a medical doctor when Kim Il Sung was about 7.*

Mangyng-dae is a beautiful village with clean air and green mountains around it. Mount Namsan rises left to my home and one gets breathtaking panoramic views of Taedong River from its summit. For this reason, many rich people from far away places and high government officials competed to buy up the mountains in this region for their ancestral graves. A mighty Pyong-ahn governor was supposedly buried there.

My family eked out living farming a tiny patch of land. To make the matter worse, after three generations of one-man-child, my grandfather, Kim Bo Hyon, and grandmother gave birth to six children, raising the family size to about ten mouths to feed. Grandpa worked day and night to put bread on the table for us. He got up early in the morn when others were still in bed, and collected wastes from neighboring villages. Late into the night, when other had gone to bed, he stayed up making straw ropes, sandals and sacks under a dim kerosene lamp.

My grandmother, Lee Bo Ik, ported water every night. My mother, Kang Ban Suk, my uncle's wife, Hyong Yang Sin, and my aunts, Kim Gu Il, Kim Hyong Sil and Kim Hyonf Book, worked the fields

during the day and ran errands during the night. Because of our abject poverty, my uncle, Kim Hyong Rok, never set foot in a classroom, the closest to formal education he had received was the one-thousand character prose. He worked the field for grandpa since his childhood.

In spite of our hard work, we had barely enough to eat; there were days when we could not afford even a small bowl of thin rice gruel. Unprocessed grains were often served; I still recall how much trouble I had swallowing those course hard-to-digest grains, which were normally fed to domestic animals. Fruits or meats were beyond our reach. Once I had a growth on my neck and Grandma somehow brought home a tiny bit of pork. The pork in my stomach made the growth to go away. Since that time on, I often wished that the growth would come back, so that I could taste pork once again.



*Lee Wha Rang notes: Kim Il Sung's family - from left to right, Kim Sung Ju (aka Kim Il Sung), his father Kim Hyong Jik (holding Kim Young Ju, was tortured to death by the Japanese), Kim Chul Ju (killed by the Japanese in battle) and his mother, Kang Bang Suk, circa 1920. Only Kim Il Sung and Kim Young Ju survived World War II. Courtesy: North Korean government archives.*

When I was a child growing up in Mangyong-dae, Grandma often lamented over the fact that our family owned no clock. Grandma was not keen on material wealth, but she did envy the wall clock of our neighbor next door, the sole household with a clock in our village. Grandma's clock obsession began with my father's schooling. She was dead afraid that my father might be late for school and used to wake up several times during the night to check the time. She had no clock and so, she had to guess the time by looking at the sky and other natural time pieces. Many times, she got up and, misreading her natural clocks, got the breakfast ready hours prior to the actual breakfast time.

My father's school, Sung-sil Middle School, was about 30 ri from our house and Grandma would not think of sending her son to school on empty stomach. Many days, Grandma would get up hours before the time and hanged around the kitchen; she would send my mother to the next door to get the time.

Mother, not wanting to wake the neighbor, would squat down by the neighbor's house, listening for the clock's hourly chimes.

Years later, when I returned home from Paldogu, my uncle's wife asked me how my father was and then she told me how relieved she was that I lived so close to my school in Paldogu. She recalled how tough it was to send my father to school on time without a clock in the house. Our family home did not have a clock until the day of Liberation.

Dirty poor though we were, it was our family tradition to share whatever we had with needy neighbors and relatives. Even though we lived on rice gruel more often than not, we helped other people as much as we could.

Grandpa used to tell us - "You can live without money, but you cannot live without kindness.", which became my family tradition and way of life, our philosophy. My father was eager to learn new ideas and had a high level of scholastic aptitude. He wanted to attend formal schools after learning the one-thousand-character prose from a traditional village scholar..

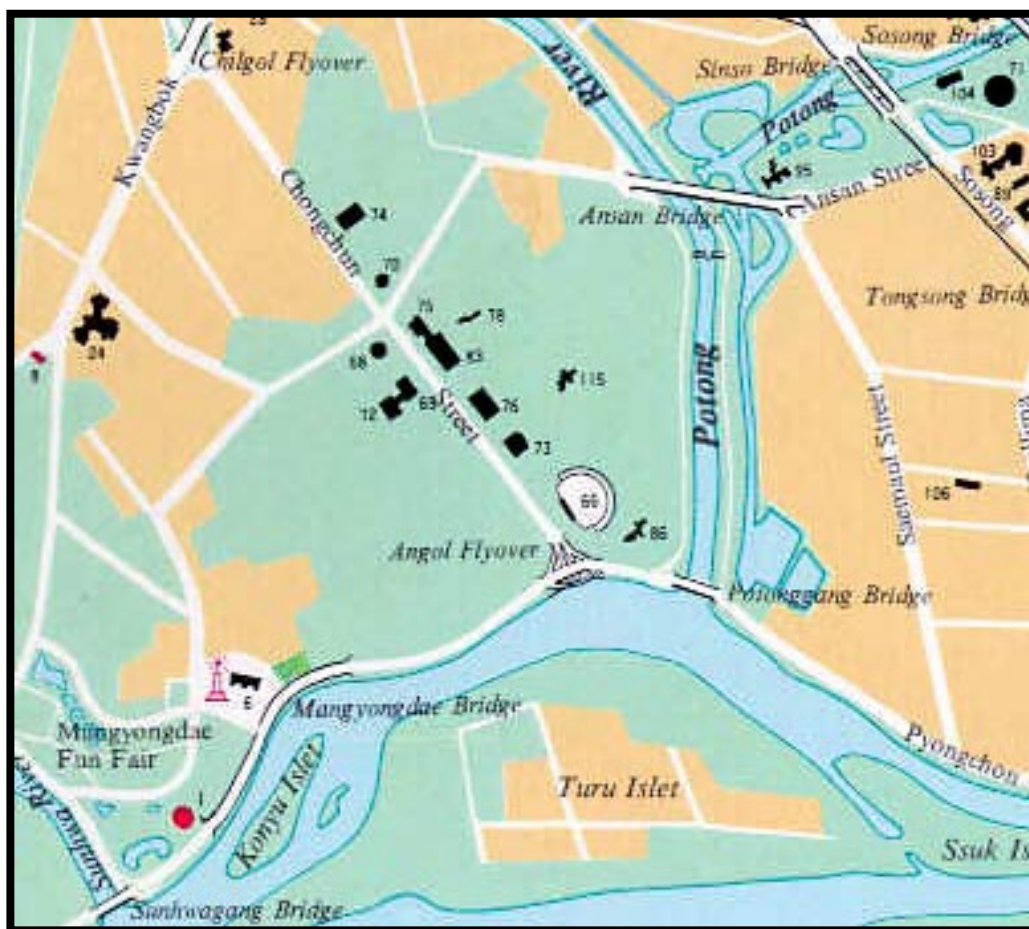
In the year of the Hague Secret Mission incident, students from Sunwha, Chuja, Chilgol and Sinhung gathered at Sulmae for an athletic competition. My father attended the gathering representing Sunwha. He competed in iron-bar, wrestling, running and other athletic events. He won all but the high-jump, because his hair knot caught the bar. He was so angry that he went to a nearby hill after the game and chopped off the offending knot. Tying up man's hair into a knot was a Korean custom several hundred years old and chopping it off without parents prior permission was a dead serious breach of filial piety. Upon learning of my father's act, Grandpa wailed as if the world was about to come to an end.

Father, realizing belatedly the seriousness of his misdeed, stayed away from Grandpa and spent the night hanging around outdoors. My great grandma saw him and took food out to him during the night. My father was her favorite offspring and she was the one who made it possible for my father to attend the school. She was the one who had persuaded Grandpa to send my father to school. Grandpa, a stalwart of feudality, did not think much of modern schools. Father started at Sungsil in the spring of 1911, a year after our nation was lost. In those days, Korea was still in Dark Ages and even rich yangban families were reluctant to send their kids to a modern school. Sending a kid through middle school education was, indeed, unusual, especially for such a poor household as ours that barely subsisted.

The school tuition was two won in those days. To get two won, my mother collected and peddled clams from Sunwha River, Grandpa raised sweet melons, Grandma worked fields and even my 15-year old uncle worked to raise my father's tuition. My father, too, worked at his school's experimental farm for long hours after the classes, after which he studied at the school library for several hour before walking 30 ri to home. He would have no more than two hours to sleep before the breakfast time for another grueling day.

Ours was a farm family, not uncommon in villages all over Korea. We were honest, hard-working, poor farmers. We had nothing outstanding; we were just a normal farming family. One thing different about us was that we were passionately patriotic, willing to die for our country. My great grandfather was a mere

grave caretaker for a landowner, but he was an ardent nationalist. The General Sherman, an American merchant marine, invaded our land and sailed up Taedong River to Turu Island, killing many Koreans with rifle and cannon fire. My great grandpa was one of those villagers who gathered up straw ropes and strung them up across the river from Kongyu Island to Mangyong Peak, to blocked the escape path of the American invaders. They threw rocks at the invaders.



*Lee Wha Rang notes: Modern Pyongyang maps show Turu and Konryu islands. The General Sherman was stranded near Turu, which sailed up this far on flooded Taedong River. Kim Il Sung's great grandfathers was among the villagers who helped destroy the ship. Kim Il Sung was born in Mangyongdae (bottom-left corner). At age seven, Kim Il Sung walked across a wooden bridge over Potong River to visit his father in prison. It is not clear which bridge he crossed.*

The invaders advanced to Yang-gak Island, shooting cannon and rifles at the crowd, pillaging and raping along the way. Mt great grandpa led his villagers to the Pyongyang Fort and joined the soldiers and volunteers from other villages gathered there. They placed firewood on small boats and sent them burning to the enemy ship. The enemy ship and her entire crew were eliminated. After the Sherman incident, the American imperialists dispatched the warship Shenandoah, which pillaged our villages at the Taedong estuary. Once again, the Mangyong-dae villagers took up arms to repel the invaders.

Grandpa used to tell us - "It is proper for man to die fighting the enemy", and told us to serve our nation. Grandpa proudly sent his children and grandchildren to the battle ground of anti-Japanese movement.

Grandma taught us to be righteous and strong. For some time, the Japanese tried to snag me using my grandma; they dragged Grandma through the plains and mountains of Manchuria in dead-cold winter days and nights. Grandma was not intimidated and screamed and cursed at her captors. She showed them what a true mother of Korea was like.

My mother's father, Kang Don Wook, established a private school and educated young children. His life was dedicated to fostering our future leaders and helping the independence movement. His eldest son, Kang Jin Suk, was also a noted patriot.

Early on, my father instilled in me deep love for Korea and chose my name, Sung Ju, to firm up his belief that I would faithfully support our nation and become a foundation pillar of Korea. Sometime during his school days at Sungsil Middle School, my father planted three white poplar trees, one for himself, and one each for his two brothers, by our home. These were the first white poplar trees in Mangyong-dae. Father told his younger brothers that poplar trees grew fast and that they too should grow fast to fight for our independence. Soon after, my father left Mangyong-dae to fight for Korea, and uncle Kim Hyong Kwon, followed him.

Only one uncle stayed behind and the poplars grew into giant trees, and they cast their shadows beyond our property line, on a piece of farm land belonging to a landowner. The man claimed that the shadow cast by our trees harmed his crop and felled the trees, and there was nothing we could do to stop him. Such was the lot of poor farmers of Korea. When I heard of the trees upon my return home in 1945, I was infuriated at this injustice, insult on my father's idealistic symbolism. This was not the only injustice perpetrated against my family.

In my youth, there were several ash trees around my house and I spent many days with my friends climbing up the trees. When I came home in 1945, I noticed that one of the trees by our house was gone. Grandpa said that my uncle was forced to cut it down. Japanese police from Daepyong station kept constant vigilance on our house. Since the station was quite a distance from Mangyong-dae, the police used my ash trees, which provided cool shades during hot summer days, as their de facto office. The police sat around in the shades fanning themselves, took siestas, and interrogated villagers when they got bored. Occasionally, they cooked chicken and had drinking parties under my ash trees. Often, they slapped around my grandpa and uncle.

One day, my uncle, the most gentle and docile of the family, could not take it any more. He picked up an axe and cut the tree by the house in one giant swing. Grandpa nodded his silent approval. I had to chuckle sadly at my uncle's act when grandpa told me about my ash tree in 1945.

On account of their off-springs being in anti-Japanese movements, my grandparents had to endure countless hardships and tortures by the Japanese. But they stood their ground and refused to submit to the Japanese. During the waning days of the Japanese Empire, Koreans were forced to change their family names, but my grandparents refused to go along. Our family was the only one that retained the Korean name and all other families in Mangyong-dae had adopted Japanese names. My uncle was beaten and summoned to the police station numerous times, but to the end, he refused to change his family name. He would be told, "your name is no longer Kim Hyong Rok! You got that? Now tell me what your name is".

Uncle would say - "my name is Kim Hyong Rok", upon which the police would slap him a few times and repeat the process; with each refusal, the Japanese police became angrier and more vicious in their beating of my poor uncle. But, my uncle did not give in.

Grandpa was proud of Uncle's courage and stood behind Uncle's decision to hold onto our Korean family name. Grandpa told Uncle that it was not right to submit to the Japanese when I, Sung Ju, was leading an anti-Japanese movement; that it was better to be beaten to death than to submit to the Japanese.



When we stepped out of our family home gate, we swore that we would be back, but I was the sole survivor to return home. My father died at age 32 while fighting for Korea in a foreign land, far away from home. In a man's life, 32 is the prime. After his funeral, grandma came to visit her son's grave at Yang-ji, Musong. She cried her heart out, hugging the grave. To this day, I remember the scene as if it were only yesterday. Six years later, my mother passed away at Ahndo before she could return home. Soon after my mother's death, my younger brother, Chul Ju, a guerrilla fighter, was killed in action against the Japanese. I don't know his body was buried. *(Photo: Uncle Kim Hyong Kwon in prison where he died).*

A few years later, my younger uncle died from torture at the Mapo prison, while serving a long-term prison term. Our family did not have the money to recover his body for proper burial, and he was buried in common graves of the prison. In less than 20 years, most of my relatives in anti-Japanese movements died at various distant strange places.

When I returned home after liberation, Grandma rushed out to meet me at the front gate and cried out - "Where is your father, your mother? Why are you back alone? Could you not bring them home with you?" She broke my heart. I felt for grandma's sorrows and also, I felt greater sorrows over the fact that I could not bring home the remains of my parents and relatives, buried in forgotten unattended graves far, far away from home.

Since then at every front gate of every Korean home I have passed through, I have wondered how many patriots had left the gate never to see it again. Every Korean gate has witnessed tearful partings, painful longings for the loved ones, and heart-wrenching tragic endings. Tens of thousands of our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters have died fighting for Korea. It took 36 long years to regain our nationhood; through years of blood, tears and agonies, through clouds of exploding shells and rains of bullets, we returned home. Thirty six years of our struggle saw oceans of our blood and sweats, and cost generations of our youth. It was a horrendous and enormous price to pay, but without our sacrifices, we would not have today's Korea, Korea would still be a slave nation and her people living shameful miserable lives. The Korean people would have been slaves of foreigners for the whole of the 20th Century.

My grandpa and grandma worked the field all of their life and farming was the only they knew. They were simple, aged dirt poor peasants, but their love for Korea was deep and unshakable. They planted patriotism deep in my soul. It is easy to preach patriotism, but actually practicing it is an entirely different matter. My grandparents raised children to serve the nation, they had stoically endured countless ordeals and tribulations; they had looked after their children and their children without any complaint and with precious little reward. Engaging the enemy in pitched combats or serving prison terms were much easier than what my grandparents had to go through.

The tragic fate of my family was a natural consequence of our nation's downfall, but it was an insignificant paragraph in the annals of the Korean people's tragedy. Tens of millions of Koreans died from starvation, from cold, from fires and from tortures under the Japanese genocidal rule. When a nation falls, its people, rivers and mountains invariably suffer; even those traitors who sell out their own nation do not get to enjoy their loots for long, for sooner or later, the hands of justice will reach them. Stateless people may go through the motion of living, but their life is no better than that of the beasts. Mountains and rivers may continue to be, but they lack the spirit and shine.

Those who realize this cold fact of truth are called progressives; those who act to save their nation are called patriots; those who sacrifice their life in order to motivate others into patriotic actions are called martyrs. My father, Kim Hyong Jik, was one of the forerunners of anti-Japanese movements. He was born on July 10, 1894 at Mangying-dae and died on June 5, 1926 after a life-long struggle against the Japanese. I was his eldest son and was born on April 15, 1912, two years after Korea was annexed to Japan, at our family home in Mangyong-dae.



# My Father and the Korean People's Association



My father lived by "ji-won", 'Righteous Aspirations', for all of his life. He preached his way of life not only to his family but also to his associates at Sunwha and Myongsin schools and other places. He exhibited his calligraphy of ji-won, two Chinese characters, whenever he had chance. Even today, his calligraphy of ji-won pops up here and there. He liked calligraphy. (Photo: My father's calligraphy - Ji Won).

In those days, people worshipped Chinese calligraphy and the works of famous people and authors were much valued; they were made into hanging picture scrolls or folding screens. It was a fad of the time. I, too, was swept up in this fad - I did not know any better then. My father posted his writings wherever he could without any framing or decorations.

When I was old enough, Father began to lecture me on the importance of patriotism; he taught me that in order to love Korea, I must think big. Ji-won, righteous aspirations, stands for grand ideas for doing good. There is nothing new or significant about a father teaching his son to have a grand vision. But realizing one's vision in a real world requires diligence and years of hard work.



*Photo: Kim Hyong Jik - Father*

'Righteous aspiration' has little to do with achieving worldly fames or getting rich and powerful, but rather, it deals with achieving happiness and satisfaction from fighting for Korea, year in, year out, from generation to generation, however long it may take to liberate Korea. It is the basic foundation of our revolutionary spirit.

Father had explained why one should have grand visions. The visions were for free and prosperous Korea, for the Korean people's fight for independence. The Yi Dynasty was weak militarily. Prior to the Yi Dynasty, Korea used to be a strong nation. It had powerful military might and its culture bloomed, spreading across the Korea Strait to Japan. But 500 years of reign by corrupt Yi kings bankrupted and emaciated Korea to the point that Korea could not stand on her feet, and fell, she did.

A few years before my birth, Japan conquered Korea with guns and sabers; there were Korean traitors who sold out their own country and people to the Japanese. The traitors sold our land to the enemy, but they could not sell our soul. Common people, all across Korea, rose up carrying spears to drive out the invaders and their puppets. Our independence army troops killed hundreds of Japanese invaders with muskets, and civilians, armed with no more than stones, fought pitched battles with heavily armed Japanese police and soldiers. They died shouting freedom and justice, appealing to the conscience of humanity and human rights advocates of the world, in vain.



Choe Ik Hyon, a Righteous Army leader, was captured and exiled to Formosa, which was under Japanese rule at the time. He starved himself to death than to eat Japanese food. Lee Jun committed suicide in front of a world meeting of imperialist powers. He demonstrated the Korean people's firm determination to regain independence. Ahn Joong Gun shot and killed Ito, the Japanese architect of imperialism, at the Harbin rail station. Ahn kept on shouting - "Long Live Korea". until he was subdued by the Japanese police. Kang Wu Gyu, well past 60 years of age, threw a bomb at Saito, Governor General of Korea. Lee Jae Hyong stabbed Lee Wan Yong, Korea's number one traitor. Min Young Whan, Lee Bum Jin and Hong Bum Do wanted to liberate Korea by military means. (Lee Wha Rang photo: Choe Ik Hyon, 1833-1907).

There was a nation-wide movement to raise money to pay back debts owed to Japan in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War. The Yi King borrowed 13 million won from Japan, but he could not pay it back and forced the people to shell out money for him. Korean men stopped smoking to save their tobacco money, King Kojong himself stopped smoking. Women skimmed on grocery bills to save money for the King, marriage-age girls donated their dowry; servants and maids working for rich people donated their meager savings; rice-cake vendors, straw-sandal hawkers, vegetable vendors - all of them chipped in to pay off our national debt. In spite of such outpouring of patriotism, Korea could not be saved.

The problem is how to unite the people and to build up military might strong enough to smash the enemy. People firmly united would open up the means to develop military might, and military might would drive out the enemy. Uniting the people behind a common cause cannot be done overnight; it is a long term project and one must plan ahead. Father gave me this lesson many times when he held my hand and climbed Mangyong Peak. His teachings were patriotism, patriotism and patriotism.

I remember Father saying in front of Grandpa and Grandma: "Why stay alive, if we cannot achieve independence? Even if my body is cut into pieces, we must win our fight against the Japanese. If I am killed by the Japanese, my son should take over the fight, and if my son is killed, his son should continue the fight - until Korea is free of the Japanese".

Years later, I realized that our war of independence would take much longer than 3-4 years we had anticipated and what my father was trying to say hit me. His saying applies equally well to our struggle to unite Korea after Liberation. My father's favorite words - righteous aspirations, faith and conviction, belief in Korea's independence - say it all. His attending Sungsil in spite of our family's dire financial status was based on his righteous aspirations. During the span of ten years from the Kap-oh Reform of 1894 and the Ulsa Agreement, Korea saw wave after wave of well-intentioned innovation and modernization moves.

Western-style schools such as Bai-je, Yi-wha and Yuk-young were established in Seoul, and American missionary workers established Sungsil Middle School for evangelic reasons. Sungsil recruited students from all parts of Korea. Youth thirsting for new forms of education flocked to Sungsil. Modern subjects such as world history, algebra, geometry, physics, health science, biology, athletics and music were taught at the school.

My father attended Sungsil because of the modern subjects taught there. He was not sold on the classical form of education learning the Chinese classics and ethics. Even though Sungsil's primary mission was evangelical, it graduated a number of prominent leaders of anti-Japan movements, including Song Jung Do, vice chairman of the state council of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, Cha Lee Suk, a council member of the Provisional Government; Yun Dong Ju, a gifted patriotic poet, attended this school. Kang Yang Yuk attended the special class of the school. At the time, this class was called Sungsil Vocational School, equivalent to a middle school, run by Sungsil School. Because so many patriots had graduated from it, the Japanese police called it the den of anti-Japanese rebels.

My father said: "Learn literature for Korea, learn scientific and engineering skills for Korea, have faith in Heaven for the Heaven over Korea." My father preached his gospel to his fellow students and bound together patriotic students into a close-knit circle of future leaders. Under Father's leadership, a book-reading club and a friendship club were organized. The clubs were to instill and ferment Korean nationalism, and also to engage in enlightenment activities in nearby villages. They believed that educating the mass, living in age-old darkness, was their sacred duty and obligation. In December 1912, the club members organized a mass student walkout in protest over the school's human rights violations and exploitation of the students.

My father spent his summer-breaks traveling to Ahnju, Kangdong, Sunahn, Yiju and other towns in Pyongahn provinces as well as to regions in Hwanghae, on mass enlightenment and recruitment missions. The most valuable thing my father gained at Sungsil was the comradeship of his friends, many of whom became long-term close personal friends and comrades-in-arms in his fight against the Japanese. They were bright, eager and magnanimous; the cream of a new generation of Korea. Among them was Lee Bo Sik from Pyongyang, who was active in both clubs at the school, played key roles in forming the Korean People's Association and the March First Movement. When we lived in Bongwha-ri, Lee Bo Sik came to see my father frequently at our home and also at Myongsil school where my father taught.

Baik Seh Bin (aka Baik Young Mu) from North Pyongahn Province was a close friend of my father. He came from Pihyon and acted as a guide whenever my father traveled in his area. He was a national and international liaison for the Korean People's Association. In December 1960, I heard that Paik Se Bin became an active member of the National Self Determination for Independence League in South Korea.

Park In Gwan roomed with my father when he briefly stayed at the school dormitory. In the spring of 1917, Park got a job teaching at Kwangsun school in Unyul, Hwanghae Province. While teaching there, he became an active member of the Korean People's Association. He was arrested while recruiting members in Songwha, Jaeryong, Haeju and other towns of the province and spent a year in the Haeju prison. "The Peninsula and Us", a thesis written by his students at the school is preserved and on display at the Unul library. The thesis is a witness to the revolutionary activities of the Association.

Oh Dong Jin was perhaps the closest associate of my father. He was a frequent house guest at our home going back to my father's Sungsil school days. Oh Dong Jin attended Daesung School in Pyongyang, which was established by Ahn Chang Ho. On account of their common ideology that transcended personal attributes, their camaraderie evolved rapidly. Oh Dong Jin met my father for the first time in the spring of 1910 at an athletic meet held at an old training ground of the Yi Dynasty army. Some 10,000 students from Pyongyang, Pakchun, Kangsuh, Youngyu and other towns were at the meet,



My father spoke at a speech contest held upon completion of the athletic events. Some speakers advocated that the best route for Korea to catch up with the rest of the world was to follow Japan model and adopt Japanese culture. My father vehemently denounce it and advocated that the Korean people alone were capable of uplifting themselves from poverty and backwardness. The crowd liked what they heard; among the crowd was Oh Dong Jin, who was so moved by my father's speech on that day, he devoted his life to patriotic activities. From 1913 on, Oh, using retail business as a guise, traveled to Seoul, Pyongyang, Sinyiju and other major cities in Korea and China. He used to drop in to to see my father and they would spend hours discussing anti-Japanese activities (*Photo: Oh Dong Jin in prison*).

By that time, Oh Dong Jin had become a household name. He was from a wealthy prominent family and he could have led a comfortable life, but instead, he chose the difficult and dangerous path of anti-

Japanese activities. Oh took up arms to fight the Japanese. Oh showed much respect for and devotion to my father. His home at Yiju had so many visitors seeking his advice that he set up a visitors quarter with its own kitchen staff. But my father was always welcome to the inner quarters and Oh's wife personally prepared meals for my father. Oh and his wife visited us once and Grandma gave them a rice serving bowl as a humble gift.

The reason why I write so much about Oh Dong Jin is not only because of his friendship with my father, but also because of his influence on me during my youth. I had developed a strong kinship to Oh when I was a young boy. Oh was arrested by the Japanese police when I was in school at Jirin (Kil-rim). Years later in March 1932, while I was trying to organize a guerrilla unit, Oh was tried at the Sinyiju court. They say Mahatma Gandhi's pre-trial records numbered 25,000 pages, but Oh Dong Jin's court documents were well over 3,500 pages in 64 volumes. His trial was delayed because of the huge crowd that came to see him. The trial was scheduled to start in the morning, but it had to be postponed till one O'clock. Oh denied the accusations and then jumped on the trial judge's stand, shouting "Long Live Korea!". He was escorted out and was sentenced in absentia to life in prison. Oh died in prison. News paper articles on his court trial and a photo of his travel to the Pyongyang prison were welcome inspirations for me during a time when I was struggling to form a guerrilla unit.

Many of my father's school mates of Sungsil became renowned revolutionaries and became the corner stone of the Korean People's Association. After my father quit Sungsil School, he taught at Sunhwa school in Mangyong-dae and Myongsin School in Gangdong. He was devoted to educating the youth of Korea and also recruiting new members for the Korean People's Association. He quit Sungsil so that he could spend more time for revolutionary works. In 1916, Father went to Kan-do during the summer break. I don't know how, but from there, he traveled to Shanghai and got connected with Sun Yatsen's Nationalist Party of China. My father thought highly of Sun as the forerunner of the progressive elements of China and said that the new laws of China that allowed one day of rest per week and cutting off the pigtails worn by men were realized thanks to the Chinese bourgeoisie.

Father liked the "Three-Min" slogans of Sun's party: people, people's rights and people's livelihood. He believed that Sun was a bright sincere progressive revolutionary. However, Sun's appointment of Wang Seik, an old general of the old Dynasty, was a serious mistake. My father told me about the Korean bourgeois movement when I was young. Father very much regretted that Kim Ok Gyun's reform movement had failed in less than three years since its inception; he believed that Kim's charters for human rights, equality, anti-illiteracy and equal opportunity were just right for Korea. Kim's covert attempt at breaking the age-old yoke of client state relation with China was patriotic. I believed that Kim Ok Gyun was a progressive patriot and I wondered if his reform movement had succeeded, Korea's history might have been quite different.

Years later, Kim Ok Gyun's movement was viewed in light of self-reliance (juche). Many of our history teachers branded Kim pro-Japanese and even after liberation, our historians tagged him pro-Japanese because he sought Japanese assistance in readying his reform. I think it is not right to label him so, and I have told the historians that although Kim's failure to mobilize the people behind his reform was a mistake, his reliance on Japanese was not by itself a bad thing. He used the Japanese to further his

objectives and not to Japanize his reform. In view of the situations prevailing at the time, he had no other option and using the Japanese was the best tactic available to him.

Father said that one of the main reasons why Kim Ok Gyun's reform failed was his reformists did not trust the people's power, relying instead upon palace cliques. He said I should learn from Kim's error. I assume that my father went to Shanghai from Kan-do to see for himself our much rumored independence movements in China. He most likely wanted to coordinate his activities in Korea with those working abroad. Anti-colonial wars of liberation had not reached any degree of maturity at the time and there was no accumulated expertise on the subject.

When my father went to China, the Chinese revolution was fighting for its very survival. The Chinese revolutionaries had to fight military factions and warlords as well as foreign intervention forces from America, Great Britain and Japan. In spite of this state, many of our independence fighters were living under the illusion that some foreign imperial power would come to their assistance. My father returned home convinced that the Korean people must liberate themselves on their own, by themselves. After his trip to China, Father began to work more feverishly, often skipping meals and sleeps, to educate more youth and recruit more patriots. Our house was at Bongwha-ri at the time; my father taught school children during the day and taught adults during the evening and went to bed at late hours.

Once I read an anti-Japan article written by my father at a school event. Father wrote many revolutionary and anti-Japanese poems and essays for his students. Many independence fighters came to see my father at Bongwha-ri and he went to see them at various location of Pyongahn and Hwanghae provinces. He firmed up core cadres and laid foundation for mass movements. On March 23, 1917, my father together with Jang Il Whan, Bai Min Su, Baik Seh Bin and other comrades formally established the Korean People's Association at the home of Lee Bo Sik, located at Hak-dang-gol, Pyongyang. The charter members wrote letters of their allegiance in their own blood - "Korean independence and fight to the end."

The main theme of the Association was that the Korean people must unite and achieve independence on their own, and develop Korea into a strong advanced nation. It was a secret organization, about the largest of anti-Japan organizations in Korea around the time of the March First Movement. There were hardly any secret organization in 1917 in Korea. Organizations such as the Righteous Army, the Korean Independence Army and the Korea Restoration Society, which sprang up after the annexation, were gone by this time. They could not withstand the savage attacks by the Japanese security forces, which were quite effective in detecting and arresting anti-Japan activists. Consequently, few Koreans dared to even ponder doing anti-Japanese work. Even those who had the courage to oppose Japan could do little in Korea and some went abroad and formed secret organizations. Some people set up organizations, sanctioned by the Governor General of Korea and did what they could legally under the Japanese rule.

The Korean People's Association came into being in this kind of vacuum in Korea. It was an anti-imperialism organization. Its platform asserted that the US and Western powers would soon get into conflict with Japan, already entrenched in Asia, over hegemony in Asia. This would be an opportune moment for the Korean people to rise up and drive out the Japanese, and so, the Association members

must work in unison and prepare for the moment. As is clear from this statement of its purpose, the Association believed that Korean independence could not be achieved by external forces and so, it should be accomplished by the Koreans themselves.

The Association decided to establish an operational base for anti-Japan activities at Gan-do and dispatched an advance team to lay the groundwork. The Association was organized meticulously. It chose and accepted members after lengthy investigation; only people with well established track records were invited into the Association. Members were organized in independent cells and secret codes were used for communications among the members. Secret documents were encrypted. The members got together once a year on the occasion of Sungsil school anniversary. It ran several front organizations such as Education Society, Stone Monument Society and Home Society. These legal open entities were used to cover the secret activities of the Society. Liaison offices were set up in Beijing and Dandong for external contacts.

The Association was established with full support of the people; its membership included workers, farmers, teachers, students, military (independence armies), merchants, religionists, businessmen and people from other socio-economic strata. The association's membership was not limited to people living in Korea and reached Beijing, Shanghai, Jirin, Musong, Rimgang, Jangbaik, Yuha, Kwangjun, Dandong, Hwajun and Hong Kong. My father recruited Jang Chul Ho, Kang Jeh Ha, Kang Jin Gun, Kim Si Woo and many other key members into the Association and they played important roles in the organization and expansion of the Association. Recruiting a member took a great deal of time and effort. Father would travel even one thousand ri in order to recruit one single member.

One day, Oh Dong Jin dropped in unexpected to see my father. Oh was on his way to Hwanghae Province. He was unusually quiet and had an air of tension. Oh said proudly that he found a good man for my father - "Gong Young from Byokdong is still a green young buck, but he is highly intelligent, tall and good-looking. He is trust-worthy and an martial art expert, too. In the olden days, he would have made a good marshal." My father was pleased and thanked Oh for a fine job well done. From the ancient times, it had been accepted that finding a talent was more important than the talent itself.

Upon Oh's departure, Father asked my eldest uncle to make him several pairs of straw sandals, and in the next morning, Father left home with the sandals. Father was gone for about one month. He had apparently walked long distances, for he wore out all of the sandals that Uncle made for him, but he came home with smiles on his face. Father met Gong Young on his trip and he was very satisfied with Gong. Father's way of caring for and nurturing his comrades was one of the most important lessons I learned from him in my youth.

For several years, the Korean People's Association spread its gospel in Korea and abroad. Its membership increased and its word got around. However, the Japanese got wind of it in the Fall of 1917 and started to dismantle it ruthlessly. On a windy day, three Japanese policemen burst into my father's classroom at Myonsin School and dragged him away right in front of his students. Mr. Huh followed my father to the river ferry, where Father managed to whisper a message to Huh. Huh ran all the way to my house and relayed Father's message and the news of his arrest. Father instructed Mother to burn documents hidden

in the roof of our house. She climbed to the roof, recovered the documents and burnt them in her cooking fire.

In the morning after my father's arrest, the Christians of Bongwha-ri met at Myongsin School and prayed for the immediate release of my father. People from Pyongyang and Kangdong rushed to the Pyongyang police station and petitioned for my father's release. Grandpa heard of Father's impending court trial and sent Uncle to the police station to find out what could be done to help Father. Grandpa was ready to sell everything he owned to hire an attorney to defend Father in court. Father would not let Grandpa do such a thing. Father told Uncle - "Attorneys use their mouth for living and so do I. Why would you waste money, that you don't have, to hire an attorney?"

My father was tried three times in Pyongyang. At each court session, Father defended himself by saying - "I am a Korean and I have the right to love Korea and work for Korea. I have committed no crime and you have no authority to try me." After attempting three court trials, Father was convicted and sentenced to a prison term.

Soon after my father's arrest, Uncle Hyong Rok wanted us to move back to Mangying-dae and came with his brother-in-law, Kang Young Suk, to fetch us. Mother refused to move and told them that she wanted to remain at Bonghwa through the winter. Mother wanted to maintain contact with the Association members and other nationalists who might show up for messages. In the following spring, Mother moved us back to Mangyong-dae. By that time, she had managed to cover the base for Father. Grandpa and Mother's father came to get us with an ox-cart.

I was much depressed that Spring and Summer. Every time I asked Mother when Father would be back, she would tell me that he would be back in a few days. But days went by with Father still gone. One day, Mother took me to a play ground located at Mangyong Peak and got on a swing holding me on her lap. She told me: "Sung Ju - Your dad is not coming back, even after the ice in Taedong River over there is all melted gone. Your dad fought for Korea and he has committed no crime. You will have to grow up fast and get even with your dad's enemies. You must become a hero and recover our lost nationhood." I swore to her that I would follow her wish.

Mother had visited Father in prison secretly several times. She did not say a thing about her prison visits. One day, Mother took me to her parents' house in Palgol on the premise of picking up some cotton, but her real intent was to visit Father in prison with me. Mom's mother insisted that Mom should not take me to the prison, because I was too young. Seeing Father caged up in a dark prison cell would do much harm to my mindset, Grandma argued. I was seven at the time. But Mother persisted and prevailed.

Upon crossing the wooden bridge over Botong River, I noticed prison right away. No one had told me what a prison looked like, but I could tell it was the prison from its dark color and its stark, austere surroundings. The prison was indeed awe and fear inspiring, just being there would send chills running through any body. Its heavy iron gates, walls, watch towers, barbed wires and armed guards in dark uniforms and eyes indicated that it was a place of death and deadly venom.





We were led into a damp, dark room, filled with suffocating stench and stagnant air. There I saw Father smiling in the room. He was glad to see me and thanked Mom for bringing me along. I had some difficulty recognizing Father in prison garb and noticed that every part of his body visible - face, neck, hands and feet - was swollen and bruised. But Father was more concerned about his family than his broken body. Father said: "Yes, you have grown quite a bit since I saw you last. Pay attention to your elders and study hard, you hear?" Father talked calmly as if the prison guard watching us did not exist. Hearing his voice made me to break into loud sobs and I cried loudly - "Father, please come back home

with us". Father was happy to hear my voice and nodded his head smiling. Father told Mother to take good care of brush and comb salesmen who might drop in. He was referring to the Association members and nationalists who may need help. (*Photo: Pyongyang Prison*).

Father's unyielding spirit even in prison etched indelible marks in me. Another unforgettable thing about that visit was running into Lee Kwang Rin, who was a member of the Association. She attended Pyongyang Girls Vocational School of Mechanical Engineering. Fortunately, the Japanese police had nothing on her. Lee and another Association member came to see Father on that day. In those days of strong feudal habits, young unmarried women visiting a prison was a taboo. If a young woman of marital age got caught frequenting a prison, she might as well kiss away any idea of finding a suitable husband. No man from a decent family would marry such a woman. Nevertheless, Lee, a modern progressive woman, extremely rare in those days, came to see Father in prison and the guards gawked at her and followed her every move. Lee's shining face cheerfully consoled Father and Mother.

Visiting Father in prison was one of the most significant events in my life. I understood why Mother chose to take me to the prison. Scars and wounds on Father's body pained me physically and I swore to get even with the Japanese devils, that were not human beings at all, but Satan. Father's wounds taught me about the Japanese imperialists far more than any number of political scientists or historians could have possibly taught me. Until that time, I had not witnessed police brutality, except those instances of the police on headcount and health investigation; once, a Japanese policeman got angry at us for some reason and cut up a door and smashed it onto a cooking pot, breaking its lid. This was nothing compared to torturing and maiming innocent people. I have never forgotten Father's broken body in prison. That image was always with me even during moments of heated combats.

Father completed his term in 1918 and came home. Grandpa and Uncle went to the prison to bring Father home in an ox-cart. Our neighbors gathered in Songsan-ri to welcome him back. Father could barely walk because of the tortures he had received in prison. He managed to walk out the prison limping.

Grandpa rushed to Father and tried to make him lie down on the ox-cart, but Father refused and insisted on walking. Father said: "How can I be seen lying down on an ox-cart while I am still alive. I don't want the Japanese to see me like that". Father walked all the way home on his own.

Upon returning home, he told his brothers (my uncles): "I struggled to stay alive while in prison. I ate and drank whatever in order to stay healthy and gain strength. The Japanese are the worst people in the world and we cannot let them be. You Hyong Rok and Hyong Gwung must fight the Japanese. You must fight blood for blood, death for death." I swore that I, too, would follow Father's wish and wage life and death struggles against the Japanese demons.

Father read books even in his sickbed. Father stayed with a relative, Kim Sung Hyon, well-known for curing eye diseases. Father got interested in medicine and began reading medical texts while in prison. Father learned medical skills from Kim Sung Hyon. Apparently, Father had decided to become a medical doctor while in prison. He believed that he could be more effective being a medical doctor than a school teacher.

Father would not stay in bed waiting for his broken body to heal. He dragged his aching body out of bed and walked to various towns in North Pyongahn Province and tried to rebuilt the networks for the Korean People's Association. Grandpa encouraged Father to stay the course and carry on. Before leaving home, Father wrote a poem titled - "The Green Pine Trees of Namsan": "Even if our body is broken into dusts, we will go on fighting generation after generation, without rest, until our three thousand ri land of green mountains and shining rivers is free and a new Spring comes here". It was Father's solemn pledge to fight on.

# Long Live Korean Independence!

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It was freezing cold on the day when Father left home. I waited and waited for his safe return home all during the Spring months. Our family did not have enough food to eat, not enough clothing to wear and not enough heat to keep warm. Winter was a cruel enemy to my shivering family.

Grandma worried that, with the spring thaw, my birthday would come upon her. On my birthday in the spring, flowers broke out everywhere and Father would be less cold in the north somewhere, but celebrating my birthday without Father and at a time when our food stock would be at the rock bottom. Even though my family's food supply ran out late in the Spring, Grandma managed to come out with bowls of white rice and a cooked chicken egg on my birthday - until that year. Even a single egg was a major food item in our household, as our daily menu was mainly bowls of thin gruel at best. Celebrating my birthday was the farthest thing on my mind in that Spring. I was still in shock from my father's arrest and I was worried sick about my father's being away for so long.

Not long after my father's departure, the March First Movement erupted on March 1, 1919. All the pent up angers and sorrows of living under the Japanese imperialists for ten long years exploded on that day. In ten years after the annexation, Korea had become a gigantic dungeon, no better than those of the Middle Ages. The Japanese colonists used naked military power to suppress the Korean people's aspiration to become free again. The Japanese took away our freedom of press, freedom to hold meetings, freedom to form organizations, and freedom to march. They took away our human rights and properties. The Korean people formed secret organizations, independence fights, mass enlightenment activities, and had built up considerable potential energy against the decade of plunder and exploitation by the Japanese.

Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists and other religious leaders, patriotic teachers and students had planned and executed the March First Movement. The Kapsin Reform, Kaboh Peasants War, Patriotic Mass Enlightenment and Righteous Army ensued one after another, and our nationalistic feelings were sublimated and ripe for kinetic explosion, like a volcano letting out the pressure built up over the years. Thus, at noon, March 1st in Pyongyang, church bells rang out in unison to signal the start of the march. Several thousands students and citizens gathered at the front yard of Sung-duk Girls School located at Jang-dae-jae. Declaration of Independence was read aloud and it was solemnly proclaimed that Korea was a free nation. The crowd began the march shouting "Long Live Korean Independence", "Out with the Japanese and their army". They were joined by tens of thousands of citizens.

The villagers of Mangyong-dae lined up in a file and marched into Pyongyang and joined the crowd of marchers already there. We got up early on that day and ate our breakfast; all of us joined the march. When we left the village, there were only a few hundred of us, but by the time we reached Pyongyang, our rank swelled to several thousands. We beat on drums and gongs and marched toward Botong Gate, shouting "Long Live Korean Independence!" at the top of our lungs.

I was only eight years old at the time, but I joined in the march wearing my worn-out shoes full of holes. I shouted and shouted with the marchers and reached Botong Gate. The marchers rushed inside the castle past the Gate; I could not keep up with them in my tattered shoes and so I took them off and ran after the marchers as fast as my little legs could move. The enemy mobilized mounted police and army troops to stop our march. They slashed and shot the marchers indiscriminately. Many of the marchers fell spilling blood. But the marchers marched on and fought the enemy with bare hands.

For the first time in my life, I witnessed people killing people, Korean blood staining our own land. My young mind and body was enraged. After the sunset, the villagers from Mangyon-dae went to Mangyong Peak and held a rally at the summit. Torches were lit and bugles blared. We beat drums and metal pans, making enough noise to wake up the dead. We shouted hurrah for our independence. This continued on for several days. Mother and her sister took me along when they joined the crowd at the summit. Mother was busy carrying drinking water and burning oil for the torches to the protesters at the summit.

The marchers in Seoul were joined by the people who were in Seoul to attend King Kojong's funeral. Several hundreds of thousands of people joined the march. Hasegawa, Governor General of Korea, ordered the 20th Infantry Division garrisoned at Yongsan to squash the movement. The Japanese soldiers attacked unarmed marchers with swords and rifles, turning Seoul into a sea of Korean blood. But the marchers stayed their course; when the vanguards fell, the next in line took the lead. The marchers pushed on stepping over their fallen comrades. People marched in all major towns and cities in Korea on that day.



*Photo: Young school girls marching for independence.*

Young school girls marched holding up Taeguk-gi. When their hand holding up the flag was cut off by the Japanese, they picked up the flag with the other hand. When both hands were cut off, they marched on until they dropped, shouting "Long Live Korea!" Even the most hardened Japanese savages were afraid of such determined opponents. The mass uprising in Seoul and Pyongyang soon spread to all of the thirteen provinces of Korea by the middle of March. It had spilled over to Manchuria, Shanghai, Siberia, Hawaii and other foreign places. The uprising was a true pan-national movement, of all Koreans, all overseas Koreans, irrespective of their gender, age, religion and vocation. Every one was welcome to

join. Even the lowly women servants and entertainment maidens (kisaeng), the bottom echelon in the feudal society, formed their own formation and joined the march.

For over a month or two, the Korean peninsula resonated with shouts for independence. Spring passed and Summer came, and the ardor of the uprising gradually subsided. Many Koreans mistakenly assumed that the Japanese would get out, if they marched for several months shouting slogans. They were sadly mistaken; the Japanese were not about to leave Korea on account of mere marches. Japan fought three major wars over Korea.

About 400 years ago in 1592, Toyotomi Hideyoshi sent Gonishi Yukinaga to conquer Korea with several hundreds thousand troops. The Japanese conducted scorched-earth campaigns and torched Korea from Pusan to Pyongyang to Hamhung. In the 19th century, after the Meiji Reform, the Japanese formulated a plan to take Korea by force. It was asserted that Korea was essential for the Empire to expand. Some Japanese were opposed to this plan of naked aggression and a quiet civil war broke out in Japan that lasted for half a year. The war faction was led by Saiko Takamori, whose stature still stands in today's Japan. Japan fought war with Russia and China over Korea. America and Great Britain supported Japan in these two wars.



*Nationalist leaders being crucified.*

The bestiality of the Japanese troops was fully exposed in the Russo-Japanese War. Maresuke Nogi commanded Japanese Third Army in the Port Arthur battle. He had dead corps piled high and used them as stepping stones to attack the "203 Meter Hill" (*Lee Wha Rang note: the Hill fell on December 5, 1904. The Russian general Anatoly Mikhailovich Stösel surrendered on January 2, 1905.*). Some 25,000 were killed for Nogi's human ladders. The Japanese suffered heavy losses and won the war, but they failed to take Manchuria or Siberia. Angry war widows and orphans of the soldiers who died for Nogi gathered to confront him. But the crowd fell silent when they saw that Nogi wore three crosses, one for each of his own sons killed in the war. I do not know how accurate this story is, but the point is that the Japanese had paid for Korea dearly and they were not ready to cough up Korea.

The elite of Korea who organized and led the March First Movement failed to see this lesson from history. The March leaders erroneously opted for non-violent marches, totally ignoring the people's burning desires for action. All they accomplished was to publish a declaration of independence, that gained precious little for the Korean people. They did not want the people to go beyond peaceful demonstrations.

Some of the leaders believed that Korea could be freed by sending petitions to other nations. They took and swallowed US President Woodrow Wilson's "Doctrine of Self Determination" and expected the United States and other Western Powers to pressure Japan into freeing Korea. They wrote petition after petition, becoming laughing stocks of the imperialists. Kim Gyu Sik and associates begged and pleaded with representatives of the imperialist nations, who were more keen on grabbing more colonies for themselves than freeing any colony.

It was a mistake for those Korean leaders to take Wilson's self-determination doctrine at its face value. The so-called doctrine was nothing but an American ruse to counter the October Revolution in Russia and to dominate the world. The American imperialists used the doctrine to stir up divisive forces in the Soviet Union and prevent it from assisting colonies fighting for independence. The doctrine was also a scheme to take over colonies of the nations defeated in World War I.

Early in the 20th Century, the United States signed the Taft-Katsura Treaty whereby Japan was given a free hand in Korea. To expect America to pressure Japan to give up Korea was ludicrous. There is no record of any strong nation helping a weak nation, presenting its people with freedom and independence. A nation's nationhood can be maintained or regained only by the people. This is a truth proven throughout the history. During the Russo-Japanese War and the Portsmouth Conference, King Kojong dispatched emissaries to the United States and pleaded US help in keeping Korea independent. The fact of the matter is that the United States sided with Japan during the Russo-Japanese War and did everything it could to ensure Japanese victory. After the war, the United States in effect negotiated on behalf of Japan and injected issues favorable to Japan. US President Theodore Roosevelt refused to accept King Kojong's letters claiming that they were not 'official' documents.

King Kojong dispatched secret envoys to the Hague Peace Conference. Kojong declared that the Korea-Japan Ulsa Agreement of 1905 was illegal, void and null. He appealed to the world conscience and humanitarianism, believing that Korea would be helped doing so. The Japanese countered Kojong's moves with false propaganda and other world powers ignored the King's pleas. The emissaries suffered tearful rejection after rejection by the delegates. Because of the secret emissaries, Japan forced King Kojong to abdicate and his son Sunjong ascended the throne.

The Hague emissary fiasco was a loud warning bell that shook the very foundation of Korea's feudal ruling class, rooted deep in toadyism (*Lee Wha Rang note: sah-dae ju-i - worship of the powerful; also, flunkeyism*). Lee Jun, Kojong's secret emissary, cut his stomach open at the Hague Peace Conference and stained the conference hall red with his Korean blood; it is a tragic lesson that Korea should not

count on other nations for independence, because they did not care. In spite of this sad lesson, some of our nationalist leaders clung to the naive notion that the United States, with its 'doctrine of self determination' would free Korea; it shows how toadish they were; how deep-rooted their pro-Americanism was.

The failure of the March First Movement showed that the Korean bourgeoisie nationalist leaders could not lead our anti-Japanese independence movement. The social class mix of the march leaders was such that they were not totally opposed to the Japanese rule of Korea. Their objective was to extract concessions from the Japanese authorities so as to protect and enhance their class standing in the Korean society. The fact that many of the leaders became after the march pro-Japanese collaborators and social reformists under the Japanese rule supports the above assertion..

At the time, Korea had no progressive elements that were strong enough to counter reformism. There was no major industrial proletarian class consciousness that could fight against bourgeois reformism at the time. Our toiling mass was still untouched by Marxism-Leninism and lacked organized leadership. It would be years before the Korea's working class had at last a vanguard that fought for and protected its class interest; it had to make a long hazardous journey. In the aftermath of the failed March First Movement, the Korean people came to realize that a strong leadership was needed to gain independence. Although, millions of Korean people joined the movement, there was no people's organization or class-root leadership and the movement was hampered by divisiveness and ineffectual spontaneity.

The failed March First Movement taught us that in order to win our fight for independence and freedom, we must have effective revolutionary leadership and organizational structures; we must use the right tactics and strategies; and we must debunk toadyism and build up our strength on our own.

The March First Movement, even though failed, showed to the world that the Korean people did not wish to be slaves of other nations, that they were strongly self-reliant and self-deterministic, that they were willing to die for their country. The March First Movement shocked the Japanese imperialists into imposing harsh martial laws and brain-washing indoctrination policies.

The March First Movement put an end to Korea's nascent bourgeois nationalist movement and the Korean people's struggle for independence entered a new stage. The loud hurrahs for independence that shook our land of misfortune and reverberated throughout the world kept on ringing in my ears all through that summer; the ringing forced me to grow up faster. The Potong Gate boulevard, shrouded in smoke and sparks of intense fighting between the marchers and the Japanese police, opened a new venue in my world-view. Shouting "Long Live Korea" squeezed between grownups and on my tiptoes to see between their legs ended my age of innocence; my childhood ended abruptly on that day.

The March First Movement placed me in the rank of the people and left an image on my eyes of the true nature of the Korean people. Whenever I hear the echo of the March First hurrahs in my mind's ears, I feel so proud of the Korean people's unbending determination and heroism.

A letter from Father arrived in that Summer. Along with the letter, there was a "Goldfish" calligraphy set

of a brush and ink, made in China. Father wanted me to become proficient in writing. I immediately put the set in use, I ground out some ink in water, dipped the brush in it and wrote out three large letters - "Ah Buh Ji" (father). That night, the family gathered around a dim kerosene lamp and read Father's letter over and over again. Uncle Hyong Rok read it three times. He was normally restless and vibrant, but he was slow and deliberate like an old man while reading the letter. Mother quickly glanced over the letter and handed it me, asking me to read it aloud for Grandpa and Grandma. Even though I had not started my formal schooling, Father had taught me how to read.



Gen. Hong Bom Do and aids in Siberia.

Sooner I had started to read the letter loud and clear than Grandma stopped her spinning and asked - "Does it say when he would be back?" and before I could answer, she muttered to herself - "Is he in Siberia or is he in Manchuria? He has been gone unusually long". Seeing that Mother did not get to read the letter in detail, I recited the letter from memory for her after we went to bed. Mother would never read Father's letter in front of Grandma and Grandpa, instead she would tuck the letter under her sleeve and read it alone during rest breaks from her daily farm chores. Mother said - "Ok, that's good enough. Now you better go to sleep" - and rubbed my forehead.

It was not until the Fall of that year when Father returned home to take us with him. He had been gone for a year. During his absence from home, Father was busy rebuilding the Korean People's Association; he traveled to Yiju, Chang-sung, Byukdong, Chosan, Junggang and other towns in North Pyongahn Province and Manchuria. Father convened Chungsu-dong Conference in November 1918. Representatives of the Association in the province and liaison agents from various sites met there to discuss future actions to rebuild the Association and organize the poor working mass.



Father talked about events in Manchuria and Russia. He was quite enthused about about Lenin and the October Revolution. He said that in Russia, workers, peasants and other toiling people were in charge; he was envious of that. He was angry at the White reactionaries and the 14 nations that had sent intervention troops to Russia to topple the new government of Russia. Since what he said was true and factual, I believe Father had been to Siberia. Like Manchuria, Siberia was a base for national movements and an important gathering place. Several hundred thousands of Koreans were resident in Siberia at the time of the March First Movement.

Many patriots and nationalist leaders fled there. Lee Jun's secret mission stopped in Siberia on their way to Hague. Yu In Sik and Lee Sang Sul established the "13-Province Righteous Army" headquarters in Vladivostok. It was in Vladivostok that Korean progressives under Yi Dong Whi founded the first Korean socialist organization and began to propagate Marxism-Leninism. The Korean People's Assembly in Russia established the Korean Provisional Government in Far East Russia. Hong Bom Do and Ahn Jung Gun had military units in active operation in that region.

The Korean exiles in Siberia formed numerous independent groups for Korean independence. Korean nationalists in Russia crossed the Russo-Korean border and attacked Gyongwon, Gyonghum and other Korean towns under Japanese rule. They fought Japanese police and military and inflicted heavy casualties. Korean nationalist troops from Manchuria and Russia worked hand in hand with the Soviet Army and fought the enemies of the Soviet Union. The imperialists attempted to topple the new Soviet government and poured in billions of dollars and tens of thousands of their troops in Russia. They armed Russian reactionaries. Several thousands Korean nationalists rushed to the aid of the struggling Soviets. Many fought as partisans and many joined the Red Army. Monuments in Siberia honor those Koreans who died for socialism.

Hong Bom Do, Yi Dong Whi , Yuh Woon Hyong and other nationalist leaders conducted intense military campaigns for Korean independence from military bases in Russia. They met Lenin and discussed Korean independence. Their fight for Korea had ended in a sour note at Free City; factionalism, foreign intervention and egoism culminated in the shameful fratricidal self-destruction in the Free City Incident (also known as the Amur River Incident - see Chapter 9, Section 4 for more on this incident). Nevertheless, their contributions to Korean independence should not be ignored.



Gen. Yi Dong Whi

My presumption that Father had been to Siberia looking for new members for the Korean People's Association is not unfounded. Father told us about the demonstrations by the people in northern border regions and we told Father about the heroic activities of the villagers during the March First uprising. I still remember my father saying: "An armed robber in your house will not spare your life, just because you plead for your life. Other armed robbers standing outside will not rush inside to help you no matter how loud you scream. If you want to live, you must fight off the armed robber yourself. Armed robbers must be fought with arms."

I could see that Father's mind was set on a new course for Korean independence activities. I learned later that during the March First uprising, Father observed the events unfolding in Korea from various locations in the northern border regions and southern Manchuria. His thoughts were on changes in the class structure in Korea. The March First Movement taught us that you cannot free your country by merely shouting and marching around. The March turned Korea into a gigantic Japanese prison, buried under forests of Japanese guns and bayonets and it would take superhuman efforts to fight the Japanese. We must learn from the Russian revolution and mobilize and arm the people of Korea, in order to free our nation and build a new Korea of equality, freedom and justice for all. This is the gist of Father's new way of thinking - proletarian revolution.

Father saw that the Korean independence movement was not going anywhere; all it had done was to leave bloody tracks of meaningless sacrifices; he realized that a new strategy was called for. Father saw

hope in communism in light of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. The March First fiasco convinced him that we must change our nationalist movement into communist revolution. Father argued for toilers' revolution at the Chung-su Conference in July 1919. He convened a conference of the Korean People's Association cadres, liaison officers and leaders of other nationalist organization in August at Hongtong-gu, China. At the conference, Father expounded his belief in transforming our nationalist movement into communist movement. He emphasized that the movement must defeat the Japanese imperialists by our own power, adapting to the prevailing world situations and work to build a society that protect the proletariat.

Formulating concrete steps to go from nationalist movement to communist movement was one of my father's achievements in our struggle for independence. Father explained his idea of proletarian revolution is to build a new society wherein those without food are given rice and those with nothing to wear are given clothes. He awakened workers, peasants and other toilers by setting examples; he united various organizations and groups into a united front and nurtured it into a powerful organ of revolution.. Father advocated that petitions and diplomacy would not bring us freedom and we must rely on military forces to gain freedom. He began to organize new military organizations. Father wanted to train nationalistic youth from farming families on military tactics and leadership and to indoctrinate the existing military leaders and junior officers. They would form the core of a new army of workers and peasants. Father dispatched members of the Korean People's Association to various military organization to spread his new military doctrine; he directed arms procurements and education of military officers.

Father endeavored to unite military groups. At the time, there were many groups competing to expand and this was the most agonizing defect of our independence movement to my father. In Kan-do and Siberia, there were a host of armed Korean camps. Almost every day, a new "Korean Society", "Korean Freedom Corps", "Korea Corp" and so on popped up. There were at least 20 of such armed groups in southern Manchuria alone. They might have achieved something significant, if they got together and coordinated their actions. But the fact of the matter is that they betrayed each other and vied for dominance.

Father feared that this sad situation, if continued, would alienate the Korean people and help Japanese wipe out the camps. Father learned that Korean Independence Youth Corp and Kwangje Youth Corp were at each other's throat; he rushed to Kwangje and called on the leaders to bury the hatchet and work together for common cause. Thanks to Father, Hong-up Corps, Gung-bi Corps and other armed groups in the Yenan-Yalu region merged into a united national army.

Transforming extant armed groups into a people's army of workers and peasants and embarking on the road of communist revolution was one of Father's agenda. This new direction would help unite the armed groups and minimize contentious rifts amongst them. Father worked tirelessly to redirect our military activities until the day he died. He was struck down with an incurable disease. After Father's announcement of the new direction at the Kwanjun Conference, ideological splits among the nationalists intensified. Even among those who had supported Father's plan when he was alive deserted after his death. Some of them were captured by the Japanese, some became turncoats, and others scattered away. Few took up the banner of revolution when Father fell. The conservatives in the nationalist camp built

walls around them and kept to their old ways; but many progressive leaders chose the new way and later joined in our communist revolution.

Father's belief in communist movement provided much needed nourishments for my growth.

# Stateless Vagabonds in Foreign Places

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Father changed his operations base often and so, my family moved several times when I was young. The first move was when I was five. In the Summer, we moved to Bongwha-ri, leaving behind Grandpa, Grandma and other close relatives. Because of my tender age, I felt no sad feeling parting with them. I was too excited about our new home.

But our move to Jung-gang in the Fall was entirely a different matter. It was a sad move. Our relatives were sad that we were moving so far, to the northern tip of the country. Grandpa, who normally stood behind Father and supported his decisions, was aghast at Father's decision to move us away more than a thousand ri. Father saw what was going through Grandpa's mind and did his best to calm him down. Father sat next to Grandpa and helped with his handcraft work for the last time and said: "Dad, I am on the blacklist of the Japanese police and I cannot do anything in Korea. They told me to stay home and work the farm when I was released from prison. I will go on fighting, even if they jailed me ten times more. Japanese are savages and merely shouting for independence will not bring it."

Uncle hugged Father and told him to write often, if he moved far away, too far to come home; he begged Father never to forget the home and wept openly. Father held onto Uncle's hands for a long time. Father consoled Uncle: "Hey, I will never forget our home. How on earth can I forget our home? We are forced to part because of the bad times we are having, we shall meet again when Korea is freed and live happily together again. Since our childhood, you have been cleaning up the mess I created and now I am leaving and you have to be the man of the family now. I am very sorry."

"Dear elder brother, don't talk like that! I will care for Mom and Dad and you don't worry about them. You keep your mind on your work and make sure you succeed. I will be here waiting for your success."

I was moved by their tearful farewell and wept with them. Although Mother told me that we would be back home when Korea became independent, I wondered when that will be. I had no clear idea. In fact, Father and Mother passed away in foreign places and this was their last moment with the family.

I kept on looking back toward our old home; I did not want to leave Grandpa and Grandma behind. I did not want to leave the home, the mountains and rivers I grew up in, but I was happy that we were moving far, far away from that prison in Pyongyang. Even after Father was released from prison, I was uneasy about that prison. I feared that Father might get arrested and jailed there again. I was so naive that moving to a remote village, away from Seoul and Pyongyang, we could find a safe haven from the Japanese savages.

I asked how far Joong-gang was from Pyongyang and was told that it was one thousand ri. This sounded like a safe distance because I thought no Japanese would come that far to get Father. It was said that Joong-gang is the coldest place in Korea, but I did not mind as long as Father was safe there. I could

stand cold. Our family possessions were meager: mother's bag containing a rice cooking pot and a few spoons, and Father's sack; that was all. When we moved to Bongwha-ri, we had chests, a desk, brass utensils and pots, but this time, we had very little to carry.

A friend of Father came with us. We rode a train to Sinahnju and from there, we walked to Joong-gang, passing through Gaechun, Hichun and Kang-gye. There was no railroad in that area in those days. Father worried that I might not be able to keep up with them; Mother, too, worried that I might fall behind. I was eight at the time and too old to be carried. I hitched rides on passing ox-carts now and then, but I walked most of the distance on my own feet. It was the first major physical endurance test in my life. We arrived at Kang-gye and spent a night at a lodging outside its south gate. We took off next day. The owner of the lodging and some undercover members of the Korean People's Association welcomed us with open arms. Joong-gang was about five hundred ri from Kang-gye. We had to climb several mountains and pass through scary uninhabited areas.



*Lee Wha Rang note: Kim Il Sung and his family rode a train from Pyongyang to Sinahnju (near Ahnju) and then traveled on foot to Joong-gang (Chungang on this map) after staying over one night at Kangye.*

*Note the rugged terrain. Later, Kim Il Sung's family moved to the Chinese town of Lim-gang (Linjiang) across Yalu.*

Crossing Mount Bainang was hard on Mother. She carried my 3-year old brother Chul Ju on her back and a bundle on her head. Her shoes wore out and her feet were a mess of bleeding blisters. Joong-gang was a letdown for me. It was teaming with Japanese, not much different from the Hwang-gum or Sehmun regions of Pyongyang. While we Koreans were forced to leave our home villages and wandered around in alien places, why do these Japanese follow us even to the most remote boondocks and lord over us? •Father told me that everywhere Koreans are, Japanese are there, too. I saw that Joong-gang had a Japanese police station, a jail and a military police station. Joong-gang made me realize that all of Korea was a gigantic dungeon.

More than half of Joong-gang was occupied by the Japanese immigrants and there was Japanese school, a Japanese hospital and Japanese shops. I learned from Jung-gang residents that the Japanese occupation began some ten years ago. Japan took over the rights to our timber in Ulsa Agreement and set up a timber processing plant at Sinyiju and a branch at Joong-gang and brought Japanese woodcutters to settle in Joong-gang. Among the woodcutters were many battle-hardened Japanese army veterans and they were in fact paramilitary units ready to do battle at any time. In addition, there were a number of armed Japanese police and regular army troops.

The main reason why Father moved us there was because Joong-gang was a hub of Korean nationalist movement. He wanted to set up a hospital there and promote anti-Japan activities. He believed that being a medical doctor, he would be less subject to Japanese surveillance and would have more degree of freedom to move around; also, being a doctor would make it easier for him to see people.

We moved in Kang Ki Rak's lodging house. Kang gave us the cleanest and quietest room he had. After getting out of prison, Father traveled in Kan-do and stayed in the this very room whenever he came to Joong-gang. Kang Ki Rak ran the lodging "Yuh In Hotel" and also, a dental clinic and a photo shop. He was a liaison for the Korean People's Association. Father operated from Kang's hotel room and maintained contacts with Korean nationalists in Lim-gang, Jang-baik, Joong-gang, Byuk-dong, Chang-sung. Chosan and other towns in the Yalu region.

Kang Ki Rak was well known in Joong-gang and visited the town hall at will. He passed on whatever intelligence he gathered from the unsuspecting town officials to Father, which was invaluable to Father's work. I worked for Father as a lookout and took care of the nationalists who came to see Father. I also carried secret messages to Joong-sang and Joong-duk for Father.

One of the most memorable events in Joong-gang that I recall is the wrestling match I had with a Japanese fellow. He was much bigger than I was but I won the match by doing a belly-throw on him. I was called in to go after any Japanese kid that hassled Korean kids, which made the lodging proprietors fear for Japanese reprisal. Father told him that we should never kowtow to anyone who look down upon us, and he blessed my actions.



Joong-gang was a hotbed of nationalist activities at the time; anti-Japanese leaflets were everywhere, students boycotted classes and many Korean puppets of the Japanese were killed. Soon the Japanese got wind of my father's activities and suspected that he was behind the anti-Japanese activities in Joong-gang. The Japanese police received police dossiers on him from the Pyongyang police and placed him on their blacklist. While hanging around the myon office, Kang Ki Rak happened to notice a red line across my father's name, a clear sign of an impending arrest of Father. Kang hurried home and warned Father. At about the same time, a Joong-gang policeman leaked that Father would be arrested at any time. Father decided to leave Joong-gang at once.

Once again we packed and left our home away from home; this time, we were forced to move to a foreign land, Manchuria. You take one step from Joong-gang and you are in China. We boarded a ferry at Joong-duk pier and crossed Yalu. I cried all during the passage aboard the ferry. It was our fourth move. I thought Joong-gang was a foreign place, but moving to China was overwhelming to my young mind and Joong-gang looked like home to me. After all, Joong-gang was a Korean town. Mangyng-dae was my cradle and sang me slumber songs and gave rides in swings; Joong-gang and Bongwha-ri taught me that all of Korea was a Japanese prison.

The day of our departure from Joong-gang was unusually gloomy. Fall leaves of trees fell everywhere and the winds blew the fallen, helpless leaves around. Flocks of migrating birds headed south in the skies over us. They made me sad, I did not know why. This was the last step on the Korean soil for my mother; my brother, Chul Ju, too, would never set his feet in Korea again.

Man's life is full of sorrows and, of all the sorrows, the sorrow of losing one's country is the worst. Deserting one's own country is the saddest thing on one's life. Leaving one's home is a sorrowful thing but it pales in comparison to the sorrow of leaving one's motherland. If your home were your mother, your place away home in Korea were your step-mother, what would a strange foreign land be?

Thinking about moving to a foreign land, without being invited, with no one to welcome us, with no knowledge of the language spoken there, I was numb with the fear of unknown. But we had to overcome and stand behind Father and support him in any way we could. The ferryman told us that more or more people were crossing the river to Manchuria. He lamented why the Korean people had to endure so many tragedies. Father said tens of thousands of Koreans have fled Korea, leaving behind everything they had.

Even before the annexation, many farmers were forced to leave Korea and seek a better life in China and Siberia. They did not want to leave their homeland, but they were starving in Korea and had no choice but to desert their fatherland. They left their home villages risking brutal punishments and death, if caught; it was a life and death move for them. Starving Koreans migrated as far as Mexico and Hawaii. "Flowers bloom four seasons, year long; cotton flowers blossom on their own once seeded; you will become rich in three years after working only three hours a day" - is how they deceived our starving people and gold-diggers. They were enticed into the stark cotton fields of Hawaii, where they were treated as ignorant savages; they ended up working at food stalls or as house servants of wealthy



Americans. They were forced to work long hours on hot steaming farms like so many slaves.

But, at least, these immigrant laborers had a country of their own in those days. After Korea fell, several hundreds of thousands of our farmers lost their farms to the Japanese and had to move to the distant barren plains of Manchuria and Siberia. Get-rich-quick artists and other con-men from Japan swarmed over Korea like so many hungry vultures and drove out Korean farmers off their farms they had owned and tilled for generations. The landless peasants were forced to leave their motherland and wander around in foreign places. Their lot was like that of fallen leaves or papers in the wind. Today, descendents of these homeless vagabonds return home seeking the land their forefathers left behind. Every time I meet them, I recall the homeless people crossing Yalu.

We arrived at Lim-gang, China; everything looked strange to me but there was one bright spot: I could see only a few Japanese in that town. Lim-gang was a transportation hub linking Korea and China. It was a thriving commercial center. Japan had little clout in Manchuria at the time and it had to use covert means to attack Korean nationalists based there. For this reason, Lim-gang was safer than Joong-gang. Soon after we settled down in Lim-gang, Father hired a Chinese tutor for me for a half year and had me enrolled in Lim-gang elementary school. I had to learn Chinese in earnest. I continued my study at Paldogu Elementary School and later at Muson First Middle School. Thanks to Father, I became fluent in Chinese.

I did not know why Father had me enrolled in Chinese schools and made me learn Chinese at the time, but the reason why became clear in my later years. It was in line with his ji-won, righteous aspirations; my fluency in Chinese helped me greatly during my 25 years of stay in China. If I had not learned the language, I would have been much less effective. To be frank, since most of our armed activities were in China, I would have had less contacts with our Chinese host and it would have been difficult to mount joint operations with Chinese comrades. Without Chinese expertise, we would have had little chance to survive the relentless Japanese pursuit. I was clad in Chinese clothing and spoke fluent Chinese; and even the Japanese detectives, that were more effective than hunting dogs, and Manchurian police mistook me for a Chinese. My Chinese fluency helped our cause significantly.

Father rented a house with the help of Roh Gyong Doo, a friend of his, and set up a medical clinic. One of the rooms was made into a storage room of medicine as well as a patient treatment area. Father hanged a large sign, Sunchun Medical Clinic, on the wall outside. He displayed his "Severance Medical School" diploma on the wall. I believe one of his friends forged this fake diploma for Father before Father left Pyongyang. Within a few month, the news of Father's medical prowess and miraculous cures began to spread like a wild fire. Father's medical credential was limited to reading a few medical books and his medical expertise was more personal relations than any medical know-how. Father always respected people and did his best to take care of our nation-less lost people in China.

Many of Father's patients had little or no money, but they came to Father seeking medical help. Father not only treated them free but also gave them money for medicine. He told them that they could pay him back after Korea became free again. He told them that the day of liberation was near and that they should persevere and hang in there until that time. Just like our house in Bongwha-ri, we had many visitors at

our Lim-gang house. Most of the patients were Korean nationalists fighting for our independence.

About this time, Kang Jin Suk, Mother's brother, moved to Lim-gang. Uncle Kang formed Baik-san Musa Dan, Mount Baiktu Warriors Corps; 'white mountain' referred to Mount Baiktu. The group was made of nationalists from Pyongahn provinces. Mount Baiktu was a popular and sacred word to the Korean nationalists active in Manchuria. The Korean school in Musong was named Paiktu Elementary School. The youth group we formed in December 1927 was called Mount Baiktu Youth League. Mount Baiktu Warriors Corps was of the larger units among the many armed groups in Lim-gang and Jangbaik regions. Its main base was in Lim-gang Province and it operated in Joong-gang, Chosan and Huchang in North Pyongahn Province and Pyongyang, Sunchun, Kangsuh in South Pyongahn Province.

Uncle Kang was active in a secret youth organization in Pyongyang prior to his move to Manchuria. Until he organized Mount Baiktu Warriors Corps, he stayed with us, working as a woodcutter now and then. After forming the Corps, he worked restless, undercover, raising money for his army and doing propaganda in Pyongahn provinces. Uncle came to our house often with the Corps commanders such as Byun Dae Woo and Kim Si Woo, the Corps finance officer. Sometimes they stayed overnight at our house. Guests usually slept upstairs, but Uncle Kang was the exception and he slept downstairs with the family. Uncle slept with a pistol hidden under his pillow.

In those days, Father devoted a great deal of his time on readying armed actions for independence in accordance with the Kwangjun Conference proclamation. He went to Hongto-ae frequently to consult with Mount Paiktu Warriors Corps leaders. One night I woke to see Father and Uncle Kang disassembling a pistol under a lamp. The sight of the pistol reminded of the scene I had witnessed during the March First Movement in the Botong gate area. I remembered that our people were armed only with wood sticks and stones. One year after that incident, I saw Uncle Kang holding a pistol. The lesson of losing tens of thousands of our unarmed patriots had made our leaders to turn to armed struggles.

A few days later, Father sent me to Joong-gang to fetch a load of bullets and gun-powder in my school bag. Customs inspectors checked every inch of grownups but children were examined less thoroughly. I picked up the cache in Joong-gang and returned home safely. Japanese police watched people crossing Yalu like hawks but for some reason, that did not scare me.

Uncle Kang left Lim-gang and returned to Korea to raise money for armed actions. In less than a month since his departure, Sgt. Kim Duk Soo of Joong-gang military police came to our house with the news that Uncle Kang was arrested. Sgt. Kim worked for the Japanese but he tried to help Father as much as he could. Sgt. Kim was a good man. On that day, I came from school and found Mother in tears. Gloom settled in our house over Uncle's misfortune.

After leaving Lim-gang, Uncle Kang and a small band of armed men operated in Jasung, Gaechun and Pyongyang. In April 1921, they were captured while operating in Pyongyang. He was sentenced to 15 years in jail. He was released after serving 13 years and eight months. He died in 1942. Originally, Uncle Kang was engaged in mass enlightenment movement in Korea. He formed Mifung Association and campaigned against gambling and heavy drinking. My father and his father, Kang Dok Woo, talked

Uncle into switching to armed activities.

Revolution is not done by a handful of any particular persons. With proper perception and nurturing, any one can accomplish revolutionary tasks that reshape the world. After Uncle Kang's capture, Japanese dispatched numerous spies and plainclothes police detectives in order to arrest Father. Father slept at a friend's house outside of Lim-gang and came home at day break. It was clear that we could no longer stay in Lim-gang. Once again, we were forced to pack up and move from one alien location to another. Every member of the family carried loads and left Rim-gang. There was no way we could carry everything; Bang Sa Hyon, a Christian minister, was kind enough to load up a sleigh and pull it all the way to our new house in Paldo-gun, Jangbaik Province, a distance of 250 ri.

Like Lim-gang, Paldo-gu was also located by Yalu. Just as Japanese security forces were in Joong-gang, a Korean town opposite to Lim-gang, there were Japanese police and military stationed in Popyong, a Korean town opposite to Paldo-gu. Even though Popyong was a remote town, it was heavily guarded and spies, military police and police swarmed all over Paldo-gu in search of Korean nationalists. Our house was situated near the confluence of Yalu and Paldo River. Father hang a new business sign - Kwangje Medical Clinic. The Kims, members of the Korean People's Association, lived next door and another Kims, noodle merchants, were also our next door neighbors. The Kim brothers, who donated money for arms and ran a business, lived near us. Thus we were surrounded by good Kim's.

There was one problem, however. Our house was owned by Son Seh Sim, a spy for the Japanese police, which fact we learned later. Son lived in Joong-gang; he was ordered to follow us to Paldo-gu and spy on Father. Father met with various persons in Paldo-gu. Among them was a Mr. Whang, a politician. While working as a clerk at Namsa Timber Yard, he was moved by progressive ideologies and joined the rank of revolutionaries. Whang secretly worked for Father. Father sent Whang on various secret missions and sometimes, he stayed at our house between missions. At times, Whang and Father debated over some published articles in Asahi-sinbun or some other papers or magazines, while sharing a bottle of sake.

Mr. Whang accompanied Father on fishing excursions. He would take a jar of hot bean pastes, use fishing nets to catch fish and clean them. They had picnics feasting on the fish. He frequented our house for three years; once celebrating Chusok with us. Mr. Whang introduced Father to the workers at Namsa Timber Yard, some 200 ri from us. Father went there several times to indoctrinate the workers and organized an anti-Japanese group of the workers. Father gave guidance to the teachers of Rajuk Middle School, whose students staged a general walkout, that shocked the people in that region.

One of Father's favorite places was Popyong Church. Even though it was called a 'church', it was no tall pointed building with a large cross on top; it was in fact a normal tile-roof house. The only thing unusual about it was that the room dividers were taken out to make room for a worship "hall". Since Father's arrival at Paldo-gu, the church became the meeting place for Korean nationalists. On every day of worship, Father went to the church and preached anti-Japanese philosophy; on occasions, he played an organ and taught them songs. When Father was unable, Mother or Uncle Hyong Kwon took his place and preached nationalism. My younger brother and I attended the Church meetings and Father taught us

how to play the organ.

Father had several secret meeting places in Popyong. The janitor at Popyong police station worked for Father. This man took intelligence data to the man in charge of mail, who in turn relayed the data to Father. I, too, had carried secret messages for Father many times. Once I smuggled food and clothing to some nationalists incarcerated at the police station. The mail depot was the most often visited place for me. Father wanted me to pick up Dongah-ilbo, Chosun-ilbo and other newspapers and magazines, miscellaneous publications at the mail depot. Father ran a branch office of Dongah-ilbo under Uncle Hyong Kwon's name. He received no pay but he got to read the papers free.

I went to Popyong twice a week to pick up Father's mail. Going to Popyong was not easy unless Yalu was frozen over. When the river froze, I walked across the river every other day. When I was busy with school work, Uncle Hyong Kwon went in my place. When Father had much mail, Uncle and I went together to fetch the mail, mostly packages, magazines and medical publications from Japan.

Hong Jong Woo, an aid to Japanese military police, helped us on many occasions. He was in fact a revolutionary pretending to be a pro-Japanese. He was one of those converted by Father. Hong was not always a revolutionary. Paldo-gu was under the jurisdiction of Popyong military police. Popyong police and customs officials reported to the military police. In those days, military police was the king and wielded enormous power. Father and his associates kept a close watch on the military police and they in turn watched us non-stop.

When Hong Jong Woo, in Japanese military uniform, walked in our medical clinic for the first time, I was alarmed; Father and Mother were on guard. Hong looked around the room abject and then slowly spoke: "The reason why I came to see you today is to deliver a message from Jang Sun Bong of Ahnju. When I got transferred to the border post, he asked me to look up his friend, Kim Hyong Jik. I myself wanted to meet you in person and learn from you." For a man in military police uniform, he was unexpectedly polite and humble. However, Father was suspicious and did not trust Hong and said: "You used to be close to Sgt. Kim Duk Soo in Joong-gang. Why do you talk like this?"

When Hong left, Mother told Father - "Mr. Hong's military police uniform reminded me afresh of the Pyongyang prison." Father said it was not proper to treat Hong like that; he said Hong came to us with good intentions and we should treat him better if he came back. Hong came back several times. One day I heard Father telling Mother - "If Hong came here to spy on us, I will use him to spy on the military police. If anything goes wrong, I will be the only one in danger; but if we turned him around, he could become valuable to us. We have Kim Duk Soo in Joong-gang and now Hong Jong Woo in Popyong. Kim Hyong Jik will have help from the Japanese military police everywhere."

From that day on, Father focused on Hong Jong Woo. He wanted to convert Hong. Hong was warmly received as a fellow countryman, not treated coldly as a Japanese military police aid. Hong gradually relaxed and opened up; he was in fact a nationalist from Suncheon, South Pyongahn Province. He was a farmer but could not make ends meet; he wanted to improve his lot and took exams for a military police aid purely for financial reasons. After witnessing the inhuman acts of the military police during the

March First Movement, Hong changed his mind and decided to stick with farming. But he was accepted and received the order to join or else. That is how Hong became a Japanese military police aid.

The Japanese imperialists introduced "martial rule" and "cultural rule" in Korea in the aftermath of the March First Movement and under 'administrative reforms', military police were cut back and civil police were beefed up in Korea; at the same time, military police in the border regions were beefed up. Most of the Koreans military police aids were either absorbed into civil police or transferred to the border area. Hong Jong Woo was one of those sent to the border region.

One day, Hong Jong Woo came to see Father and told him about his plan to steal weapons from his military police unit. Father commended him for his courage and said: "It is great that you have decided to join our revolutionary ranks. Just because one wears Japanese military uniform does mean his soul is soiled. We have 5,000 years of history behind us and should not remain slaves to the Japanese for ever and we must stand up and fight. However, you can do more for us in your current position." Hong Jong Woo stayed with the military police and helped our cause on many occasions since then.

Hong would inform Father when he would be manning the watch on the Yalu crossing and asked Father to have his people cross the river on his watch. In this way Hong helped many nationalists cross the river safely. Father himself narrowly escaped dangers thanks to Hong. Whenever Hong got wind of an impending police raid across the river, Hong came over and tipped Father off. If Father was not home, he told Mother - "Please, tell Master to go back to the country side and keep low for a few days".

One day, Hong was ordered by the military police commander to cross the river and spy on Korean nationalists in Paldo-gu. He happened to see Father being led away by a policeman from Popyong. Hong jumped in front of the policeman and said: "This man works for the military police. Why the hell have you arrested him without notifying us first? If you have any qualms about this man in the future, consult with us first. Don't mess with our work again. Do you understand?" The policeman apologized profusely and unbound Father. Thus, Father escaped from another mortal danger.

Once a military policeman, after making a round in our area, reported to his commander that Doctor Kim in Paldo-gu should be brought in for questioning for possible political crimes, whereupon, Hong Jong Woo showed page after page of police "intelligence reports" and asserted that the information came from Doctor Kim; that, in order to spy on political criminals, one must be able to talk and act like one. Doctor Kim has been a great help to us". The so-called 'intelligence reports' were fakes made up by Hong.

The Japanese military police auxiliary system was abolished in May 1923 and Hong Jong Woo's days as a military police aid ended. Hong wanted to move his family to Manchuria and join the fight for independence. Hong did not wish to stay in the enemy camp any longer. Father did his best to change Hong's mind. He told Hong that he would be helping our cause much more by returning to his hometown and joining the police there. Father asked him to visit his parents in Mangyong-dae on his behalf and relay his greetings. Hong accepted Father's council and returned to his hometown. The first thing he did upon his homecoming was to visit our family in Mangyong-dae and relay Father's messages to Grandpa and Grandma. Hong became a policeman in his hometown; he petitioned for and was reassigned to the

Daepyong police station in 1927. The first thing he did at Daepyong was to have a police orderly carry a basket of rice wine, pork and tangerines to my grandparents as Lunar New Year presents. Mangyongdae was under Daypyong police.

Hong Jong Woo followed Father's teachings and stayed a true patriot; he looked after our family in Mangyong-dae. The main reason why he moved to Daypyong was to protect our Mangyong-dae family. Grandpa and Uncle Hyong Rok were safe when Hong was around. The station chief told Hong that Kim Hyong Jik's family was anti-Japanese and should be watched carefully and the family house should be thoroughly searched often. But Hong reported there was nothing going on at the Kim Hyong Jik's household.

When liberation came, people all over the country hunted down pro-Japanese Koreans and beat them up. But Hong Jong Woo was not touched. Even though he had worked for the Japanese police, he had done no harm to his fellow countrymen and looked other way when he saw anti-Japanese deeds. Nevertheless, because of his police work, he was shunned as a pro-Japanese and mistreated. He could have contacted me to clear his record, but he kept silent. Years after the Fatherland Liberation War, I sent my workers to find Hong in Soonchun. By this time, Hong was an old man of past 60. He was sent to a provincial party cadre school for education. After graduation, he continued to live his life simple and humble. For the rest of his life, he spent his remaining energy digging up information on my father's work. People like Hong Jong Woo, who had decided to live with true love for Korea and the Korean people, whatever uniforms or badges they wore matter little. What matters is not one's signboards or uniforms, but his ideology and spirit.

Father was very keen on educating new generations in Paldo-gu. Even after switching his profession from teaching to medicine, Father spent a great deal of effort on education. Father believed that in order to recover our nationhood and to build a strong Korea, the mass must be educated and mobilized through educational programs at public and private schools. In the Summer of 1924, there was a summer training camp for teachers of Korean elementary schools, held at Samwon-po. Father wrote the lesson materials and made a list of the songs for the students.

Father was instrumental in establishing a Korean school in Paldo-gu. Many young boys from Popyong came to the school to learn Korean. They would carry heavy sacks of rice on their back from home and cooked their own meals in order to attend this school. Father repeatedly said: "Education of new generations is the very foundation for independence and nation building. Ignorant persons are not much better than wild beasts. Education makes you human and will help you restore our nationhood." I took Father's sayings seriously and studied hard. The Paldo-gu elementary I attended was a 4-year Chinese school and Chinese language was used for all things.

There was no Korean school in our town at that time. After school, Father gave me lessons. He taught me Korean language, geography, and Korean history; He gave me lessons on Leninism, China's Sun Yatsan ideology, George Washington and other famous world leaders. He gave me progressive novels to read and had me write reviews. I read "Great Koreans", "Korean Heroes", "History of Russian Revolution and Lenin" and other books as well as newspapers and magazines. Father was dead serious about my

education. Father punished us severely when my brother Chul Ju or I did poorly in school; he did not spare the rod on us. He would even hold his younger brother, Uncle Hyong Kwon, accountable for our education.

Mother, too, helped me with my education. After school, I would go to the mountains to gather firewood for her. Mother wanted me to stay home and study instead. I felt sorry for Mother; she did everything for us and did not possess even a single set of decent clothe for herself; I constantly looked for ways to please her. Once, she gave me money to buy a pair of shoes for myself, but I went to Popyong and bought a pair of rubber shoes for Mother. She was in tears and said: "You are young in age but mature in thought. I can live with any kind of shoes; the best way for you to please me is to study hard and grow up fast and strong."

Mother did her best so that I would grow up with bright spirit and pleasant personality. I grew up with no malice in heart and optimism as the guide. Looking back, I played around the most in Paldo-gu. Sometimes I took adults' tong lashing for horsing around too rough. Childhood with no play is no childhood. Once, I cut out a hole about one meter in diameter in the frozen Yalu River; a bunch of kids lined up and jumped across the gaping hole in a friendly competition. This and other childish plays during that winter in Paldo-gu bring back my childhood memories 70 years past I declared that those kids who could not jump over the hole would never make it into the Korean Army when they grew up. Every kid mustered all the courage and attempted to jump over it, because none of them wanted to be left out. Some kids were too small or too timid and splashed into water and they ran home half-frozen. Their parents were irate and blamed that boy from Pyongyang, Sun Ju, for the near drowning and freezing death of their kids. I was known as the Paldo-gu gang leader and parents blamed me for the misdeeds of their kids.

Some days, we played war games late into the night in the mountains near Paldo-gu. Our parents thought we were lost and spent sleepless hours in worrisome agony looking for their missing kids. After a few plays like this, parents kept closer watch on their kids, but a child's vivid imagination and mind cannot be shackled. I remember my school friend Kim Jong Hang. One day, he took a dynamite fuse from his father's warehouse in order to impress us. His family supplied arms and clothing to our nationalist forces and the warehouse was chock full of weapons, uniforms and footwear. Kim Jong Hang's brothers ran branch offices of Japanese firms and acquired supplies for our armed fighters. They had two ships and horses and were busy procuring and distributing goods in large volumes. We sat around a bonfire and ate roasted pumpkin seeds. Kim put the fuse in his mouth and whistled. Somehow the fuse got lit and exploded injuring him grievously. His brother carried him on his back and rushed to Father's medical clinic. Father feared that the news of a fuse explosion might alert the Japanese police and hid Kim Jong Han in our house for more than 20 days. That is how I got to know that Kim Jong Hang's family supplied arms to our independence fighters.

# The Song of Yalu

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Early in 1923, Father asked me what my plans were after my impending graduation from the elementary school. I told him that I wished to go on to a middle school. That was what my parents had been saying all along for some time. I thought it strange that Father would ask me a question like that.

Father stared at me with a serious look on his face and said that it would be good for me to continue my study in Korea from now on. It was totally unexpected; it would mean I would have to leave home; I had never thought of living without my parents. Mother, who was busy sewing, heard Father and cut in and asked Father, since I was so young, he should send me to a school nearby. But it was clear that Father had his mind made up. He said several times that even though it might be tough initially, Sung Ju must be educated in Korea. Father seldom repeated himself, but this time he did.

I had suffered many hardships moving around with my parents, but I might face more severe hardships in Korea. Father had made up his mind to send me back to Korea. He said "You are a son of Korea and you should get to know Korea. Just finding out why Korea went down will justify your return home. You should see with your own eyes how much the Korean people are suffering. Then, you will know what to do next". Father was dead serious.

I told Father that I would go to Korea to study as he wished. In those days, kids from rich families left Korea to study abroad. It was fashionable to study in Japan or in the United States. People believed that was the only way to get educated and to learn modern technology. While everybody was heading out, I was heading in. Father had some strange way of looking at things. Today, thinking back, I believe Father had done the right thing for me. It took courage for Father to send his son, not quite 12 years old, on a thousand ri journey, all by himself, through regions that were barely inhabited. But Father's strong character gave me strength and faith.

Honestly, I had some mixed feelings. I liked the idea of studying in Korea, but I hated to leave my parents and my kid brother behind. I was excited about going back to my old home. I was caught between the sorrow of getting separated from my family and the excitement of returning to Korea. I was in deep thought several days.

Mother counseled Father that he should wait for warmer months to send me away. Sending her young boy alone on a 1,000-ri journey worried her. But Father did not agree and Mother began packing my bag, working late into the night. She made me a new coat and cotton-padded socks. Mother knew Father too well to argue over a matter already settled in his mind. That was the way Mother was.

On the day of my departure, Father asked me if I could make the 1,000-ri trip from Paldo-gu to Mangyong-dae by myself. I told him - no problem. He drew a map with detailed instructions: stay at so



and so place in Huchang, such and such place in Whapyong and so on; he even jotted down the distance between my two stops - the first in Kangye and the next in Pyongyang. I left Paldo-gu on March 16, 1923. Heavy snow and strong winds raged since the morning hours. My friends from Paldo-gu accompanied me all the way to Huchang after crossing Yalu. They kept on walking with me and finally, I had to talk them into returning home.

Once I was alone on the road, many thoughts hit me at the same time. Out of the thousand ri, about 500 ri would be through uninhabited wild mountains and forests. Passing such wilderness was not an easy thing to do. The path from Huchang to Kangye was infested with wild beasts lurking on both sides of the path even in broad daylight. I did suffer numerous hardships on my 1000-ri journey. Going over the Jik and the Gae mountains was really scary. It took me a whole day to climb over Mount Ohga. I walked and walked, there was no end in sight, and new mountains popped up in my way.

By the time I made it over Mount Ohga, my feet were shot with blisters. Fortunately, I ran into an old man at the foot of the mountain, who kindly burned off the blisters with matches. After Mount Ohga, I walked through Hwapyong, Hoksu, Gangeh, Sung-gan, Junchun, Goin, Chungwoon, Hoechun, Hyangsan, Gujang and Gaechun. I got on a train at Gaechun and rode it to Mangyong-dae. The rail from Gaechun to Sinahnju was narrow-gauge, and a tiny British engine called "Nikisha" pulled the train. From Sinahnju to Pyongyang, wide-gauge rails, like the ones used today, were in place. The train fare from Gaechun to Pyongyang was one won and 90 jun in those days.

During my 1000-ri journey, I met many good people. Once my feet hurt so much and a farmer let me ride on his oxcart. I offered to pay for the ride but he refused to accept any money from me and instead, he bought me sweet taffy to eat. The most unforgettable was the hotel proprietor in Kangye. I arrived late in Kangye and found the hotel. He rushed out to greet me. He was short in stature, had neat Western-style haircut and was nattily dressed in traditional Korean clothing. He was kind and pleasant. He said that he had received a telegram from Father and had been expecting me. He called my father "Master Kim" and his mother remembered me from four years ago when we stayed there on our way to Joong-gang. She said I had grown quiet a bit since then and treated me as if I were her own son. She warmed up a bowl of short-rib soup and broiled a herring for me. None of her own kids was so lucky. She gave me a brand-new blanket. I was treated like a royalty.

Next morning, I went to the post office and sent a telegram to my parents in Paldo-gu - as instructed by Father. Each character cost 3 jun and 1 jun more if there were more than six characters, and so I wrote out "got to kang gye O K" - six characters. Next day, the hotel owner went to a car business trying to get me a ride, but the only car they had was in repairs and it would be ten days before the car would be up and running. He went on to say - "Hi, why not pretend you are visiting with relatives here and stay with us until the car is ready?" I thanked him for his kindness, but told him that I had to push on. He saw that I was determined and gave me two pairs of straw sandals and got me together with an oxcart team going in my way.

The owner of Suhsun Hotel in Gaechun was also kind to me. Upon arrival there, I ordered a 15-jun meal. He had several meal options and mine was the cheapest. However, he served me his best meal, a 50-jun

item. I told him that I did not have 50-jun for the meal, but he told me to eat it. He charged 50 jun for two blankets and a comforter, but I could not afford two blankets and asked for just one. The owner gave me two blankets and a comforter, saying, everyone else had them and there was no way he would let me sleep with one blanket, money or no money.

Though the Korean people lost their country and lived in a living hell, their traditional kindness and ethics remained undiminished. Many people traveled penniless up until early in the 20th century. Villagers fed and housed poor travelers passing through their village - free of charge. Such was our custom, envied even by the Westerners. My 1000-ri journey made me realize how pure and ethical the Korean people were. The owners of Susun, Kangye and Joong-gang hotels all were under Father's direction and spell. As I had noticed during our journey to Joong-gang when I was eight, Father had devoted friends and comrades everywhere he went. When I saw people who treated us like their long lost kin, I often wondered how and when Father had managed to make so many friends, how hard he must have worked at making friends. Having so many friends at so many places made Father's travels less burdensome. I, too, was helped by Father's friends.

Another unforgettable memory of my 1000-ri journey was Kangye's streets; four years earlier, they were lit dim with kerosene lamps but on my second passing through, they were lit bright with electric lamps. The Kangye citizens were happy with electricity, but I felt uncomfortable at the sight of Japanese wind sweeping through the town. I understood the reason why Father wanted me to be back in Korea and to observe Korea suffering under the yoke of foreign domination. My 1000-ri journey taught me many valuable lessons; it was an open classroom for me.

Nineteen days after leaving Paldo-gu, in the sunset hours of March 29, 1923, I set my reached my old home. Grandma, who was doing laundry, saw me coming and rushed out shoeless and hugged me. "Who else is with you?", "How did you get here?", "Your mom and dad OK?", she asked me non-stop. Grandpa, who was making straw mats, jumped up and ran toward me. Grandma could not believe that I came all by myself and asked: "Do you really mean you made the journey all by yourself? Your dad must have a rock in head!"

The relatives gathered around and listened to my story all night long. I found the mountains and rivers unchanged, as beautiful as ever, but there were more signs of poverty here and there in my home village. After resting several days in Mangyong-dae, I moved in with my mother's family in Chilgol. I was enrolled in the 5th grade of Changduk Elementary School, where my grandfather, Mother's father, was the principal. Thus, my formal education in Korea began.

My mother's family was in no financial position to support an extra mouth. They were troubled by Uncle Kang Jing Suk's arrest. Since his imprisonment, the Japanese police watched them closely and harassed them. Uncle Kang's health was getting worse in prison and they feared for the worse. They lived on watered-down meals and bean curd dregs. It was hand-to-mouth living. My second Uncle did labor to supplement his farm income. Nevertheless, they tried to hide their dire financial strait from me and let me concentrate on my school work. They gave me a room, placed several lamps, and a mat on the floor. They did not mind my friends dropping in threes and fours at the same time.

Changduk Elementary School was private, set up by Grandpa Kang and other progressive residents of Chilgol. It was part of their patriotic enlightenment and independence movements. During the waning years of Yi Dynasty and after the Korea-Japan Annexation, the wind of education for liberating Korea blew strong. Our leaders had realized that it was because of our poor education and ignorance that we lost our nation; education was the key for regaining our freedom, for modernizing our society. Private schools popped up all over Korea.



Among the leaders fighting for better education were Ahn Chango Ho, Yi Dong Whi, Yi Sung Whoon, Lee Sang Jae, Yu Gil Soon and Nam Goong Ukh. Old traditional schools in the countryside joined the mass education movement. Soon, several thousands private schools were in operation and the Korean people were finally awakening from years of darkness and bondage of feudalism. Even those who used to teach Confucius and Menfius promoted modern education and turned their old-fashioned schools for modern one. Fever of modernizing our educational system swept the nation. (*Lee Wha Rang Note: Photo: Do San Ahn Chang Ho, 1878-1938 - Kim Il Sung respected Ahn.*)

Our nationalist leaders, without exception, believed education held the key for our freedom, and devoted financial resources and efforts to establishing modern educational institutions. Even Kim Gu, who used terrorism to strike fears at the Japanese, who was behind the heroic deeds of Lee Bong Chang, Yoon Bong Gil and other martyrs, started as an educator in Hwanghae Province. Ahn Joon Gun established a school in Nampo and taught there; he was a teacher at first. Best known among the new schools were Ahn Chang Ho's Daesung School in Pyongyang and Lee Sung Hoon's Ohsan School in Jungju. Ohsan was funded by Lee himself. These schools graduated many noted nationalist leaders and intellectuals.



*Lee Wha Rang note: Kim Gu helped found Bong-yang Institute in 1903, where he taught. Kim Gu was once engaged to Ahn Chang Ho's younger sister, who became a Kim Il Sung supporter after Liberation.*

Grandpa Kang told me that he would be honored if his Changduk school graduated just one patriot like Ahn Joong Gun and asked me to study hard and become a fine patriot. I told him that I could never become as famous as Ahn Joong Gun, but I would devote my life to Korean nationalism. Changduk was relatively large in size, as the schools in the region went, and more modern; it boasted more than 200 pupils. This size of student body was not small in those days. Once a school was set up in an area, it became the center of enlightenment activities in the area. Thus, Changduk was an important place for the people of Pyongyang and the surrounding regions. They supported this school in many ways and in whatever way they could.

Baik Sung Haeng donated a fortune to Changduk. She went more by "Baik The Widow" than her name. She was well-known for her charity work in Pyongyang before liberation. She was widowed in her late teens and led a frugal life into her 80s. She became wealthy by saving pennies; she had an uncanny nose for making money in business deals. The coal mine sites of today's Songho-ri Cement Plant used to belong to her. She bought the barren mountain that no one wanted for a song and then sold it to Japanese capitalists many times what she had paid. That is the origin of the coalmine sites. When traitors sold out Korea for a mere piece of paper and the whole country was in shocks, this humble woman, who didn't even know how to use the abacus, managed to beat sharkish Japanese businessmen in their own game, and made a fortune. She became a heroine as the woman who had outwitted Japanese sharks.

People respected BaikSun Haeng for her many good deeds for our nation. Even though she was wealthy, she never flaunted her fortune and she lived a humble, frugal life. She willingly and freely donated her life-long savings to just causes. Her generosity included a bridge and a public meeting hall. Baik Sung Haeng's hall still stands in front of Young-kwang Station.

Several days after I started the school, Grandpa Kang brought me a sack of textbooks for my 5th grade school works. I was much excited and went through the books, opening one by one. I came to a book titled "National Language" in Japanese. The Japanese forced their language on us in order to make us Emperor's subjects. Soon after the military rule went into effect, all official functions, court trials, and schools had to use Japanese, and Korean language was forbidden. I asked Grandpa Kang why the Japanese language was called the "national" language; he was spellbound and could only sigh. I took a knife and scratched out the letter "national" and penciled in "Japanese" in its place. My anti-Japanese sentiment made me do it.

After a few days at the school, I noticed that some kids spoke Japanese in classrooms, streets and the playground. I saw kids teaching Japanese to other kids. Few kids seemed to feel any shame or regret in using Japanese. The kids acted as if Korea was already dead for good and that there was no sense in using Korean any longer. I told those kids struggling to learn Japanese that Koreans ought to speak Korean.

The day I moved to Chilgol, after returning home from Paldo-gu, the village neighbors gathered at the house eager to hear the news. Since I had lived in Manchuria for years, they figured I must be very good at Chinese and wanted hear me speak in Chinese. My Changduk school mates wanted to learn Chinese from me. I told them - "Why use Chinese when we have our own language" and refused to go along.

I spoke in Chinese only once in Korea. One day, Uncle Kang decided to take me on a site seeing trip to Pyongyang. He thought it was about time he and I spent some time together; he wanted to treat me to a fine meal in Pyongyang. After touring the city, we stopped by a Chinese restaurant in West Pyongyang. There were many Chinese eateries there in those days (today's Bongwha Hotel site.) The Chinese hawked their fares in intense competition; they stood out and bowed to passersby pleading, "Please, welcome", "Please, welcome". We picked a shop and entered. The owner asked us in broken Korean what we wanted to eat. I told him Chinese that we would like two plates of stuffed pancakes. He was surprised to hear Chinese spoken and asked me if I were a Chinese student. I told in Chinese that I lived in Manchuria for several years and that I had managed to pick up a word or two. The Chinese owner was impressed that such a young boy could speak Chinese so well; he was elated to hear a Korean speak Chinese so well; he was visibly moved and had tears in his eyes, thinking of his own home in China. The Chinese restaurateur brought out our pancakes and other dishes we did not order; he insisted that we ate them and we obliged reluctantly. He would not even think of getting any money from us, not even for the pancakes we ordered. Uncle Kang said on our way home that his treat had turned into my treat; he told everybody in the village about my adventure.



My wish to be enrolled in Kang Yang Ok's class was realized. Kang Yang Ok quit Soongsil School and got a job teaching at Changduk shortly before I moved to Chilgol. Kang was forced to quit his education at Soongsil because he could not pay his tuition. He was extremely poor and once he had to send his wife, Song Suk Jung, away to stay with her family. His in-laws were unhappy that their son-in-law was not smart enough to support his own spouse. "There are many poor people here, but how many of them are as poor as you?", "We thought, once you got married, you would be living a comfortable life". Kang had to beg his in-laws' pardon and retrieve his much harassed wife. Such was Kang's poverty. (*Photo: Kang Yang Ok at graduation*).

We called Mrs. Kang Yang Ok, Aunt Sookchun, because she came from Sookchun, South Pyongahn Province. She cooked us the most delicious meals of bean curd dregs and rice. After Liberation, I met her at a birth celebration of Kang Yang Wook and recalled her dregs meals during our Changduk school days. "Aunt Kang, I still remember your bean curd dreg meals in Chilgol. I cannot tell you how much I had enjoyed and appreciated your meals. I am sorry that it has taken me 20 years to thank you. I wish to thank you now." She said: "I wish I could have served you proper meals of rice; I was ashamed that all I had was dregs for you, and it you who must forgive me", and she cried. She insisted on preparing a sumptuous meal for me, saying "You must allow me to make it up for having treated you so shabbily".

Some time later, she sent me a bottle of "one hundred flowers" wine on my birthday. This wine was made from one hundred kinds of flowers. Knowing of her abject poverty, recalling that she has lived semi-starved for all of her life, without having tasting a single bowl of rice, I could not bring myself to drink her unusual wine. I felt in my bones the sorrow of being stateless; every tree, every blade of grass, every ear of grain appeared many times more precious to me. My teacher Kang Yang Ok taught us Korean nationalism. I was inspired to be patriotic both at home and in classrooms. Mr. Kang took us on many excursions and long-distance picnics.

An excursion to Mount Jungbang in Hwanghae Province was one of the most memorable. After Liberation, Kang Yang Wook became Secretary of the Korean People's Supreme Council and Vice Premier of the People's Republic; we have had many occasions to work together and we often shared our memories of that memorable excursion to the Sungbul Temple at Mount Jungbang. Another memorable event from my Changduk school days is the music lessons of Kang Yang Wook. His music class was one of most popular classes at the school. His musical voice would have made even professional vocalists envious. He would belt out in his clear booming voice "The Marching Song", "The Youth Patriots" and other popular songs of the time, and the room would fall silent hushed. Looking back, his songs instilled patriotism in us. During my anti-Japanese guerrilla war, I often sang some of the songs I learned from Mr. Kang. Those songs - both the words and music - remain fresh in my memory even after so many years.

It was clear that people's livelihood became much worse than it was before I left home. During the planting days in spring, kids from poor farming families had to work in the fields and missed classes. In order to supplement their falling farm income, farmers raised various cash crops such as water guji,

mothers-hearts, and mehssak. On market days, poor farmers sent their kids to sell garden vegetables and buy food items with the proceeds. School kids often stayed home to baby-sit their younger siblings while the adults worked in the fields. Poor kids' lunchbox normally contained millet, Kaoliang and other items unfit for human consumption. Even worse, there were many kids who had absolutely nothing to eat.

In Chilgol and Mangyong-dae, many families could not afford to send their kids to school. I felt sorry for those children who had never seen the inside of a classroom. During vacation months, I taught evening classes for these kids. I started out with a first-grade class on Korean language; Korean history, geography, arithmetic and music followed. This was my first humble attempt at enlightenment.

My friends and I went to Pyongyang often and I had noticed that the people there were no better off than people of Mangyong-dae and Chilgol. Among Pyongyang's population of 100,000, only a handful, mostly Japanese and Americans, lived well. Americans occupied Sinyang-ri, the choicest sites in Pyongyang, and lived like kings. Bonjung and Hwang-gum districts were taken over by the Japanese. In the American "Foreign Village" and Japanese quarters, brick buildings, churches and shops sprang up, while the rest of Pyongyang was turning into an urban ghetto.

Today, along Botong River, we have modern streets like Chulri-ma, Gyonghung and Bong-hwa, and People's Palace of Culture, Pyongyang Athletic Club, Ice Sport Ring, Exhibition Hall, modern high-rise apartments and other sky-scrapers, and it is impossible to visualize what it was like in the olden days. When I attended Changduk, Pyongyang was a city of shacks, made of cardboard boxes and four-by-fours.

In the year I returned home (1923), there was an epidemic in Pyongyang and its adjoining regions. To add insult to injury, unusually heavy snow falls caused floods; the people's sufferings were indescribable. Dongah-ilbo reported that some 10,000 homes, about one half of Pyongyang, were under water during the flood. Today, a 105-story hotel building, Riugyong, the tallest hotel in the world, is going up in Botong River Square. It would be hard for today's young people to believe that our grandfathers and grandmothers lived in shanty hovels and eked out living of unimaginable hardship. Mine eyes have seen the misery and poverty of our forefathers and I made a solemn vow to fight for the working poor of Korea; my hatred of the Japanese imperialist exploiters, Korean landlords and capitalists intensified.

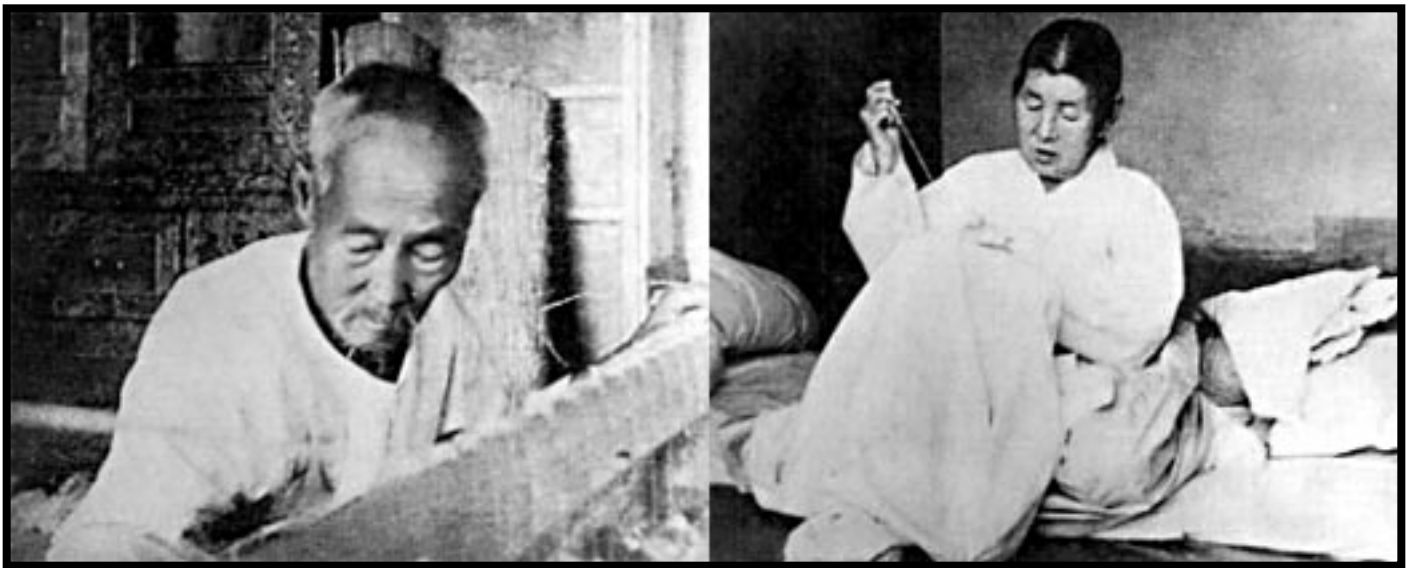
On September 1, 1923, a strong earthquake devastated Japan's Kanto plain. Ultra-rightist Japanese spread rumors that Koreans caused the earthquake and that Koreans were about to riot.irate Japanese hunted down and killed several thousands of the Koreans living in Japan. The news of this massacre reached us in Chilgol and I was enraged. It made me realize that Japan's "Korean-Japanese equality" and "Korea-Japan union" policies were fig leaves covering Japanese contempt of the Korean people: Koreans were no better than beasts as far as Japanese were concerned. I decided to go on the offensive. Japanese police rode bicycles in those days and I buried wooden boards with sharp nails sticking up along the path used by the police; many a Japanese police lost his tires on my nails.

We put together a musical play called "Thirteen Collection"; this play had 13 players on stage singing

and each kid carrying a cardboard map of a province. The players danced around and arranged themselves in the shape of Korea with 13 provinces. The play was intended to inspire patriotism and promote hatred toward Japan. We staged this play during the Fall athletic meet of 1924; halfway through the play, a group of Japanese police rushed in and stopped our play. Even a small athletic meet had to have a prior permit from police and even with a permit, you had to have a policeman present. I went to see our teacher Kang Yang Wook and asked him what was wrong with our singing and dancing; I said that we should go on with the play. Mr. Kang and other teachers sided with us and told us to continue our play.

Patriotism ran high even among young school children. It goes without saying that it ran much higher among the grownups. In the Summer of the year I returned to Korea, the workers at a Pyongyang socks plant staged a general strike. Newspapers headlined this strike. I figured that in spite of Japan's "cultural" rule of Korea, sooner or later, the Korean people would rise up on a scale much larger than that of the March First Movement.

I studied for two years at Changduk and had only a few more months to go to graduate when Grandpa Kang gave me the bad news of my father's arrest, his second. The skies fell on me; I shook with anger and boiled with hatred for Japan. My relatives in Chilgol and Mangyong-dae were shocked and did not know what to say to me. I had to make a do-or-die decision, to punish my father's enemy, my family's enemy and my nation's enemy; I had to do something now. I started to pack up my things to leave Korea.



*Grandpa (Kim Bo Hyon) weaving straw mats and Grandma (Lee Bo Ik) doing needle works*

Grandpa Kang and other relatives told me to finish my schooling and then leave next year. Grandpa in Mangyong-dae, too, advised me to stay a few more months to graduate, and by then, it would be warmer for my long trip back to Paldo-gu. But I could not stay there any longer. A misfortune befell on Father and how could I study here as if nothing had happened? I had to go back and help Mother and my young brothers. Grandpa, seeing that my mind was made up, encouraged me to leave right away, saying "Now that your dad is incapacitated, it is your turn to take care of things". I left next day. Grandpa and



Grandma wept; Uncle wept; everyone of the family wept. Uncle Kang Chang Suk came to see me off at the rail station; he wept unreliably; my school friend, Kang Yun Bum, too, wept seeing me off.



Kang Yun Bum was the closest friend of mine from my Changduk school days. I was his best friend and we spent many hours together roaming the streets of Pyongyang. When my train was about to pull out, my friend Kang handed me a lunchbox and an envelop. He said: "We may not meet again and I wrote down a few things for you to read. Open and read it after you leave here". Soon after my departure, I opened the envelop: it had a piece of paper with Kang's writings and three won. No one could imagine how moved I was by that letter and money.

Three won was a huge sum of money for a young school kid in those days. It took a special friendship to give that kind of money to a friend. I took off to avenge my father's enemies but I was ill prepared for my journey; my pocket was basically

empty. *(Photo: Kang Yun Bum).*

Kang Yun Bum came to my rescue with his three won. It was not easy for him to raise three won. After Liberation, Kang came to see me. I thanked him for his money and told him what it had meant to me 20 years ago. He confessed that he had to pull some strings to raise that money. The three won meant more than a million won to me. It represented his deep and pure friendship for me and no amount of money could buy that kind of friendship. Money does not get you friends, but friends get you money. Friends make things possible.

Kang Yun Bum said: "You, General Kim, fought for Korea in the mountains, but I had done very little." I told him we should work together to build a new nation. I told him that one of our most urgent tasks was to build schools for education and asked him if he would take care of some building projects. He accepted the challenge and built a school in Jochon. He asked me to name it and I came out with "Sam Hung", Three Joys - wisdom, virtue and health. Profound knowledge, lofty ethics and healthy body make a whole person. Later, Kang Yun Bum helped build a university. Today, building a college campus is a child's play, but in those days, we had no money, no civil engineers; building a college campus had many difficulties; from time to time, Kang asked me for advice and sometimes he stayed at my home; he and I had discussions late into the night.

Kang Yun Bum was my friend and comrade, who saw me off on the road of independence war. Even today, I vividly recall Kang Yun Bum waving goodbye with tears in his eyes at the Pyongyang rail station. "Sung Ju, I cannot bear parting with you; I cannot help but cry. When shall we meet again? Let's stay in touch no matter how far apart we are. Don't you ever forget our school days together. Don't forget your home, your country." This is what he wrote to me. His friendship energized me and helped me cross rivers and rugged mountains. After 14 days of journey, I arrived late in the evening at Popyong. I got to the ferry station but I could not bring myself to cross Yalu and wandered along the shores. The rivers and the mountains of Korea held me back.

I remembered Grandma and Grandpa rubbing my hands, fixing my clothe, worrying about my journey,

all while weeping. I hated to leave them behind and cross that river in front of me to a foreign land. Bone-chilling winds blew along the border and my mind's eyes saw Korea's rivers and mountains, groaning under the Japanese occupation, begging me to stay. My stay in Korea was cut short to two short years, but I had seen and learned many lessons during that time. Most importantly, I learned the true color of the Korean people; our people are simple and diligent, yet courageous and strong-willed. They are persistent and overcome problems and tribulations. They are keen on fairness and warm-hearted; they fight injustices relentlessly.

Some reactionary enlightenment leaders pushed for self-rule under the Japanese, but the majority of the Korean people - workers, peasants, youth and students - fought the Japanese occupiers with their blood. They taught me that no force on earth can shatter our national pride and iron will for self-determination. I had learned that the Korean people were the best people in the world and that there was nothing we could not do as long as we are properly organized and mobilized.

I saw Korea turning into a Japanese prison under the guise of 'cultural rule'; police and military were building more and more prisons in Korea. I saw Japanese trains and freighters carrying away our national treasures and resources. I was convinced that Japan was our enemy number one; the most cruel and cunning stranglers and merciless exploiters and thieves. The unbelievable sufferings of the Korean people convinced me that armed struggles were the only one way to free our fatherland. I realized that Korea must be freed soon and that we must ensure that Korea remain free for eternity.

Avoiding the watchful eyes of police, I walked away from the ferry pier to Jul-mok. Yalu was frozen there and I would be able to walk across Yalu. Yalu was less than 10 feet wide at that point. Paldo-gu was 10 feet away and my home was in Paldo-gu. My feet refused to get on the ice because I might not feel the soil of Korea again. I turned around and picked up a small pebble and held in my hand tight. I wanted to take a piece of Korea with me; I wanted something that would remind me of Korea. That moment at the Yalu bank was one of the most heart-wrenching of my life. It left a permanent scar on my soul. I talked about this moment at my welcome-home gathering after Liberation; it was the first thing I said.

I slowly crossed the frozen Yalu, humming the Song of Yalu to myself:

*March 1, 1919 was the day I crossed Yalu,  
Every year this day returns but  
I shall not return until my work is done,  
You blue waves of Yalu, rivers and mountains  
Please, tell me when I could return,  
My wish is to free my country and  
even death shall not let me forget this wish.*

I kept on looking back at my motherland with tears in my eyes. "Korea, Korea - I must leave you now. I cannot live without you even for a short moment, but I am crossing Yalu looking for you. Yonder is a

foreign land, but I shall forget you not. Korea - wait for me - I shall return." I hummed the Song of Yalu again. While singing, I wondered if I would ever feel our land again, when would I be returning to the land of my forefathers. I felt sad and determined. I swore that I shall never return until Korea was freed.

# My Mother

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By the time I reached Paldo-gu, it was already dark after sunset. After my uneasy 1000-ri journey, I became tense as I got to the door of our house. I opened the door and found Mother unexpectedly calm and well composed. She hugged me with her arms firmly around me and said, "I could not have done it myself but you have made the 1000-ri journey alone and came back. You are a boy alright." She was happy to see me.



*Mother (Kang Ban Suk).*

After briefly giving her the news from back home, I inquired about Father. She whispered to me that he was OK. That was all she said. I could tell from her expression that Father had evaded a crisis but he was still in danger. I understood that we had to watch out for probing ears and eyes. I saved some of the travel money from Mangyong-dae and bought cookies for my brothers. After handing them the cookies, I was ready to unpack and spend a quiet evening with Mother and my brothers. However, things did not turn out that way.

After serving me dinner, Mother dropped the bombshell on me: she said I must leave right away because Japanese spies were watching us like hawks; she did not say where but I should go to a safer place Father had gone to. Mother had been always soft in talking to me in the past, but her voice had steely finality; she was in effect kicking me out with no regard to the fact that I had walked 1000 ri through winter

storms and in bad need of rest. What kind of mother would kick out her own son she had not seen for two years in the middle of a cold night, after a 1000-ri journey? On top of that, Mother told me to take my brothers with me!

I was dumbfounded. I did not know what was happening. All I could say was: "Mother, what are you going to do?" She replied: "I will wait here for your uncle, who went to Sinpa. When he is back, I will take care of things here and see you. You must hurry and leave now." Mother told me to go to Roh Gyong Doo's place in Lim-gang; she said we must sneak out without being seen or followed. She had arranged a sleigh-ride for us with Song Sip Jang. Song was more than willing to take us to Lim-gang. Song's real name was Song Byong Chul, but he went by his nick name Song Sip Jang - Song the Boss - because he liked to boss people around. My brothers and I arrived at Lim-gang safely on Song's sleigh.

I have been in many different situations in my life, but this was the most unusual event in my life. Making another journey right after a fifteen-day walk home and without even a night's rest made me think about my mother. She was a gentle and kind woman. Father, being a revolutionary, was ice-cold and strict with us. It was Mother whom I turned to for love and warmth; When I left two years ago to study in Korea, Mother was the only person who was reluctant to let me go. Grandma in Mangyong-dae said Father was more fearsome than a tiger and I could see why Mother kept her mouth shut and went along with Father - Mother did not dare to step on a tiger's tail. I wondered how many times she wept in silence.

If Mother had seen another family's boy of 14 passing by her door at dusk, she would have taken him in and given him hot food and warm lodging. Such was her personality. In one Spring, a young boy from Huchang across the river, suffering from serious wounds on his neck and thigh, was brought in by his uncle. His parents were divorced over family problems and he was being raised by his uncle. His was a sad situation. After examining the boy, Father told Mother that the boy needed a surgery on his leg and that he won't be able to walk for awhile; and so he had to stay with us until his recovery. Father asked Mother if she had any problem with that. Mother said - not at all. After surgery, Mother helped Father clean the boy's festering wound and applied medicine - honey mixed with flour and baking soda. Mother showed no qualms about draining smelly puss.

After several days of treatments, the boy was well enough to go home. His uncle came to fetch the boy; he had only one won for his nephew's medical bills. He told Father: "Master Kim - if I had the money I will be more than happy to pay you any amount you want, but I am just a poor peasant and this is all I have. Please take it and buy yourself a glass of wine,,," - he was choked up and could not finish his sentence. Mother cut in and said: "Nonsense! People with no money don't have to pay for medical treatments. We won't take your money. I just wish that I could have taken a better care of your boy."

But the man insisted that we took his money. The man worked hard to raise that one won; he spent hours collecting wood chips in the mountains and sold them in town. It was a large sum of money for him. Father was hesitant to take his money but he did not wish to offend him either. Father was in a dilemma and turned to Mother for her advice; she said, "We have to accept his money". She took the money and bought five ja of Chinese cotton (*Lee Wha Rang note: 1 ja = 0.33 meter*) for the boy. She said: "Here -

this is just for you for the Spring Festival (*Lee Wha Rang note: "dan-oh, Spring Festival, is celebrated on the 5th day of the 5th Lunar month*). Make some new coats for yourself." Cotton cost 35 jun per ja in those days and Mother paid 1 won and 75 jun for the boy's clothing - 75 jun over and about what the poor peasant paid us.

Even though our family was strapped for money, Mother was not keen on counting money and had no yen for getting rich.

She philosophized: "People do not die for lack of money but people die because of their fate. Money comes and goes; you have it one moment, then it is gone next moment; it is gone one moment, then it is back". Mother was a gentle and kind person. When Father got irritated by some things and faulted her, she calmed him down saying: "I am very sorry, dear", "I will do better next time, dear". Mother never confronted Father direct. When I came home with soiled or torn clothe from horsing around or when I broke something or made a mess, Grandma would scold Mother: "Why don't you ever spank that kid?" Mother would demur: "Well, he will not do it again. There is no sense in spanking him now".

Purely from a woman's point of view, Mother's life was nothing but hardships, one after another. She knew that being a revolutionary's wife was not easy and she stuck by Father. Mother had little time together with Father for any semblance of normal family life. Father was away doing independence work most of the time, and Mother had to tend her family all by herself. The year when Father worked teaching in Kang-do was probably an exception and Mother got to see Father almost daily. Perhaps, Mother saw Father often during the one or two years they lived in Paldo-gu.

Father was in jail for several years and even after being released, he was sick in bed for some time. Father moved around trying to dodge police. After Father's death, Mother lost me to revolution and I could not care for her properly. She spent her lifetime worrying about her family's safety. She never got to enjoy life as normal people do. When we lived in Mangyong-dae, she had to care for our extended family of twelve, because she was married to Father, the eldest son. She tended to her husband and in-laws' needs; she cleaned the house, inside and out; she did the family laundry and worked the weaving machine; she worked in the field during the day with no break even to gaze at the sun; feudal customs reigned in those days and being married to the first-born son of a family came with awesome burdens. Her meals were nothing more than food scraped from the bottom of the cooking pot and her bowl of gruel was the thinnest.

When things got really bad, she and my aunt went to a Christian church in Songsan. There is a military academy there now, but in those days, there was a Presbyterian church there. There were quite a few Christians in Nam-ri and the adjoining regions at the time. Many people believed that they would go to Heaven if they followed Christ's teachings; Jesus would save them from their misery on Earth; faith in Christ would give them a better life after death. Children attended church services with their parents. The church membership grew rapidly. Occasionally, the church gave candies and free books to the kids, and hordes of kids went to the church on Sundays for the gifts.

Occasionally, my friends and I went to the church in Songsan, more for curiosity than faith in Christ. The

preacher's sermons, intended for grownups, were way over my head and the solemn rituals were too much for a restless boy. I found church services boring and attended them only occasionally. Once I asked Father, while eating a corn taffy Grandma gave me - "Dad, this is Sunday, are we going to the Church today? Church services are no fun for me." Father lectured me: "Going to church is up to you. There is nothing, really, in a church and it is OK not to go there. You must have more faith in our nation and our people than in Jesus Christ. Serving our nation is more important than serving God." When I attended school in Chilgol, the school was funded by Christians and we were expected to attend religious services. But I managed to stay away. I thought Christian doctrines were too far off mark to suit our misery and problems; even though Christianity had many things to offer as far as humanitarianism was concerned, it had little to offer for Korean independence.

Ideologically speaking, Father was an atheist, even though he graduated from Soongsil, which taught theology. Father had many Christian friends and associates. Some people think that I must have had Christian influence in my childhood. The fact of the matter is that I have received many humanitarian helps from Christians, but not any religious help. I have influenced Christians' ideologically but not vice versa. I see no contradiction between Christian doctrine of 'peace on earth and good will for all mankind' and my 'juche' doctrine of self-determination for all mankind.

I went to the Songsan church only when Mother went. Mother attended church meetings but she was not a believer. Once I asked her: "Mom, do you go to church because there is really God in that church?". She smiled, shaking her head sideways: "I go to church not because anything is there. What will I be doing in Heaven after I die? To be honest with you, I go to church to rest from my toils at home." That made me feel sorry for Mother. Mother was so tired from her household chores and often dozed off during sermons; when the congregation stood up shouting "Amen", she would wake up. There were times when the "Amens" did not awaken her and I had to shake her awake.

One evening, my friends and I were passing by the funeral home located by a hill near Mangyong-dae. The home was a place where the village funeral hearse was stored. When I was a kid, I was scared death of that funeral home. When we were about to pass by the place, one of the kids screamed - "Hey, there is a ghost coming out of there!" We thought we saw something, too, and took off running for life. I did not notice that my shoes came off my running feet. Losing one's shoes was like losing one's fortune. I dared not to go home without my shoes. I stayed at a friend's house that night and recovered my shoes next morning. When I told Mother what happened, she said: "Sung Ju - next time you pass by that place, sing. Singing scares away ghosts". Since then I sang when I walked by the funeral home, and I was no longer scared.

Mother was normally gentle and calm, but she was a tigress when faced with enemies. The police who arrested Father in Bongwha-ri, came back several hours later to search our house. They turned over every thing looking for hidden documents. Mother was angry at the police and tore out clothes, saying - "Hey, look all you want". The police gave up the search and left.

Such was my mother. That night, when Mother told me to leave with my brothers in Paldo-gu, was cold and windy. Winds howled strong as if they were about to blow away the forest and wild beasts roared in

the dark, cold forest. Once again, it reminded me of the misery of a stateless vagabond and I felt sharp pains in my soul. I held my two brothers, shaking with cold and fear, close to me and rode in the sleigh on the icy road along Yalu to Lim-gang. I realized that revolution was no picnic and that Mother's love did not grow on trees.

All three of us got under a heavy quilt and shivered from the cold weather. It was pitch dark and my young brothers were sacred and clung tightly to me for dear life. We stayed over at Ohgu-bi on the Korean side of Yalu that night and arrived at Lim-gang next day. It turned out that Roh Gyong Doo was the same person who had helped Father when we lived in Lim-gang. He used to visit with father to talk politics. He owned a lodging, where we stayed. He treated us as if we were some royalty. The lodging had seven guest rooms and we were given the second room, the most quite one. There was a kitchen between our room and other quest rooms. The rooms were full of people on their way to Korea and people coming from Korea. They usually stayed over at this lodging. Roh Gyong Doo's lodging was in effect a dormitory of Korean nationalists.

Roh Gyong Doo was an ardent Korean nationalist; he was gentle but firm and strong-willed. He funded nationalists with income from his lodging. He was not rich and sold meals, eking out a hand-to-mouth precarious livelihood. That was his labor of love for our revolution. I don't know for sure how he got to Lim-gang. I heard that he was caught smuggling contrabands in order to raise money for our fighters. He escaped to Daedong and hid out there until things settled down, and moved to Rim-gang.

He was originally from Ha-ri, Goh-pyong Myon, Daedong County. Ha-ri and my home place of Ham-ri is separated by Soon-wha River. Roh was a honest, hard-working farmer in Ha-ri, until he met Father. After getting connected with Father, Roh hit the road for independence work. He was seldom home and his family hated him for neglecting his farming. At low tides, he would cross Soon-wha to visit with Father in Nam-ri. It was probably because of this kind of relation with Father that Roh treated us like his own.

Roh helped me and my family in many ways. He was God-sent for us. We were his guests for about one month, during which Roh gave us all he had without any hesitation and always smiling. Once, he used his own money to pay for our long-distance phone call to Father in Musong. Thanks to Roh, I got to talk on the phone for the first time in my life. Father wanted to hear from all of us and we took turns talking to Father - my two brothers and Mother.

Earlier, Mother and Uncle Kim Hyong Kwon had joined us in Lim-gang as she said she would. Upon their arrival, Mother took us out to a sight-seeing walk. She took us to a Chinese restaurant and treated us to dumplings. She asked us questions: at first, I thought she just wanted to feed us special food to make up for our month-long separation, but it became clear that she wanted us away from the lodging so that we could talk freely. She asked us if we had seen any suspicious characters looking for us at the lodging; how many people knew that we were staying at Roh's place; she told us not to tell any soul that we were Kim Hyong Jik's boys; we were to keep our mouth shut until we moved to our new home.

Mother was always on the lookout; she slept with one eye open and jumped at the slightest noise



outdoors. She did not want any harm coming to her sons; and I could imagine the agony she must have felt when she had to let us go on that day when I returned from Korea. She was a true mother of Korea, a true revolutionary.

There is no love more permanent, genuine, warm and beautiful in this world than the love of a mother. A mother's love makes her spankings and tongue-lashings painless. A mother's love makes her do the impossible for her children. There is no price tag on a mother's love.

In my dreams today, I see Mother in those days of agony.

# Father's Legacy

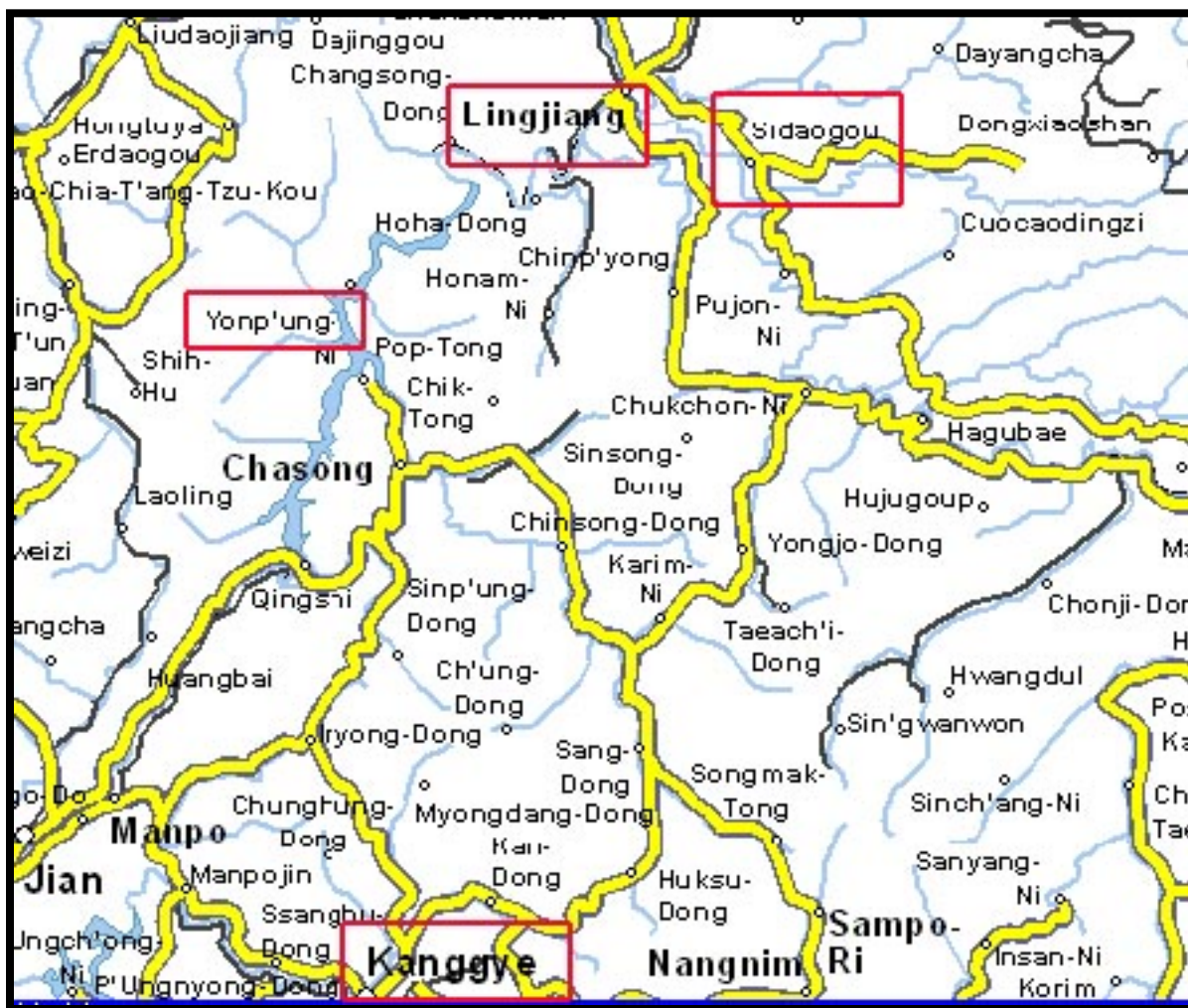
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Mr. Whang, who used to visit us in Paldo-gu, played several key roles in Father's life. He was the man who saved Father from Japanese captors at Hoochang. Father was arrested in Popyong while trying to contact certain Korean nationalists there. He went to a secret meeting place near a noodle shop, but Japanese police were waiting for him. The man who tipped the Japanese was one of our neighbors, a traveling salesman named Son Seh Sim. Son came to our house often and hanged around Father, calling him Master Kim. Father had no inkling that Son was a Japanese spy.

My father's arrest was kept secret by the Japanese in order to snag Father's associates. The Japanese Governor General in Seoul dispatched special investigators to North Pyongahn provincial police headquarters to interrogate Father. Akisima, chief of Popyong police station, was ordered to escort Father to Siniju. The reason why Akisima was so eager to move Father from Popyong was because there were many nationalists in that area and he was afraid that they might try to free Father by force.

No visitors were allowed to see Father at Popyong station and so, we did not know that he was being moved to Siniju. Mr. Whang told us about the move. "Mrs. Kim - I will hire a lawyer to defend your husband even if I have to sell all of my properties. I will follow your husband to Siniju and take care of him there; so you don't worry about a thing. Please give me some bottles of sake, if you have them." Mother gave him bottles of strong liquor and some dried pollack fish. He put them in his sack and trailed Akisima's party, which left early in the morning. Akisima stopped at a Youngpo-ri eatery for lunch, and Mr. Whang caught up with them there.

Mr. Whang sat down next to Akisima and took out the drinks and dried fish, offering some to the Japanese fellow and his Korean helper. At first they declined, saying they were on duty escorting a prisoner, but Mr. Whang persisted and they accepted his drinks and fish. Mr. Whang said that even a prisoner got to eat and talked the Japanese into taking off handcuffs from one of Father's wrists. Mr. Whang was a heavy drinker and he kept on drinking and offering drinks to the Japanese, who fell asleep after a few drinks, at which moment, Mr Whang sprang into action and took off with Father.



*Lee Wha Rang note: Kim Il Sung's father escaped at Yongpo-ri (Yonp'ung ni on the map). Kim Il Sung's family moved from Joong-gang (across from Lingjiang = Lim-gang), to Lingjiang, and then to Paldo-gu (Sidaogou on the map). Not shown on the map is the Korean town of Popyong situated on the opposite bank of Sidaogou. Yalu is a small stream at this location, not far from Mount Baiktu. Kim Il Sung's government moved to Kanggye during the darkest hours of the Korean War.*

They ran toward Byojok peak across from the eatery. They reached its summit when it began to snow. Soon the police woke up to find Father gone; they found the tracks and ran after Mr. Whang and Father shooting at them. In the confusion, Father and Mr. Whang got separated, never to see each other again. After Liberation, I looked for Mr. Whang everywhere but to no avail. The man who risked his own life to save Father was nowhere to be found. Mr. Whang would have died for Father, a true friend and a comrade. Father could not have survived without devoted friends like Mr. Whang. Father's friends often joked that Father was born with friends. Father's devotion to Korean independence made him many friends and comrades.

During our retreat in the 1950 War of Unification, Lee Guk Roh told me about my father's escape. Early in the Fall of 1950, the People's Republic sent out cabinet members to countryside to promote collection of taxes in kind. Lee Guk Roh, minister of state without portfolio at the time, was sent to North Pyongahn Province. By the time, Lee had completed his task, we began a general retreat and I was in

Kanggye. One day, Lee came to see me on the pretext of making a report on state matters. He told me about the eatery in Youngpo-ri. After completing his job in Hoochang-gun, he headed out toward Kangye with the county security chief and made a stop at the eatery. He found the eatery was still there. Kanggye and Hoochang were in North Pyongahn Province at the time.

Lee Guk Roh spent most of his life in South Korea and abroad until he came north just before the Republic was established. Hearing about the Yongpo-ri eatery from Lee was totally unexpected. In those days, few people knew about my father and the Yongpo-ri eatery's significance. I was curious and asked Lee: "Master Lee, how do you know so much about my father?". Lee said: "I had heard about Master Kim Hyong Jik twenty years ago. Someone in Jirin told me about your family. When this war is over, I would like to write a book about your father, but I am hesitant to undertake such an important task." Lee was normally quiet and cool, but he was visibly agitated on that day. Lee and I left the room where the cabinet members worked and took a walk outdoors for an hour or so.

Whang Baik Hah, Whang Gui Hyon's father, told Lee about my father. At that time, Lee represented Sin Gan Association in Manchuria. His mission was to provide assistance to the Korean victims of the May 30 and August 1 riots. Lee met Choe Il Chun in Simyang, who told Lee to look up Whang Baik Ha in Jirin. Lee followed Choe's suggestion and met Hwang, who helped Lee with his rescue efforts and also told him about my father. At that time, Youngpo-ri was part of Hoochang gun, an important base of my father's activities. Sin Gan Association sent Lee to Manchuria because he had spent many years there doing educational work. Lee was an instructor at an independence army training school in Naedosan. Lee also taught at Baiksan in Musong and Dongchang in Whanin Province. Therefore, it was not surprising that Lee had heard about my father.

Lee told me angrily: "That county security chief did not know a thing about the eatery and I yelled at him that it was the county's shame. I told him to make sure that the eatery was preserved as a historical site." Lee Guk Roh said that unless the new generations learned about their forefathers' revolutionary activities, they would become lazy bums and I am afraid that our cadres are not doing a good job in teaching our revolutionary history".

At a time when the two-year old Republic was fighting for its very existence, when most people had written it off as a goner, it was mind-lifting to hear Lee talk about upholding our revolutionary tradition. I could never thank him enough for his timely inspiration. I felt as if the spirits of those patriots who had died for our country spoke to me in unison, "You must fight on to win, You must defend our country to the end". When people were saying that the Republic was finished, Lee Guk Roh's inspirational talk reinforced my resolve to fight on.

After getting separated from Mr. Whang, Father wandered around the mountain for some time and luckily, ran into an old man living in a hovel built into a cave in Gaduk-ryong near Yongpo-ri. He asked the old man for help. It turned out that the old man originally came from Junju, Chul-ra Province, the place of origin of Father's. The man was happy to meet a distant relative and proud to hear that Father was a revolutionary. The cave man, Elder Kim, helped Father all he could. He hid Father in a bush near his cave. Father's feet and knees, the lower part of his body, were frostbitten by then. He hid in the bush

exposed to the elements for several days unable to move his limbs. Elder Kim fed father rice balls and baked potatoes, and kept him alive.

Akasima was severely reprimanded by his superiors and the provincial police sent special units to hunt down Father. They blocked all crossing points across Yalu and sent out search parties combing the area. For some reason, they did not bother with Elder Kim's cave; Father picked his hiding place wisely. Elder Kim went to Yalu looking for ways for Father to cross it undetected. The river was not quite frozen over yet and there was no way Father could walk over the thin ice. But Elder Kim devised an ingenious method for Father. He showed Father how to use wooden poles to crawl over the half-frozen river. The poles spread his weight over a larger area and made it possible for him to cross the river. The poles could also be used to float in case he fell through the ice.

Father followed Elder Kim's instructions and crawled across the river on the poles Elder Kim gave him. It was indeed a smart way. But it took Father a long time to make it across the river and by the time he had made it, he got third-degree frostbite from crawling on his belly on the wet ice. A year later, Father would die from his frostbite among other ills. He made it to Toroz, where he was treated for his frostbite, after which Gong Young and Park Jin Young took him to Musong. These two were members of Muson detachment of Jang Jin Young's Jungyi Bureau army.



This Gong Young was the very same Gong Young Father met years ago through Oh Dong Jin as I mentioned in an earlier section. Gong Young was originally from Byuk Dong county. He joined Byokdong Youth Corps and became an independence fighter under Father's tutelage. He and Father had met many times earlier and he often came to our house and was fond of me, calling me "Hey, Sung Ju". I called him "Uncle Gong" then, and years later. Comrade Gong after he became a communist and joined our rank. After Father passed away, Gong Young, based in Malri Province, came to see us once a week. He brought us rice and firewood, and comforted my widowed mother. Gong's wife came with him carrying a load of wild greens on her head. He mourned Father's death for a long time. (Photo: Gong

Young).

Father and his two escorts ran into a near fiasco on their way to Musong. Near Mangang-gyong, they were captured by Chinese bandits, mah-juk. In those days, bandits roamed the countryside at will and warlords fought for supremacy everywhere. Many people became bandits because there was no other way to survive, it was their last resort. Furthermore, Japanese imperialists infiltrated bandit groups and manipulated their leaders to use them against Korean nationalists; in addition, Japanese organized bandit groups of their own. Chinese bandits pillaged villages and robbed unwary travelers. If things did not go in their way, they chopped off hands and even heads of their victims.

Father tried to talk his way out of his predicament. He told his captor bandits that he was a medical doctor, but the poor ignorant bandits thought Father, being a doctor, must be rich, good for ransom, and did not budge. Father pleaded that he was a poor doctor and that he charged just enough to live; he

offered to give free medical treatments to any member of the bandit gang. Father told the bandits that he would not inform the police about them and so it would be safe for them to let him go. But Father's pleadings fell on deaf ears.

Seeing that Father's tactics did not go anywhere, Gong Young went into action. The bandits fell into happy stupor after smoking opium. He snuffed out the lamp and helped out Father and Park Jin Young; he then killed the bandits with martial arts and rejoined the group. This was a dramatic scene more intense than any action drama one can possibly dream up. Father had talked about Gong's heroism in this incident. Gong Young was willing to die for his comrades; he was a true revolutionary and a comrade-in-arms.

Several days later, Father met Jang Chul Ho in Musong. Until a few years ago, Jang worked as a surveyor but he became a fearless warrior and commanded a company of an independence army. He was concerned about Father's poor health and arranged a safe house for Father to rest until he regained his health. Other people advised Father to do the same. Father was, in fact, in a poor shape; Father probably was aware of his poor physical condition. It was winter, about the coldest winter for that region. But Father refused their hospitality and pushed on.

Commander Jang Chul Ho escorted Father to his destination. Father went to Whajun and Jirin. The reason why Father went there, in spite of his poor health, was to help unite anti-Japanese groups in those areas. Father knew that there were dissensions in the ranks of Korean nationalists. As people became more enlightened in political ideology, political parties had become dominant in governing bodies. Both Bourgeoisie and communists formed political parties to promote their political beliefs. The October Revolution in Russia gave rise to communist movements in nations of Asia; communist parties popped up everywhere in Asia. The new way of thinking spread throughout the world and the era of political parties dawned over Asia. Thus, in 1921, the Chinese Communist Party was born.

In this kind of atmosphere, our progressive leaders vigorously laid ground for a political party to lead our independence movement. Political parties must be based on ideological principles and a firm foundation of beliefs; their aim should be to promote what they believe in. Without these essentials, no political party can last long. It is true that bourgeois democracy had a bright chapter in Korea's history and led our nationalist movement at one time, but they failed to organize an effective political party and their nationalist movement got fragmented and fizzled. In this vacuum, communists stepped in and took over the leadership of our nationalist movement. Communism spread like a wild fire among our progressive nationalist leaders and many of the progressive bourgeois leaders joined the communist camp. The communist manifesto of the Kwansun Conference effected formation of communist leadership and mass organizations. Oh Dong Jin led the effort to put the manifesto into practice. Oh Dong Jin's camp of nationalists had many converts to Leninism-Marxism. Japanese imperialists tagged this new locus of power in Korea, "the Third Power".

It was mid-1920 when Father went to Jirin via Muson after escaping from the Japanese police custody. Our nationalists were split into two camps: a progressive camp for communism and a conservative camp

opposed to changes. These two camps were tearing up our nationalist movement. Father judged that the time had come for an effective political party. The Korean nationalists in Manchuria in 1920s were primarily concerned with freeing Korea; they concentrated on armed activities, education and welfare on the basis of self-determination. They had no political party to lead them. Father saw this weakness and worked to unite all progressive elements of Korean nationalists, armed groups and other Korean organizations, by providing political leadership.

For this purpose, Father convened a meeting at Uhmahang in Jirin Province in early 1925. It was held at Park Gi Baik's (Park Il Pa's father) home. Attending the meeting were Yang Ki Tak, Hyong Ha Jook, Oh Dong Jin, Jang Chul Ho, Goh Won Ahm, Kwak Jong Dae and other nationalist leaders. They agreed that a united front was needed and unanimously passed a resolution to form a political party. They debated over details of the party. According to Lee Kwan Lin's recollection, the attendees spent a great deal of time on the name of the party; some wanted to call it "Korean Revolutionary Party" and others wanted to call it some other names, and there was no consensus on the name. It was agreed to call it "Korean Revolutionary Party" for now and move onto the party platforms and political agenda.

One year after this meeting, they met with representatives of progressive Catholics in Korea, social welfare organizations, and nationalists in Siberia and established the Korean Revolutionary Party whose platforms included "eliminating private properties, dismantling extant national structure and building a unique communist nation in the world". Father was too ill to attend this meeting.

Father toured Buksan and Kangnam parks and met with leaders of Sinahntun Youth Corps, after which he returned to Muson and phoned us, still in Lim-gang, to join him in Musong. We left Lim-gang and on the way, met two nationalist fighters wearing straw hats sent by Commander Jang Chul Ho. The straw hats were disguises to evade Japanese spies. We got on the horse wagon they brought and headed to Musong. Father walked some 40 ri to greet us at Daeyoung. Father was pale from illness but he broke out in smiles as soon as he saw us. Seeing Father, all of my worries seemed to melt away. I ran to him pulling my brothers. They climbed all over Father and opened up their sorrows of the past two years before I could say a word. Father patiently listened to them while staring at me. He said: "Water in Korea must be good; I have stayed awake many nights worrying about you since the day I sent you back to Korea, but now I see that you have grown up quite a bit". He was happy to see me again.

That night we stayed up all night trying to catch up. Father told me about Elder Kim, from our place of origin Junju, and Mr. Whang who helped him escape and saved his life. That night, Father told me about Gong Young's heroism that saved Father from Chinese bandits. While telling him about my days in Korea, I said that I would never cross Yalu again until Korea was freed. Father was impressed and said that was a proper attitude for a true son of Korea. He told me that Changduk was not the end of my education on Korea and that I must continue to learn about Korea even in Manchuria. Several days later, I was enrolled in the First Elementary School in Musong. Jang Wool Wha was my best friend at this school. He was Chinese and his family was the second or the third wealthiest family in Musong. Jang's family had scores of private armed guards. His family owned most of the ginseng farms in Donggang, Musong Province. Every Autumn, the Jangs loaded up ginseng on horses and mules and sold the plant in the surrounding regions. The Jang's ginseng caravan stretched ten ri heavily guarded by a private army.



Jang Wool Hwa's father, though rich and famous, hated imperialism and was a good-hearted patriot of China. So was his son. Later during my years of war against Japan, the Jang family came to my rescue at moments of crisis.

Among the Koreans at the school were Goj Jae Bong, Goh Jae Ryong, Goh Jae Lim and Goh Jae Soo. I was close to them. Father clanked up his nationalist activities in Musong; at that time, China's reactionary warlords began to curry favors with Japanese imperialists and obstructed Korean nationalist activities. It was a tough time for Korean nationalists. Japanese police tortures in Pyongyang and Popyong finally caught up with Father and his health began to deteriorate fast; but Father kept on fighting. Father hung up a new signboard "Murim Medical Clinic" on the front of our house at Sonam-mun street. Father was in no condition to cure other people; he needed more medical attention than his patients. But, Father hit the road again.

Everyone was against Father's trip. Jang Chul Ho, Gong Young, Park Jin Young and other nationalists counseled him not to go; Uncle Hyong Gwon and I begged him not to go, and even Mother, who had supported his every move in the past, was against Father's decision this time. Father left Musong anyway. Korean nationalists in Naedo mountains could not work together and split into several competing camps. Father knew of this situation well and went there to smooth things out. Jang Chul Ho arranged a guide to lead Father to Ahntong. Father and his guide packed up hulled millet and a jar of bean pastes to eat on the road and tucked in an axe and a pistol. They had to walk through a wilderness of several hundred ri. They went through many hardships on their journey. They built bonfires during the cold nights and slept leaning against trees with no blankets to shield them from the elements. Father coughed all night long and his guide could not get much sleep.

Father's coughs persisted even after he returned from Ahndong. Several days after his return, he ran around trying to reopen Baiksang School. The school was established years ago by Korean émigrés, progressives and peasants of Musong during the era when fervors for private schools for national enlightenment were intense. The school had many years of fine records. In the beginning, the school was basically a small study room, no larger than the traditional classics study room, Songwha suh-dang, Father attended in Mangyoing-dae. The school was the size of two rooms of a farm hut. It was forced to shut down for lack of operating fund. By the time we moved to Musong, there was an active fund-raising campaign to reopen the school. The pro-Japanese Chinese authorities refused to reissue the school license, and Father was trying to change their mind.

Father was a firm believer in education and had built a number of schools. Father and Jang Chul Ho had student desks built by carpenters and took them on a horse wagon to the school. Although he hung up a sign, "Murim Medical Clinic", he had little time for his medical practice and spent most of his efforts for the school. He became the honorary principal of the school but did not teach any class. He did, however, give occasional lectures and organized extra-curricular activities. Father wrote the Korean language text used by the school. He met Park Ki Baik (Park Bum Jo) in Samwon-po, Yuha Province who printed the textbook for Father. Father composed texts, which were taken to Park for printing. His texts were sent out to various sites in Manchuria. The printing was done professionally using an offset press and Korean schools in Manchuria used textbooks printed by Park.



Father held several meetings on education in Musong. He dispatched able people to Ahndong, Hwanchun, Donwha, and Jaingbaik regions. He wanted schools and adult-education centers established in every Korean villages in Manchuria. Yukyoung School in Dukhyong-ri was established at that time. Lee Jeh Woo and Kang Don, cadres of the Korean Revolutionary Army of later days and members of XX, were both graduates of the school.

After getting Baiksan School restarted, Father traveled to various towns in Manchuria to promote nationalist movements. His main obsession was uniting the factions among the nationalists. The task of redirecting our nationalist activities toward political party movement faced resistance and many obstacles, and Father devoted his remaining years working on this task. The sundry groups of Korean nationalists operating in the three provinces of North East Manchuria formed the "Three Province" alliance, but in each of the three provinces, there was an independent organization that did not see eye to eye with other provincial organizations; so-called "Justice", "New People" and "Truth" organizations failed to work together and drew criticism from the Korean people.

Father convened a conference of Korean nationalists in August 1925 in Musong. He realized that forming a united front was the most urgent task facing Korean nationalists at that moment and invited nationalist leaders from China and Korea. The Committee to Promote a United Front was formed at the meeting. I believe Father planned to evolve this committee into a full-fledged political party that would lead Korean nationalists. Father apparently knew that his days were numbered and worked more feverishly than ever before.

Father passed away soon after. Starting in the Spring of 1926, Father became bedridden. Many people came to see Father after hearing about his situation. When I came home from school, I would see many pairs of strange shoes at the door step. They came with medicine supposed to cure Father's sickness. They comforted and cheered him on. Even the poorest visitors brought a Ginseng root or two. However, Father's condition was beyond any help and no medicine or medical treatments could do much for him. Spring brought life to millions of plants and animals but it had no gift of life for Father. I lost my interest in school and one day, I was on my way to school but turned around and returned home; I was worried about Father and wanted to be with him.



*Lee Wha Rang note: Kim Sung Ju, aka Kim Il Sung, circa 1926*

Father was angry that I did not go to school and said: "Why aren't you at school?" I was choked up and could not utter a word. I sat by him and sighed. He said: "You go back to school now. You cannot be like this if you want to become a great man". He made me return to school. One day, Oh Dong Jin and Jang Chul Ho came to Father from Jirin. Oh Dong Jin's effort to form a united front in accordance with the Musong manifesto was not going anywhere and they wanted Father's advice and, of course, they wanted to comfort Father, too. They were unhappy about those nationalists who opposed a united front. Jang Chul Ho, known for his hot tempers, argued angrily that those conservatives should be left out and ignored. Father, after listening to the two men, grasped their hand, one by one, and said: "Oh, no. Don't do that. We must form a united front, no matter what. Unless we get united and fight together, we would never gain freedom for Korea".

After they departed, Father told me about the factional fights during the Yi Dynasty, explaining that factionalism brought down the nation and lamented that today's nationalist leaders had not learned this lesson. He was concerned and sad about the situation; he said unless we got united, there would be no enlightenment, no freedom for Korea; he told me that the Korean people must rise and put an end to factionalism in Korea once and all. Every time I sat next to his sickbed after school, Father told me many things: he told me of the things in his life.

One of the lessons Father gave me in his sickbed was the Three Resolves a revolutionary must have: "A revolutionary must be ready for three things, no matter where he might be - he must be willing to starve to death; he must be willing to be beaten to death; and he must be willing to freeze to death. He must never abandon his faith in revolution". These words are etched on my mind.

Father gave me a lesson on friendship: "Man should never forget his childhood friends. Man relies on his

parents while at home, but once out of the house, he must depend on his friends. Friends who stay with you through life or death hardships are more dear than a man's brothers." He gave me examples of this lesson. Father's revolutionary life began with struggles to find and make friends. There were nationalists who had started by acquiring money and six-shooters, but Father's struggles began with recruiting friends and comrades. Lifelong friends do not grow on trees; just as one would dig through tons of earth for an ounce of gold or a diamond, one must diligently search for and cultivate friends. Thus, Father traveled all across Manchuria and Korea in search of friends, and Mother had to help out. If you are sincere in working for the nation and people, you will find many good friends. The main thing is one's intent and mind. You don't need money to make friends; all you need is a common cause. You cannot win friendship with one million won, but you can with one swallow of shared drink or one shared potato.

Father was neither a capitalist nor a power-monger, but he had many friends and if one were to measure one's wealth in terms of the friends he had, he would be the wealthiest man. Father did everything for his friends and his friends did everything for him - even to the point of dying for him. It was thanks to his friends, that Father managed to stay alive so long and could achieve so much for Korea. In his deathbed, Father told me that the thing he missed the most was his friends and told me to make many friends: "Friends who are willing to die for friends are the only friends." I remember this very well.

Mother nursed Father, in bed struggling for his life, as well as she could. Her dedication would be hard to replicate or surpass, but even her super-human efforts could not save Father. On June 5, 1926, Father took his last breath, several thousands of ri far away from his home in Korea, under a tiny roof in a foreign country, still mourning the sorrow of losing his nation

Father told Mother: "When you and I left home together, we said we would be back together after achieving independence, but it appears I won't be going back with you. When Korea is freed, you follow Sung Ju home. I am very sorry that I won't be with you. Please, take care of Sung Ju. I wanted to send him through a middle school, but I won't be around to see to it. I don't know how, but you must see to it that our son, Sung Ju, finishes middle school, even if you have to live on bowls of gruel. Sung Ju then should take over and take care of his brothers." That was Father's last will and testament.

Father handed Mother the two pistols that he carried with him always and said: "After my death, please bury the guns and give them to Sung Ju when he is old enough to join the fight for independence." He then turned to his three sons and gave us his last instruction: "I am leaving this world without realizing my dreams. I trust that you will realize them for me. Don't you ever forget that you are sons of Korea. You must recover Korea even if your bones are smashed and your body is cut to pieces." I started to cry with all my heart. My father's death had, once again, reminded me of the misery of losing one's nation and all the pent-up angers and sadness exploded at the moment Father died.

Father dedicated his body and soul to Korea's independence. Even when his body was broken from repeated tortures and freezing, he pushed on and led his comrades and people onward. When he was exhausted, he leaned on canes, when starved, he ate snow; he kept on marching, never looking back or faltering. Father was never part of a group or a faction. He never sought any power; his sole interest was

restoration of our statehood and Korean people's happiness. Father never hungered for wealth or personal gains. When he had money, instead of buying candies for us, he saved it for a school organ. He put his fellow countrymen ahead of him, the nation ahead of his family. He walked, in snow and sleet, all his life, to save Korea. He lived an honest life of a human being and an honorable life of a revolutionary.

I had never heard Father talk about our family affairs. I inherited many things on ideology and politics from Father, but there was no money or tangible assets of any sort he left behind for me. Even the items on display at Mangyong-dae belonged to Grandpa and Grandma - none of the items came from Father. The ideals of ji-won, righteous aspirations, Three Resolves, and Friendship and two revolvers were the entirety of my inheritance from Father. I could not have asked for any more valuable inheritance than this.

My father was buried in a public funeral. On the day of funeral, Sonammun street was filled with mourners, who came from north and south regions of Manchuria; many friends and comrades and former students came to pay last respects. Father's former patients came in streams to see him. The Musong Provincial Governor came and lit a funeral incense and prayed for father's soul, making deep bows with tears in his eyes.

Father was buried in Yangji village on Singwha riverbank, some 10 ri from Sonam-mun. Father had spent many days there. He gave medical treatments and political lessons to the residents of that village. He was like a member of their family. Thus, Father's body rested among his friends. The ten ri road from Sonam-mun to Yang-ji rang with cries of sorrows on that day. Father's bier was carried by his closest comrades, who wept. Korean women in Musong wore white bands on their hair for fifteen days to mourn Father's death.

That was how I lost Father. In one swoop, I lost a father, a teacher and a leader. Father brought me into this world and nurtured me to become a revolutionary. His passing was a huge shock to me. It left a large gaping hole in my heart. Many times, I sat alone by Yalu and wept looking at my fatherland across the river. Looking back, Father's love for me was unusual. He started to talk about Korea as soon as I was old enough. He was extremely strict but immensely considerate; that was his way of loving his sons. But he was gone, and I had no one, did not expect to find anyone, to love me or lead me as Father had done.

Father left me, but his legacy lived on; his legacy got me out of my mourning and put me on the path of revolution. Righteous Aspirations, Three Resolves, Friendship and a pair of revolvers - this legacy from Father pointed me in the direction of revolution amidst the abyss of despair, fear of the unknown and one of the worst tragedies in my life.

# The Whasung Military Academy

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After Father's funeral, several of his close friends got together to discuss my future. It was decided that I should attend Whasung Military School in Whajun and I left home in mid-June 1926.

Korea was in turmoil again in the aftermath of the June 10th anti-Japan mass demonstrations which was organized and led by the newly emergent Korean communists. March First Movement had ushered in communism in Korea and from that time on, communists became vanguards of Korean independence movement. The March First showed that Korean bourgeois could not lead us to independence, and many Korean nationalists turned to political organizational activities following the world trend of that era. Marxism-Leninism spread fast in Korea.

In the year following March First Movement of 1919, a worker's organization, Laborers Mutual Assistance Association, appeared in Seoul. It was followed by farmers' unions, youth organizations, women's organizations and other mass organs for the working poor. Under the leadership of these groups, mass struggles against exploitation of the working class and Japanese imperialists began in 1920. Dock workers staged a general strike at Pusan Harbor in 1921 and it spread to Seoul, Pyongyang, Inchon and other industrial centers; farmers staged campaigns against Japanese landlords and evil Korean landowners. Students walked out classrooms en masse protesting colonial education and demanding freedom on campus.

Japanese imperialists hid their military rule under the cover of "cultural rule"; they empowered pro-Japanese traitors to maintain a facade of equal treatments of Koreans; they allowed a handful of Korean newspapers and magazines to be published. But the Korean people did not buy into the Japanese schemes and continued to fight for Korean independence. Labor and other mass movements against Japanese imperialists were in need of a political party for leadership and so, in April 1925, the Korean Communist Party was established in Seoul. During this time periods, proletarian political parties emerged in Europe as well. The Korean Communist Party lacked any guidelines that met the needs of the Korean people; the Party was fractional and lacked grass root support of the people. Even though the Party failed to lead the mass movements, its formation was an important step in labor, farmer, student and other mass movements and anti-Japan activities in Korea.

The last King of Yi Dynasty, Soon-jong, died during this period of mass unrest. His death rekindled Korean people's hatred of Japan. Upon hearing the news of his death, Koreans put on mourning clothes and wailed, men, women, children and adults alike. The King, although deposed, was the last symbol of Yi Dynasty and his passing put an end to the Dynasty. The Korean people's sorrow over losing their nation erupted into a rage. Students marched singing and the mass wept.

*Farewell, Changduk Palace, for ever, for eternity  
To the north Manchuria, I am going, to lonely foreign lands*

*When I could return, I know not  
Long live my 20 million fellow Koreans.*

Korean people's cries hit the Japanese occupiers like a bomb. Japanese mounted police and troops viciously scattered mourning crowds with sabers and clubs. They beat and slashed unarmed Koreans mourning their last king. The Japanese attacked little elementary school children with clubs. The Korean people were not allowed to weep over their lost nation or their king. Such was the naked truth of Japanese government's "cultural" rule of Korea. It was a brutal military rule under the cloak of a 'civil' cultural rule.

Japan's brutal barbaric suppression of the Korean people mourning their king's death added fuel to their simmering hatred of Japan. The Korean Communist Party seized this opportunity and secretly planned a mass demonstration against Japan on the day of King Soon-jong's funeral. However, a fractional group within the Party leaked this plan to Japanese police and the Japanese security forces mounted massive suppression campaigns. In spite of this, Korean patriots pushed on with the preparation.

On June 10, King Soon-jong's bier passed through Jong-ro, Seoul. Tens of thousands of Seoul citizens hit the streets of Seoul, shouting "Hurrah for Korean Independence!", "Go home, Japanese troops!", and "Korean intendance workers must unite!" Seven years of suppressed anger at Japan exploded in "Long live Korea!" all across Korea on that day. Even 12-year old school children joined the march. The unarmed marchers fought pitched battles with heavily armed Japanese.

The June 10th uprising failed because of the treachery of the factionalists within the Korean Communist Party. The movement was savagely put down. While the toadism of the Korean bourgeois was one of the root causes of March First Movement's failure, fractional in-fights among Korean communists in the early days were the main reason why the June 10th movement failed. The Whayo faction within the Party led the uprising while the Seoul faction sabotaged it. Most of key leaders of the Korean Communist Party were arrested after the June 10th incident.

The June 10th incident exposed the truth about Japan's 'enlightened, cultural' rule of Korea. It hid Japan's brutal, hideous suppression of the Korean people. The Korean people demonstrated that they would continue to fight for freedom no matter what. If the Korean Communist Party had been united and provided more effective leadership, the June 10th uprising would have expanded into a pan-Korean mass movement. The failure of the June 10th incident showed that unless we formed a united front, communism and nationalism in Korea were doomed.

When I learned about the June 10th, it struck me odd that the its organizers had not learned any lesson from the March First and repeated the same error of mounting a peaceful demonstration. There is an old saying, "One thousand days to train a soldier, one day to fight". One must organize, educate and train the people over a long period of time in order to mount an effective uprising. The organizers of the June 10th demonstration did not have any adequate preparation and placed unarmed people in front of armed enemies; it was inevitable that the leadership's ineptitude resulted in tragedies.

When I thought of the tens of thousands of our patriots who were butchered by Japanese like so many sacrificial lambs and not much to show for their heroism, I became so angry at the inept leaders who led their followers to the killing fields for no tangible gains, that I stayed up all nights planning revenge. I swore to myself to get the most out of my study at Whasung; I swore not to forget Father's legacy, Mother's wish and the Korean people's expectation.

Whasung was a 2-year military-political academy founded in early 1925 by Jung-yi-bu. It trained independence army officers. Korean nationalist leaders, patriots and enlightenment activists had founded schools for mass education; they also founded military academies. Among the military academies were: Sinhung Training Center in Yuha Province, Sipripyong Officers School in Wangchun Province, Sosaha Training Center in Ahndong. Yang Ki Rak, Lee Si Young, Oh Dong Jin, Lee Bum Suk, Kim Gyu Sik, Kim Jwa Jin were among the nationalist leaders active in military education of our patriots.

*[Lee Wha Rang note: Jung-yi-bu, a quasi-government, was established in January 1925 as united front of Jirin Residents Association, Yisung-dan, Kang-jung-dan, Workers Friendship Association and other nationalist organizations in Manchuria. It was based in Whajun (wha-jien in Chinese), Jirin Province. It was led by Lee Tak (president, later defected to the Japanese), Kim Yi Dae (primer minister, later defected), Ji Chung Chun (military), Oh Dong Jin (finance) Kim Ho (civil affairs), Lee Jin San (justice), Hyon Ik Chul (foreign affairs), Kim Chul (security) and Jang Sun Uhn (industry). It was demolished by the Japanese in December 1927. ]*

Whasung accepted students from the ranks of Jung-yi-bu soldiers with combat experiences. Once the enrollment size was set, each combat unit was allocated so many candidates to select. Upon completing the two-year curriculum, the graduates were assigned to various duties based on their class performance. The school occasionally accepted students from other sources, but such was an exception. Many young boys aspired to enter this school. Today, few of my classmates from Whasung are alive.

When Father was alive, I did not have to worry about my upkeeps or my family's livelihood. But after Father's passing, I had to worry about my own and my family's financial affairs. Amidst of my sorrow and agonizing over Father's death, I spent days thinking about how I could live up to Father's legacy, how to continue my education. Father in his deathbed asked Mother to send me to a middle school, but Mother had no financial resources to do so. She supported her family by doing laundry and sewing for other people, and she could hardly save enough money for my tuitions.

After Father died, Uncle Hyong Kwon, who had worked as Father's medical helper, lost in effect his job. By the time Father died, there was hardly any medical supplies left to sell. It was under these circumstances that Father's friends recommended that I should attend Whasung Military Academy. Before his death, Father told Mother and Uncle to make sure that I got at least middle school education and that they should write letters to his friends asking for assistance. Accordingly, Mother wrote to some of Father's friends; we could not survive even one day without our friends' compassionate aids in those days. After Father's funeral, some of his friends got together to map out my next move.



Oh Dong Jin said that he had sent a letter of recommendation to Choe Dong Oh on my behalf so that I could attend Whasung, that learning military science would be good for me; "Your father used to say that just talking about it will not get us freed from Japan. After you finish the school, we will pay for your education, if you want higher education. Make sure you study hard at the school." They wanted to train me; they were keen on educating the next generation of leaders to follow in their footsteps. (*Photo: Oh Dong Jin*).

I accepted Oh Dong Jin's suggestion. I was appreciative of their concerns for my future. Their idea of sending me to a military school gibed well with my ambition to fight for Korea. I believed that only military means could free Korea of Japanese, and that only military leaders could lead our fight for independence. My dreams were about to come true. I believed that Whasung Military Academy was the ticket for my fight for Korea and started to pack my bag.

Once, a world leader asked me why I, a communist, had attended Whasung, run by conservative nationalists, a reasonable question. I had not yet started my communist career when I entered Whasung. At the time, my grasp of Marxism and Leninism was superficial. My communist reading was limited to two booklets, "Socialist Ideals" and "Lenin's Life Story"; I read about the advances being made in the Soviet Union and admired the Soviets; that was the extent of my education in communism at that time. I was surrounded by more nationalists than communists. Most of my school teachers taught more nationalism than communism. We were in the threshold of a new revolutionary era, but we could not ignore the achievements of Korean nationalists for the past 50 years.

There were many fine youth at the Academy, which offered free education in political science and the art of war. It was an ideal place for me because I could complete my middle school education there and at the same time I would be trained to become more effective freedom fighter. Frankly speaking, I looked forward to attending the school; two years of free lodging and education, with military training added, sounded too good to be true. But once I stepped out of my house on my way to Whasung, other thoughts flooded my mind. I slowed my pace and glanced back. I gazed at Jang-ji where Father was buried and saw Mother and my young brothers still waving at me in far distance, I was overcome with sadness. I wondered how Mother could manage to feed my young brothers by herself in a place like Musong. Mother's admonition, "Don't look back, once you start a journey", rang in my ears and I hastened my pace.

Whajun is about 300 ri from Musong. People with money traveled in style in a hired carriage, but my near-empty pocket did not allow such a luxury. Whajun was a mountain town, located about 50 to 60 ri from confluence of Songhwa River and Whibal River, in Jirin Province. It was one of the key bases of Korean nationalists in south Manchuria. A nationalist in Muson warned me that life at Whasung would be Spartan; he said that independence fighters were short of cash, and so, the living conditions at the school dormitory might be tough. I was used to wearing rags and going to bed hungry, and his warning



did not scare me. I thought how could anything be worse than our days in Mangyong-dae?

The only thing that worried me was how I, a young boy without any military experience, would fit in there with those old veterans? I was comforted by the fact that Kim Si Woo, one of Father's best friends, lived there; Kang Je Ha, another friend of Father's was at the Academy. After arriving at Whajun, I looked up Kim Si Woo, as instructed by Mother. Kim ran the Korean Help Center in Whajun. The Korean Help Center was created by Korean nationalists to provide assistance to Korean in need. Musong, Bansuk, Kwanjun, Wangchun-mun and Samwon had a branch.



Kim Si Woo and Father worked together for many years. He came to China after March First Movement and was active in Rimgang and Dandong. He moved to Whajun in 1924 and set up a rice-polishing business, a grain storage, called "Young Pung Millry". He provided financial aids to independence fighters and was active in mass enlightenment campaigns. He donated food and money to Whasung Military Academy as well as a Korean school in the region. I met him in Rimgang and admired his masculine airs, typical of people in northern regions. He treated me as if I were his own son or nephew. *(Photo: Kim Si Woo).*

When I showed up, Kim and his wife were busy repairing a chicken coup. They had chickens everywhere in their yard. As soon as they saw me, they ran to me shouting my name. Kim Si Woo took me to the Academy. I could smell the order peculiar to rice millers. Whasung Military Academy was located by the Whibal River bank. The school building had a sharp-angled straw thatch roof and bricks wall, typical of village buildings in Manchuria. I spotted the school through Zelkova trees that surrounded the school. There was a large school yard and a dormitory for the students. Both the school building and the dormitory were much shabbier than I had anticipated. But I told myself that what mattered was what went on inside, not what the building looked like. The school yard was the exception - it was large and well-kept. I recalled Oh Dong Jin and Father talking about establishing this school in Paldo-gu. Oh showed up hatless on a cold winter day to see father about the school. Now, I was there at the very school Father had helped to create.

The director, a short balding middle aged and pleasant man, greeted me in his office. He was the famed Yisan, Choe Dong Oh. Choe was a student of Son Byong Whi, one of the 33 leaders of March First Movement, and the third head of Chundogyo, a religion rooted in Korea. After graduating from Son's private school, he returned to his home town of Yiju and started a private school for children of Chundogyo followers. He participated in March First, after which he came to China and founded a Chundogyo school. He had been active in patriotic works. The director regretted that he could not attend Father's funeral. He and Kim went into a long reminiscence of Father.



Director Choe Dong Oh gave me an importance lecture on that day. "Sung Ju, you are here at an opportune moment. Our independence move is in a dire need of new talents. The frontal attack days of Hong Bom Do and Ryu Rin Sik are over. Japanese use new tactics and weapons against us, and we need new tactics and weapons to counter them. Who can do this for us? Young people like you must come out with solutions for us." Director Choe went on to say that the living conditions there were not ideal and that I must bear these hardships for the sake of Korea. He was gentle in his manners and eloquent in his talks.

*Lee Wha Rang note: Photo: Choe Dong Oh (top left, 1892-1963); Yu Dong Ryu; (bottom left, 1879-1950), Choe Duk Sin (top right) and Yu Yi Young (bottom right). Choe Dong Oh died in North Korea after holding key positions for Kim Il Sung.*

*His son, Choe Duk Sin, also worked for Kim Il Sung. Another nationalist, Yu Dong Ryol died of cancer en route to meet Kim Il Sung early in 1950. Yu's daughter, married to Choe Duk Sin, worked for Kim Il Sung.*

That evening, Kim Si Woo invited me to a simple dinner at his house. I was awed to sit with a friend of Father, man to man. I noticed a small table with wine at a corner and figured it was for the adults, but I was taken back when Kim offered me a drink. I did not know what to do, but I accepted the cup with both hands. I had never been offered a drink by a grownup until that time. During Father's funeral, someone offered me a drink, but that was expected in funeral situations. Kim Si Woo treated me like an equal. His tone of conversation with me changed from 'talking to kid' to "talking to friend".

He said: "When I heard of your coming here, I thought of your father a lot. That is why I have this wine for you. When your father came here, he sat where you are sitting now and drank from the same cup you are holding. Today, you take your father's place. Now that your father is gone, you are the head of your family." I took the cup but I could not bring myself to drink the wine. It was a tiny cup but it seemed to weigh a ton, it was heavy with symbolism. It was clear to me that Kim Si Woo was telling me that I was no longer a boy; and that I should act like an adult from now on for Korea's sake. He made a room available for me to stay during my education at the school. He said that he had already discussed this with the Director and I would be staying at his house, instead of the school dormitory. He said Master Kim Hyong Jik in his deathbed asked him to take care of me and he was duty-bound to do so.

This was the way Father's friends took care of me in Musong and Whajun. They were paying back Father's friendship, which was based on their common cause of Korean independence. They helped me

because doing so might help their cause. They expected the younger generation to grow up and carry the torch. I renewed my vow to study hard and grow up fast.

My schooling started next day. Director Choe took me to the classroom. The students thought I was a boy warrior and expected to hear a heroic tale; they thought I was perhaps a battle-worn boy messenger from a combat unit, a son of a battalion. There were about 40 students in the room, none as young as I was. Most of them appeared to be in their 20s. There was even a bearded father. They could have been my elder brothers or uncles. When the director told the class that I was Kim Hyong Jik's son, they clapped their hands wildly.

I was assigned to a desk in front by the window. Seated next to me was Park Cha Suk, a soldier from Company A. He would whisper to me the background of our instructors before their classes began. Lee Woong was his most respected instructor. Lee taught military science and was a member of the general staff. Lee attended the famed Wampao Military Academy and was quite a character. Lee's father ran a large drug store in Seoul and sent him ginseng regularly. His only fault was that he tended to be officious, but he knew his subject well and could do nothing wrong.

Park Cha Suk told me that the school offered classes in Korean history, geography, biology, mathematics, athletics, and world revolution. He wrote out our daily schedules for me. Years later, Park Cha Suk betrayed me to my greatest sorrow, but our friendship started as classmates. That day, Choe Chang Gul from Company Six visited me at Kim Si Woo's house with 10 of his comrades. Apparently, I gave them a good first impression. They were curious about their young boy classmate and wanted to find out more about me.

Choe had a large scar on his forehead. He had thick dark eye brows and a large forehead. He was tall and muscular. He would have been a handsome fellow but for the scar. I was impressed by his manly mannerism. He said to me: "I hear you are only fifteen, but you act much older than that. Tell me which battles were you in? How did you get in the school?" I answered honestly and truthfully. When I said that Kim Hyong Jik was my father, they were impressed. They asked me questions about conditions in Korea. After fielding their questions, it was my turn to ask him questions.

I wanted to know about Choe's life in the army. Choe began with how he got his scar. He always talked in third-persons, instead of saying "I did that", he said "Choe did that". Thus, he told me: "Choe was a soldier in Yang Se Bong's army at the time; I caught a spy and was escorting him to Gaewon. That stupid Choe dozed off at a lodging after walking several tens of ri. The damned spy managed to free himself and hit Choe with an axe and escaped. Fortunately, Choe was not killed but Choe had to wear the scar as a badge of shame. If you are not careful, you will end up like Choe." For two hours, we talked. During my lifetime, I have made several thousands of friends, but Choe was the only one who talked in third-person.

Later on, I learned more about Choe's past. His father ran a small lodging in Muson. Choe's father expected him to help out, but Choe left the house and joined an independence army. His grandmother visited him several times trying to talk him into returning home, but Choe rebuffed her saying that at a time when our nation needed him, he could not sit around at a lodging.

I met at the school Choe Chang Gul, Kim Lee Gap, Geh Young Chun, Lee Jeu Woo, Park Gun Won, Kang Byon Sun, Kim Won Woo and many other patriots. Every evening, they came over to see me at Kim Si Woo's house. I was glad to have so many classmates coming to see me; it was unexpected. That was how I got to be friends with people who were five to ten years older than I was; that was why I had so many older comrades during my guerrilla days.

After a few days, I found that Whasung Military Academy was in a much worse shape, financially, than I had anticipated. The school's assets amounted to some old desks and chairs and some beat-up exercise machines. But that did not discourage me. Even though the building was small, dank straw-thatched, its students were bright and shiny; even though it had little money, it was rich in students. I was happy to be there.

# Disillusion

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Soon I got the daily routines at Whasung Military Academy down pat. After a couple of weeks of study, I found the course works not so taxing at all. My classmates found mathematics difficult. One day, I solved a lengthy fourth-order problem with ease. Several of my classmates could not solve it even after numerous hints. That was understandable because they quit schooling in order to fight the Japanese years ago and they were quite rusty. After my day at the blackboard, these bearded old men asked me for help with math problems. They paid me back with their life stories, many of which were memorable; they also helped me with tough military exercises that exceeded my physical stamina.

We shared our inner thoughts and deep friendship evolved. Initially, some people feared that I, a young kid among the grizzled war veterans, might become a burden to the student body, but I was able to carry my own weight and got along well with my old classmates. I had no complaint as far as this went.

As time went, the classes became boring and I began to lose interest in school activities. The school was established and run by Father's friends and I felt some affinity to it, but I found its curriculum outdated leftovers of the old ideas and methods. Although bourgeois nationalist movement was several decades old, the school curriculum accepted blindly the old ways and did not analyze or critique any of the old practices. The bourgeois nationalist leaders, even after decades of having led our nationalist movement, had not written any guidelines or textbooks for new generations. Various nationalists leaders and army commanders came to our school and gave speeches blowing hot air about 'fighting for independence', without being specific on how we could become independent. No one talked about organizing the people and forming a united front. Combat tactics and strategies taught at the school were unimpressive and outdated. Korean history lessons were based on royal archives and the world history was pure bourgeoisie history. All I was getting at the school was obsolete nationalism and military training tainted with old Yi Dynasty army tactics.

My instructors were ardent nationalists and talked much about being anti-Japanese and self-determination, but they were awfully short on practical realistic methodology. The school invited war veterans to share their exploits with us. Most of them talked about individual acts of terrorism much like those of Ahn Joon Gun, Jang In Whan, Kang Yu Gu, Lee Jae Myong and Nah Suk Ju. The school was called "Military Academy" and its mission was to train military officers, but it had no bullets or real guns and we used toy rifles made of wood in our military exercises. My classmates complained, "How in hell, can we defeat the Japanese with what we have?"

One day, a student asked our military instructor, "When will we have modern weapons?". The instructor sighed and said, "Our army command is doing its best to raise money to buy weapons in America, France and other countries. You will have modern weapons soon, I hope." The army could not get hold of a few rifles here and now; instead, it was hoping for a miracle in a Western land tens of thousands of ri away.

Every time I was made to run with sand bags wrapped around my legs, I had to wonder, "How on earth, will this help me defeat the Japanese?" Years ago, Jun Bong Jun's Donghak peasant army of ten thousand men was defeated by a Japanese regiment of 1,000 men or so at Ugumchi. Japanese troops had modern rifles. The Tonghak army outnumbered the Japanese ten to one and it could have easily squashed the Japanese and marched to Seoul, if only they had modern weapons and effective commanders.

The Righteous Army (yibyong) was no better than the Donghak army in weaponry. Although some yibyong soldiers had modern rifles, the great majority carried spears, bow and arrows and ancient firearms. Their fight was muzzle-loaders against Japan's Model 38 rifles. Yibyong fighters struggled to light their guns with matches, while Japanese rifles fired more than 10 rounds per minute. One cannot imagine the frustrations of our fighters and tragic consequences of such uneven contests. In the beginning, Japanese soldiers ran away when they heard our muzzle-loaders boom, but soon they found out that the Korean guns were relatively harmless and began to laugh at them. Yibyong commanders, mostly from the elite, yangban, wore traditional horse-hair hats and bulky ceremonial robes in battle fields. Japanese mowed down Korean troops with machine guns and modern artillery.

Japan's military had expanded in size and weaponry many fold since the days of Righteous Army. I wondered how the military training offered at my school could help us defeat Japanese tanks, artillery, warship and warplanes. Running around with sandbags was no way to get ready to fight an imperialist army backed by modern heavy weapons mass produced.

The thing that disappointed me the most was the backwardness of political indoctrination at the school. Old-fashioned Korean nationalism was the only 'ideology' allowed at the school. Some students believed in restoring the old monarchy; some believed in American-style democracy. These ideas came up in our political science class. Most students regurgitated lecture materials, toting capitalism, without any critique. I was not happy with this kind of robotism. The course had nothing on Korean independence or problems facing the Korean people. It was mere presentation of stale materials by the text and instructor and rote memorization and regurgitation. There was no emphasis on applications of any political science theories to Korean problems.

During a class debate, I popped a question, "What kind of society should Korea be after independence?" A student answered without hesitation that Korea should be capitalistic, because, he said, the reason why Korea was eaten up by Japan was that Korea was ruled by feudalists bent on isolation, while Japan and other nations became capitalist societies; in order for us not to repeat this mistake, Korea must become capitalistic, he argued.

A number of my classmates asserted that the old royalty should be restored. None of my classmates pushed for democracy or proletarian society wherein the working class would be the boss. At the time when national liberation movement was changing from pure nationalism to communism, the political science class was still in the 19th century. Some said that it was premature to talk about what kind of political system Korea should have before we achieved independence; it was a waste of time, they said. Such debates firmed my belief that the school's education was anachronistic, to the say the least. Talking

about bringing back the defunct Yi Dynasty or introducing capitalism in Korea sounded so unreal.

I could not remain silent any more. I stood up and said: "Korea is in no condition for European-style bourgeois revolution and also Korea should not bring back the old royal rule. In both capitalist and feudal societies, rich people get richer by exploiting the poor working class. We should not establish any such unjust society in Korea. Looking at industrial advances and ignoring evil aspects of capitalism is wrong. Restoring our old monarchy is a nonsense. Who would want the royal family, who sold out our nation, back in power again? What have the kings done for Korea? All they did was to skin our farmers alive and vanish loyal subjects who had dared to speak out. After liberating Korea, we must establish a society with no class exploitation, no oppression of any people, and enough food and shelter for all working people."



Many of my classmates nodded in agreement. Who would be against establishing a society in which all people are equal and no class is oppressed or exploited? At the end of the class, Choe Chang Gul grasped my hand and said it was a good debate and liked what I had said. He laughed saying: "You did a good job of preaching communism without mentioning 'communism'". (*Photo: Choe Chang Gul*).

The shortcomings of Whasung Military Academy was symbolic of the shortcomings of Korean independence movement in general. I got to learn more about our nationalist movement while studying at Whasung. In those days, our army did nothing but fractional infighting. In early 1920s, Korean armed forces battled and won significant victories over Japanese troops in regions inside Korea and Manchuria along Yalu. But now, our armed forces hunkered down in safe areas and concentrated in raising money for their comforts and easy life.

Even the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, which called itself "government of all people of Korea", was manned by "self-determinists", "independentists", and other factional groups; the "government" was in name only and its leaders were more interested in selling their virtues than fighting for the Korean people. The "government" leaders came and went; in one year, the entire cabinet was reshuffled twice. Such was the shameful state of that "government". The United States and other nations used illegal means to prevent our petition for freedom from being discussed at the Paris Peace Conference; but, in spite of this fact of history, Shanghai Provisional Government sent, shamelessly, petition after petition to the very same nations that had denied our petition at the Paris Peace Conference. They even went to the extent of spending a fortune on expensive ginseng and other gifts for an American Congressional delegation that toured Shanghai and occupied Korea. The Shanghai Government virtually ceased to function in the 1920s for lack of operating funds and became dependent on Chiang Kai Sek for its upkeep.

Many of the nationalist leaders, who came from wealthy families, preferred to life under Japanese to life under the working class. They opposed and feared proletarian revolution much more than Japanese

imperialism, and deserted our nationalist movement and joined Japanese military and police in droves. They turned from patriots to traitors and fought against our independence, working as toads and running dogs of Japanese occupation force. These traitors danced to the Japanese tune of "self-rule" under Japanese, "self-enlightenment" and "self-development"; they pushed these deceptive Japanese programs in Korea and helped Japanese Empire to extent its power into other regions.

The wind of "reformist" treachery touched Whasung Military Academy as well. My room at Kim Si Woo's house teamed with visitors wanting to discuss politics with me. Kim Si Woo's library included many books on Marxism and Leninism and I got to read them and so, I could talk about communism and socialism with some degree of authority. When I was in Musong, I got to read "Lenin's Life Story", "Socialist Ideals" and some other books, but I had many more books to read in Whajun. Previously, I merely read the books without giving much thought what to the authors were writing about, but now, I spent more time thinking about how what I read could be applied to solve problems in Korea. I had many questions on how to carry out Korean revolution.

Japan must be beaten and Korea must be freed, but how? What should be our targets and what methods should we employ? What path should we follow to achieve socialism and communism in Korea? I was not sure and I wanted answers. I read books looking for answers. I read and reread paragraphs on colonialism ten to twenty times. Colonialism was one of the hot topics in my room. We talked about the world news and the USSR the most. My visitors were deeply affected and stayed late in my room for more information. They were more interested in learning about the new ways of thinking than hearing about restoring monarchy, capitalism or reformism. Many of my classmates became more keen on political ideology.

Whasung Military Academy forbade any mention of Lenin or the Bolshevik October revolution. My faith in Whasung began to crumble and I became more and more disillusioned.



# "Down With Imperialism" Association

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Whasung Military Academy's anachronism convinced me that I must find a new way of fighting for Korea. A dozen or so persons, armed with a handful of rifles, crossing Yalu to kill some miserable police and collecting a few won now and then, would never get Korea freed. It was clear to me that there must be a better way and that we must find it soon. My friends agreed with me. Most of my classmates, however, refused to go along and they either opposed my notion or sat on the fence.

Whasung students were not allowed to read communist publications. One day, I took "Communist Manifesto" to class and my friends warned me that I should not have done it. The school was quite strict on leftist documents on campus and punished violators severely by expelling or reprimanding. But I was not afraid of getting booted out for reading a book I believed in. I found "Communist Manifesto" in Kim Si Woo's library, which had many other books on communism. I saw from the books he had that Kim Si Woo was deep into communist ideology, in tune with the trend in the world at the time. I was unhappy that the school did not allow us to read books on communism. I did not understand why the school forbade us from seeking new ideas and delving into them. I read communist books in defiance of the school authority. There were so many students wanting to read the books, I had to set up a check-out/check-in rule in order to meet the rising demand.

They followed my rule and books were checked out and returned on time with the exception of Geh Young Chun. Geh was excited easily and not punctual and careless about hiding communist books from the school authority. Geh kept Communist Manifesto for ten days and I asked him to return it because there was a long line of people waiting to read it. Geh begged me for two more days, because he was on to something in the book. Next day, Geh did not show up in the morning classes and sneaked out the dormitory. He was nowhere to be seen in the lunch room. We found him engrossed reading Communist Manifesto hiding in a bush by Whibal River. I warned him that reading the book was OK, but he should not skip classes to read it.



Geh promised me that he would be more careful, but he brought the Manifesto to the history class and got caught reading it by the instructor. The instructor took the book away from him and took it to the school director. They traced the book to me and Kim Si Woo's library; the history teacher was sent to Kim Si Woo's house to raise hell. He told Kim Si Woo that the Academy counted on Kim for support and it was unbecoming of Kim to allow the students to read leftist publications. He asked Kim to stop lending his books to the students. He then turned to me and said, "Sung Ju, you better watch out". *(Photo: Geh Young Chun).*

I was offended by my school's action. I said to Kim Si Woo: "To be well-rounded, man must be broadly educated. Why does the school deny its students the opportunity to study fresh ideas widely accepted in the rest of the world? Books on Leninism and Marxism are being sold

everywhere and any literate person can get them. I don't understand why Whasung has to be the only place where the books are banned." Kim Si Woo sighed and said that it was the policy of the general staff and the school, and therefore, it was well over his head. He said there was nothing he could do to change it. Man must be judged mainly by his ideology and so must an educational institution by its pedagogical philosophy. Whasung Military Academy was trying to solve modern problems with outdated methods.

This incident exposed to the student body that there was a group of students studying Marxism-Leninism on campus. The authorities threatened expulsion or severe punishment, but that made open-minded students more curious about the new ideology; and a rapidly increasing number of students came to me asking for books to read on communism. Father, when he was alive, told me to pick my friends carefully and to make as many friends as possible. No matter how righteous and magnificent plans one might have, without friends who would share life and death together, nothing could be achieved.

Among the many students I met, there was a Lee from Company A. He was bright, able and mild mannered; he was well-liked by everyone. The only fault he had was that he was an ultra-conservative, ideology-wise. He was the guy who talked about restoring monarchy in our political science class. We were cordial to each other; there was no friendship between us - until the day our school had a football match with Korean Model High School. Lee collided with a player of the other team and injured a leg, while leading a charge. I stayed with him at the dormitory and nursed him for ten days. He opened up to me and said that he was wrong to believe in monarchism at a time when every nation was moving away from it; he said, "You are right, Sung Ju. Korea must become a society in which working people get enough to eat and live well; we must kick out the Japanese and start enjoying life."

I asked Lee, "Do you think we can defeat Japanese with what they teach us here? They say Japan is the fifth power of the world and if so, how can our army, which can hardly scrounge up a few lousy guns for us, defeat Japan by itself?" Lee answered, "Well, the best we can do is to be strong physically and shoot straight. What else can we do? We must follow what the veterans tell us." I told him he was wrong to think like that and I said: "We cannot achieve independence that way. I have been studying Marxism-Leninism for a better way. The Japanese imperialists today present a distorted picture of communism because they fear it. Some Korean nationalists shun socialism; some wealthy nationalists say socialism is bad. But there is no reason why we, from poor labor and farming families, should go along with them and say socialism is bad, without first studying it. If you want to become true patriots, you must have thorough understanding of Marxism-Leninism." Lee was moved by my little speech and, after some reflection, asked me if he could borrow a book on socialism. I told him that he should concentrate on getting well and I would be happy to lend him a book after he was healed up.

Winds of socialism swept through Whasung and no authority could stop it. All students except a few die-hard old-time nationalists were affected by the new way of thinking. I organized book-review meetings for progressive students. We met alternately at Kim Si Woo's house, Kang Je Ha's house and Whibal river banks. When we met at Kim Si Woo's library, he left us alone and made sure that his family or his guests stayed away from the library. Often, he sat outside and stood watch for us. I appreciated his silent support for what I was doing.

Kang Je Ha was Father's friend and his son was a close friend of mine. Kang Je Ha was a socialist in heart and allowed us to meet at his house. He was one of those nationalists who did not shun communism. In fact, he pushed communism on me when I visited his house. He said, "I am too old to change, but you boys are still young and should fight to win using communism, if necessary." His encouragement meant a lot to me. Kang had several books on communism. Looking back, I see that our book-review meetings were quite advanced; we had touched upon various major issues in Korean revolution. Through open debates, we were able to draw consensus among the participants.

During a debate at Kim Si Woo's house one day, Lee showed up hobbling on crutches and asked me for that book I had promised. He said: "I could not stay in bed while you guys study new ways of doing things. I don't want to be a straggler." That was how Lee became a member of our clique. To a capitalist, making money is the hobby, but for me, making friends is the hobby. The pleasure of finding a gold nugget pales in comparison to finding a true friend. My lifelong unending campaign to make friends began at Whasung Military Academy.

Once I had gathered enough friends around me, I searched for ways to organize and bind them together. If my memory serves me right, I disclosed my thoughts on getting organized at a meeting held in late September. I gave many reasons why we should be organized, "In order to liberate Korea and establish a nation for the working poor, we must walk a long difficult path ahead of us. If we get organized and fight valiantly together, the victory will be ours. After we are organized, we will rally the mass around us and awaken them; we will mobilize the mass to liberate Korea." My audience liked what they heard and wanted to get organized right away. I told them that we must do some homework before we get organized; that we must recruit more people to join us. They accepted my proposal and made a list of prospects. Each prospect was assigned to a member to be worked on. Some members worried that forming a new group might add to factionalism already in place. I told them: "Our organization will not be like any existing nationalist or communist organizations. It will be of an entirely different character. Its main purpose will be revolution, not factionalism. Liberation and revolution will be our primary objectives."

After some preparations, we met on China's Foundation Day, October 10th, to pick our organization's name, its charter, its platforms and its scope of mission. One week later, on October 17, 1926, we met at Kim Si Woo's house to formalize our organization. The meeting was held in an unheated, cold room in a solemn atmosphere. After 60 years, I still remember the energy and spirit that filled that room. All of us were filled with excitement. As the organization took shape, I thought of Father's Korean People's Association. Father spent years working hard in order to form the Association, walking tens of thousands of ri to bind together his friends scattered all over. After forming the Association, he devoted all he had to achieve Association's objectives; he died working for the Association. Father passed the torch of his unfinished revolution to his children. Father's will "you must free Korea even if your bones are broken and your body sundered" came to my mind and I took the first step to realize Father will. I was profoundly gratified.

We incorporated Father's ideals in our platforms. I still remember the shiny faces of those present at the meeting; Choe Chang Gul, Kim Lee Kap, Lee Je Woo, Kang Byong Sun, Kim Won Woo, Park Gun Won, Lee Jong Rak and Park Cha Suk; the latter two betrayed me later on. We all swore to dedicate our life to our cause. There were many eloquent speeches; there were some less eloquent ones, too. I, too, gave a lengthy speech. I proposed to name our organization "Down with Imperialism" Association, TD in short (*Lee Wha Rang note: TD is an acronym for 'tah-do jeh-guk-ju-i dong-maeng', ???????*). TD was anti-imperialism, pro-independence and pro-freedom; its primary mission was to free Korea from Japan and the toiling mass from exploitation; its members were youth of Korea's new generation with faith in socialism and communism; it was a new genre of pure revolutionary political organization.

Although TD was formed to establish a socialist, communist society in Korea, we feared that some nationalists might consider it too far left and so, we chose our organization's name "Down with Imperialism". We were careful not to offend the nationalists in power. The name was adopted unanimously. The charter and platforms I proposed were also accepted in toto. TD's mission was; first, to bring down Japanese imperialists and free Korea; second, to establish a socialist, communist nation in Korea; and third, to bring down other imperialists and establish communist states all over the world. We adopted resolutions for practical steps for our movement. We distributed printed copies of our charter and platforms to the attendees.

Choe Chang Gul nominated me to be the leader of the organization. After the meeting, we ran to the banks of Whibal River, singing and holding hands; at the river bank, we swore allegiance to our cause and made a vow to fight together to the end for our Fatherland and revolution. I was so excited that night and I could not sleep. To be frank, we thought we had conquered the world; we were drunk with youthful euphoria. Nothing can compare with the elation we felt that day.

In those day, there were many communist organizations that had impressive credentials. Our organization was a mere infant just born; our membership was negligible compared to theirs; TD had left no mark anywhere. Nevertheless, we believed that ours was a fundamentally new way to doing things and that we would succeed where other had failed. TD was not a faction that branched out an existing organization; its founding members had no association with any of the existing political organizations. TD was a brand new organization build from scratch. It was brand new, fresh as fresh snow, clean and refreshing as cool spring water.

Its founding members were easy-going capable people. They could speak well, they could write well, they could compose songs well and they could fight well. They had many talents. They were first-class young man and women of new Korea, and they rallied around me; we could do nothing wrong. The founding members worked together and broke through numerous barriers and obstacles on the path of our revolution. They were vanguards of Korean revolution. Kim Hyok Gul, Cha Kwang Soo, Kim Lee Kap, Kang Byong Sun, Lee Je Woo and many members of TD perished heroically for Korea. Regrettably, there were some members who betrayed us.

Today, none of the founding members is alive. Many of the members died at prime of their life in

nameless battlefields in foreign lands, never to enjoy the fruit of their struggle and sacrifice. They laid the foundation of the Korean Workers' Party and new Korea. The Party's roots go back to our "Down with Imperialism" Association. The Party's charter and platforms are based on those of the Association. The day the Association was formed was the day the Korean revolution, a self-reliant independent movement, took its first step.

After Liberation, Choe Il Chun (aka Choe Hyong Woo) wrote articles on TD; "A Brief History of Korean Revolution Overseas" and "TD and Kim Il Sung". Several years after TD was formed, Korean Revolutionary Army and Korea Restoration Association were formed, and twenty million Korean people heard our battle-cries; tens of thousands of them joined our swelling ranks. I am proud of TD and its accomplishments.

# In Search of a New Stage

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Whasung Military Academy was flat broke and feeding its 100 or so students was an enormous burden. The Jung Command, jung-yi-bu, was responsible for the academy but it was having financial problems itself and failed to live up to its obligation. Whatever meager funds it collected from its supporters, the Command had to support its administrative, military and civil branches. The Command was in fact more a government body than a military organ.

Students were sent out on fund-raising missions in teams of 20. They went back to their former unit, picked up their arms and then visited other units begging for money for two months at a time. Upon return of a team, another team was sent out. The funds taken in by students teams were barely enough to sustain us for a few months. In addition, student delegations were dispatched to the Command located in Jirin for long past due funds.

Once, Director Choe Dong Oh sent an instructor to the Command HQ, hoping to get funds for the oncoming winter. He came back empty-handed. It turned out that the commander of Company C took the money earmarked for the school. This man used our money to pay for his gala wedding party. He bought food and drinks for everyone in town, and its neighboring town - with our money.

This was unbelievable and I could not suppress my anger. The Command's funds did not fall from Heaven; they came from farmers who had barely enough to feed their own kids, but managed to save a few penny here and there for independence workers. The poor farmers made great sacrifices to fund the Command. That shameless Company C commander took our blood money for his personal pleasure and comfort. How could a man like that command a company of men? It was a sign that the Command was not only inept but it was rotting from inside out.

After the Ulsa Protectorate Treaty with Japan, a Righteous Army commander marshaled a force of several hundred men at Soonchang after Choe Ik Hyon's main army was crushed by the Japanese. He was intent on carrying on the fight. But he received a report that one of his men took foods from a poor peasant by force. He was so ashamed that he disbanded his men and went into seclusion to atone for the sin of his soldier. Company C commander's misdeed was a crime against the Korean people.

Back in Lim-gang, I saw independence fighters crossing Yale and taking an ox from a farmer by force. They came back with the ox and had a feast eating it. Father gave their commander a tongue-lashing. In those days, Korean residents in China were taxed, so much money, so many bags of rice; tax collectors went around collecting taxes just as tax collectors in other nations do. The peasants had to tighten their belt to pay taxes allocated to them and they had no other recourse. It was pay up or else. Some overzealous tax collectors squeezed as much as they could over and above the allocation. Each army unit was assigned its own taxing area, but often they crossed into other units territory and collected taxes; even worse, some collectors hijacked taxes collected by other collectors.

It was a free for all; small and large independence army units descended upon poor peasants and squeezed out everything they had; they took money from the working poor; they took poor men's blood money and food in the name of patriotism. For these independence fighters, peasants were merely sources of food and money, and nothing else. The working poor were dumb obedient milk cows that were milked over and over until nothing but blood was left.

A Yi Dynasty king built Gyongbok Palace, exhausting his treasury in the process, and he was forced to collect money from people using various ingenious schemes, including road taxes. If he had used the people's blood money for a college or a factory, people's sacrifice might have been rewarded in the end.

The news of Company C commander's crime saddened all students at Whasung. It was another indication that the Command was collapsing. All we could do was to criticize and vent our anger. In this day and age, such an act would not be tolerated by anyone and such a criminal would be court-martialed or tried by his peers or soldiers. In those days, things were loose and people got away with murder. People who could not pay taxes were brought in and tortured by armed soldier-tax collectors, even though the Command had a civil department assigned to handle civil issues. Corruption in high places were tolerated.

Choe Chang Gul proposed to lead a delegation of students and visit each of the six company HQs to report Company C commander's crime. Some students wanted to expose the commander's misdeed in publications of the Command; but the problem was the publications were controlled by officers who were probably no cleaner than the friends of the offender. I saw that we were wasting our time talking about things that would not work anyway; I proposed that we should send a letter of protest to each company commander. My proposal was accepted and I was asked to write the letter of protest. It was my first written criticism of the conservative nationalists since the formation of "Down with Imperialism" Association. It was my first try at writing a protest and I was not sure if I had covered the base, but my classmates liked what I wrote, and we asked Kim Si Woo to hand it to the next courier that came around. My protest letter was duly delivered to every company HQ.

There were some reactions; Company C commander, the man who stole our money to pay for his wedding was irate; Oh Dong Jin, who defended the Command no matter what in the past, was shaken. When I met him in the following year in Jirin, Oh Dong Jin brought up my protest letter. He read it while attending a meeting of Company 6 officers. Oh said: "I was shocked to read about Company C commander's action. I thought he should be relieved of his command. People like that give our army a bad name. Oh Dong Jin was aware of the deteriorating moral of the army and lamented that there was little he could do to rectify the situation. He was sad and dejected. I cannot imagine how he felt seeing his army going down the drain, yet he could not do a thing to save it.

I felt the rampant corruption of the army was not only an agony for the new generation but also an agony for all good nationalists of all ages and stripes. There was no way one page of protest would clean out the moral and political corruption in the Command. The army had gone down too far and there was no way any one could save it. It was inept and corrupt beyond repair. The army was more interested in protecting

rich men's profits than fighting for the Korean people, and it was doomed to die a slow death.

People were manhandled and squeezed for money not only by the tax collectors but also by Whasung students as well. Teams of students toured the countryside asking for 'donations'. People refusing to donate money were labeled anti-nationalistic and were threatened with violence. The students took chickens and pigs from poor peasants as 'donations'. Back at the school cafeteria, some students complained about eating millet instead of rice and the general poor quality of the food served there. Once, a student got into a heated argument with the cafeteria manager; Whang Seh Il, the student was not happy about meals of millet and mixed vegetable soup. Whang did his best to put food on the table but his efforts were not recognized or appreciated by some students, who blamed Whang for the meager meals served at the cafeteria.

After Liberation, I ran into Whang Seh Il, who was vice chairman of a county people's committee and talked about the 'good' old days at Whasung. He said that on account of his experience at the dormitory, he never complained about food when he toured countryside. I believe those students who had complained about eating millet at the cafeteria would have continued to bad-mouth foods served in the army after their graduation. People like that eventually become money-grabbing, power-mongering corrupt scourges of the working poor. Imagine students like that becoming officers after two years at the Academy and commanding a squad or a company of men. Fighting the enemy to death would be the last thing on their mind. What could one expect of an army commanded by officers like that?

I was disillusioned by the decrepit state of the army, the very foundation of our movement for independence. My unhappiness with the curriculum at the Academy deepened day by day. The Academy was not what I had expected it to be. It was clear that the Academy would never be what I wished it to be. Likewise, the school authorities were not satisfied with me and they knew that I would never be what they wanted me to be. This mutual dissatisfaction intensified with time. As I delved more and more into Marxism and Leninism, I became more convinced that the Academy was not for me.



I agonized over this irreconcilable fact. By quitting the Academy, I would be letting down all those people who had arranged me to be at the Academy. I would be betraying their faith in me. I thought quitting would be disobeying Father's will and testaments. How could I face Oh Dong Jin, who had traveled several hundreds of ri to comfort me at Father's funeral, who gave me the money for my trip to the Academy, who had talked the Academy into accepting me? How could I face Kim Si Woo, who treated as an adult? How could I tell Director Choe Dong Oh and Father's friend, Kang Jeh Ha that I was quitting? I felt so guilty about letting them down. *(Photo: Kang Je Ha).*

I thought about sticking it out and completing the two-year program. That would fulfill my obligation to those who had trust in me; I should force myself to accept things as they were at the Academy. What's wrong with becoming part of the army? That would make my benefactors happy and proud of me, right? There was no reason why I could not continue to study Marxism and Leninism in the army; there was no reason why I could not lead and expand "Down with Imperialism" Association;



all these thoughts floated around in my head.

On the other hand, I could not bear the thought of putting up with the outdated feudalistic curriculum of the Academy, my filial obligations and IOUs notwithstanding. I felt that I was wasting my time studying at the Academy. What should I do? I could return home and take over Uncle's pharmacy business and take care of my family; or I could go to school in Simyang, Harbin or Jirin. After thinking over my options, I decided to quit the Academy and go to a middle school in Jirin. The reason why I chose Jirin for my next stop on my journey of life was that Jirin was the political center of Korean activists in Manchuria. For this reason Jirin was called the Second Shanghai, Shanghai being the political center of Koreans in China.

I wanted to break out the suffocating closed cocoon of Whajung and move on to a wider, open stage for my political activities. I wanted to spread the spirit of "Down with Imperialism" Association to a wider audience. That was the prime reason for my decision to quit Whasung Military Academy. This was the very first major decision I have made in my life, on my own. I would say my second major decision was to burn the bridge with Minsaeng Corps after the Namhodu Conference and form my own military command. I still believe that my decision was the right one under the circumstance. If I had stayed at Whasung longer, I might not have accomplished what I have achieved for Korean revolution.

When I made my decision public, members of "Down with Imperialism" Association were surprised. I told them that I wanted to carry TD Association's activities and messages to other regions; that the Association could not do much bottled up in tiny, remote Whajun; that Whasung Military Academy was not giving us what we needed; that after I was gone, they should continue to carry on Association's mission at the Academy and at whatever units they would be assigned to, after graduation; that they should reach out to the mass; that they were the charter members of the Association and they should uphold the Association charter and stay united no matter where they were. I promised to meet with some of the members in Jirin.

I discussed my decision to quit with Kim Si Woo before making it public. I asked Kim, "Sir, I am not happy at the Academy and I wish to move to Jirin and attend a middle school there. I plan to discuss this with Mother and Uncle. I don't know where I will get the money. What do you think?" Kim was disappointed, but he did not try to talk me out of quitting the school. He said: "OK, if that's what you want, I will check with my friends and see what we can do for you. All of us have our own thing and if Whasung does not turn you on, then it is not for you and you must move on." I was much relieved to hear that Kim Si Woo, who was the most pleased and enthused about my coming to Whajun, was supportive of my decision. Kim's support took a load off my chest. Kim advised me to tell Director Choe about my withdrawal nicely so that he would not be disappointed. Kim told me to stop by to see him on my way to Jirin.

My parting with Kim Si Woo was easy, but it was not so with Director Choe Dong Oh. It was excruciatingly painful. At first, he was angry at me and told me he was not happy with my decision; he told me that, "Once a decision is made, you should stick to it no matter what. How can you quit this

school, after trying so hard to get here? You say we don't offer everything you desire, but where do you think you will find a school that will offer everything you want in this day and age of hardship?". He carried on, speaking his mind. He walked over to the window with his back turned toward me and gazed at the sky filled with falling snow with quiet sadness.

After an eternity of silence, he said: "If a talented student like you, Sung Ju, finds my Academy useless, then I will quit it myself". That was totally unexpected and I was speechless, dumbfounded. I felt guilty that I might have been too harsh about the shortcomings of his school and hurt his feeling. After a while, Director Choe turned around, walked to me and gently placed his hands on my shoulders and said: "I don't care what ideology one has - nationalism, communism or whatever - as long as it frees Korea. Good Luck and I hope you will succeed." He followed me to the school yard and gave me many valuable advices in spite of the raging snowstorm. I remember the snow piling up on his head and shoulders as he kept on talking. Even today, every time I recall that moment, I feel ashamed that I did not have the courtesy of brushing the snow off his shoulders.

Thirty years since that moment, I had an emotional meeting with Director Choe in Pyongyang. I was Premier and he was a member of the northern branch of Fatherland Peaceful Unification Promotion Association at the time, but it was a meeting of a pupil and his teacher. The spirit of "Down with Imperialism" of Whajun survived the Korean War and drives today's socialist revolution. Director Choe said: "Well, it has turned out that you were right, Premier Sung Ju." Upon hearing my birth name, my mind raced back to that unforgettable moment, that snowstorm of that day, when Director Choe bid me goodbye so many decades ago. His short one sentence closed the 30-year gap lapsed since that moment at Whasung Military Academy. His life was a long series of tribulations, of deep sorrows and happy triumphs.

Mother supported my decision to quit Whasung. When she heard that I was quitting, she was upset, but after hearing out my reasons, she became less concerned. She said: "I see that you are worried about your school expenses. Man cannot achieve anything if he gets hung up on money. In one way or other, you will have money for education and you should concentrate on doing what you really want. Now that you have made up your mind, make sure you take giant steps." Her words of encouragement was much appreciated.

Back in Musong, I learned that many of my elementary school friends were too poor to go on to middle school and stayed home without knowing what to do with their life. I thought I should educate and lead them to the path of revolution. I formed "Down with Imperialism" Association not long ago and I saw a golden opportunity to expand the Association in Musong. Thus, I formed "New Age Children's League" for patriotic children in Muson and surrounding regions. Its mission was to educate the young members on progressive ideologies and lead them to the path of revolution. The League was formed on December 15, 1926. The New Age Children's League was, as its name suggests, to bring down Japanese imperialism and bring a new age for independent Korea, after dismantling old customs and habits. The League was a communist organization for young teens.

The League was an important extension of "Down with Imperialism" Association. The League's main slogan was, "Let us fight for Korean independence", and its members were to study progressive ideologies and propagate them widely among the people; I placed on the table various tasks and methods for discussion. I set up League chart, organizational structure and membership standards. I managed the League until I left for Jirin.

I helped Mother set up "Anti-Japan Women's Association" on December 26, 1926, on the basis of my experience in setting up "Down with Imperialism" and "New Age Children's League". After Father passed away, Mother became active in anti-Japan activities. She traveled to distant villages and towns and taught young Korean women and girls Korean language and revolution. She was, of course, active in Muson as well.

On my way to Jirin, I stopped by Whajun to see Kim Si Woo, as promised. He wrote a letter of recommendation to Kim Sah Hyong, another friend of my father. The letter asked Kim Sha Hyong to help me get in the school. That was my last meeting with Kim Si Woo. He was the most impressive person of all of my unforgettable persons. He was a man of few words, but he had done many things for Korean independence; mass enlightenment, education of the young, arms acquisition, fund raising, local guidance and protection of operatives in Korea and Manchuria, delivery of secret documents and confidential materials, activities to unite warring factions within nationalist camps. There was no area he was not involved in.

He had helped Father in many ways and also, he had helped me in more than one way. It was he who stood watch for us and was the happiest at the night when I formed "Down with Imperialism" Association. After our final meeting, Kim Si Woo continued to run his Youngpoong Mill and supplied food to the army and helped Korean students in the region. During the Civil War in China, he was the chairman of Whajun Revolutionary Committee, and protected Korean people and properties in Whajun against Japanese and Chiang Kaisek's troops.

Kim Si Woo returned to Korea in 1958. He told no one about his lifelong, countless activities for Korean independence, and so I did not know his whereabouts. He was down with an incurable disease in Junchun and only a few days to live, when at last, he told his children about his work with my father and I. His son was surprised and asked him, "Why haven't you contacted General Kim, who would be happy to meet you again? General Kim is in our town right now doing onsite guidance, and it is not too late, why not see General Kim now? If you cannot move, we will invite him here to see you."

Kim Si Woo chided his son: "The reason why I told you about my past is not for you to benefit from it; I wanted you to know of your heritage and stand behind General Kim. Don't waste even a minute of General Kim's time. He has many important things to do." Such was the obstinacy of that old warrior. If his son had his way, Kim Si Woo and I would have met in a happy reunion; but to my greatest regret, it was not to be. Whenever I recall my days at Whasung Military Academy and "Down with Imperialism", I always remember Kim Si Woo. I cannot think of my Whajun days without thinking about Kim Si Woo.

Kim Si Woo was the most supportive of "Down with Imperialism" Association during my Whajun days; he was the man who supplied me books and ideas on new ideologies. Thanks to sincere and honest people like Kim Si Woo, the Association was able to grow into an invincible power it is today.

I started on my long journey to Jirin full of hope, anticipation and determination, knowing that the Korean people counted on me.

# Lee Gwan Rin - The Indomitable Heroine

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When I came home to Musong after quitting Whasung Military Academy, I noticed that only a few independence activists came to our house, in a sharp contrast to the crowd of visitors who came to see Father day and night, when he was alive. I felt deserted and lonely. One of the unforgettable persons from my Musong days is Lee Gwan Rin. She came to stay with Mother after Father passed away. Oh Dong Jin suggested to her that it would be nice if she stayed with and help out Mother; after all, Father had done a lot for Lee. Thus, Lee moved in with Mother and helped her, while working for South Manchuria Women Education Association.



Lee Gwan Rin was audacious and bubbly; she was versed both in martial and literary arts; she was unusually good-looking, mild-mannered and courageous beyond comparison; there had been no other woman warrior like her in Korea. In the age of feudalism, young women were expected to hide their face outdoors, but Lee Gwan Rin wore man's pants and went around on horseback. It was quite a site to behold and people stopped and watched her in disbelief, as if she came from another planet. (*Photo: Lee Kwan Rin*).

After a few days, I sensed that she was not quite herself; she seemed to be subdued, worrying about something. She was shocked to hear that I quit Whasung, a place that had a long line of people wanting to get in. It was incomprehensible to her that I threw away such a golden opportunity. But when I told her the whole story why I had to quit the school, she wholeheartedly supported my decision. I saw that something else was troubling her; I thought my action to reject a nationalist school and embrace a new ideology was heavy on her mind; I believed her bright mind saw the end coming to the old-time nationalist movement and the independence army. Mother told me that Lin had changed quite a bit. She was not the bubbly woman she used to be.

At first it was surmised that Lin was going through the depression of an old maid of her age. She was already 28 at the time. In those days, girls as young as 14 or 15 were married off, and an unmarried maiden of 28 was considered too stale for marriage. Women like Lin, who had missed their prime marriage eligible ages, were justifiably concerted about their old age. After several days of watching her pining her days away, I could no longer contain my curiosity and asked her pointblank: "Miss Lin, how come are you so sad and gaunt in face?"

Lin sighed deeply and said: "Oh, I am getting older and older, but things are not working out for me.

When your father was alive, I could easily walk 100 to 200 ri in a day, but after his death, I don't feel like doing anything; even the revolver I carry with me is about to rust. I don't know where to turn. It looks like the army is not going to achieve anything; the army is a mess. The old men at the top seem to hang around in fancy uniforms and don't bother to check what their men are doing; the soldiers are more interested in starting a family than fighting the enemy; they spend more time chasing after girls than enemy soldiers. Just a few days ago, a soldier in his fighting primes got married, quit the army and moved to Gang-dong. I can understand a guy getting married, but throwing down his gun after marriage does not make sense. Everybody is looking to desert the army. The army is losing people left and right, and who is going to fight for Korea? I don't understand how they can be so insincere."

Now I understood what was bothering her. She sacrificed her prime years fighting for Korea and it made her sad to see men in prime years deserting the army for easy family life. It was lamentable. Women with education went around in fashionable dresses and makeup, but old Lin carried a heavy six-shooter and crisscrossed Yalu killing the Japanese. There were not many cases in the history of Korea of female warriors in men's uniforms, who carried weapons and did actual combat with our enemies. That is the reason why I wrote a whole section dedicated to her life story. In those days of feudal Korea, when women were mere chattels, it was inconceivable for women to carry revolvers and fight the enemy.

It is true that throughout our history, Korean women fought our enemies, thought in different ways. On thing that stands out is that women's fight was fought to defend their feudal ethics virtues, chastity, in reactive manners. When the Japanese came and pillaged Korea, many Korean women fled to mountains and temples to escape being raped by the invaders; those who could not escape chose to kill themselves than to be befouled by the enemy. During the 1592 invasion (Imjin), more than 30 times as many women died than men, which shows how patriotic Korean women have been.

When Choe Ik Hyon, the Righteous Army leader, starved himself to death in Taiwan, his wife mourned her husband's death for three years as the custom required and then killed herself to accompany his soul. One might say that her loyalty and devotion to her husband was commendable and filial. However, there is a problem here: if everyone committed suicide, then who will defeat the enemy and defend Korea?

As our society woke up from its long dark feudal era, Korean women's outlook and attitudes changed. Instead of fighting the enemy by hiding from them or committing suicide, they joined men in marches against Japanese guns and bayonets. Some women threw bombs at Japanese installations. But, no woman, other than Lee Gwan Rin, fought the Japanese hands-to-hands for over ten years.

Lee was so beautiful that a horde of suitors following her around. She could have become a teacher or married a rich man and led a comfortable life, but she chose to dedicate her life to nationalist causes. Her father owned a small farm, a forest and a large 10-room, though straw-thatched, house. He was middle-income and made a comfortable living. When Lee was 12, her mother died and two years later, he married a 16-year old girl, barely two years older than Lee was. She could not bring herself to calling her "mother"; and her father planned to marry her off at age 15, he had no plan to let her continue her education beyond that. Lin could not take it anymore and left home at age 15.

While her father was gone on an errand, Lee sneaked out to Yalu and left her clothing and shoes by a hole in the ice to make it look like she had committed suicide. Then she went to a distant relative's house in Yiju. Some of her relatives got together and helped her enroll in Jangsil Institute. After half a year of hardship, she wrote her father asking for tuition money. After she left home, her father found her clothing by the ice hole and assumed she was dead; he had been crying ever since - until he received her letter. Overjoyed, he rushed to Yiju to see her and assured her that he would never interfere in her life; he promised to pay her tuition as long as she wanted. Lee did not have to worry about her tuition any more and concentrated on her school work. She did well and her teachers recommended her to the prestigious Pyongyang Girls Technical School.

After a year or two at the school, her eyes were opened to world affairs and she joined Korean People's Association on my father's recommendation. She became an active founding member of the Association. Father taught her Righteous Aspirations; Lee was active among students at Pyongyang Girls's School, Sungsil Middle School, Sungwi Girls School, and Kwangsung Institute. One day, she came to Mangyong-dae on an excursion and stopped by our house; she had lengthy discussions with Father and helped Mother with house chores. On those days, when the weather was good in Spring, students from Sungsil and Kwangsung packed up a lunchbox and came to Mangoyng-dae on picnic; there was no easy transportation and they had to walk long distances.

When March First Movement broke out in Pyongyang, Lee was in the vanguard of the marchers and fought valiantly. When a march was blocked by the Japanese, she returned to her dormitory to rest and recoup, and went out to lead a new march. After the Movement failed, she went home to hide from the Japanese, hunting down march leaders. That was when she became a fulltime activist for independence. She was convinced that she could not continue her school while Korea was no more. At first, she was active as the general director of Kwangje Youth Corp, which was set up by Oh Dong Jin.

Even prior to her move to Manchuria, Lee shot and killed two Japanese police in Korea. She dumped her victims into Yalu, through a hole in the ice. Her heroic exploit was a big news. Soon after she joined the independence army, she was sent on a fund-raising mission, when she was arrested. The Japanese began to search her. She had a pistol hidden in the bag she was carrying on her head and the Japanese police wanted her to open the bag. Pretending to comply, she whipped out her gun, marched the startled police to a bush nearby, and shot them dead.

On her many travels for independence, she had run into many hazardous situations. Once, she was in South Pyongahn Province on a fund-raising mission for Oh Dong Jin. After completing her mission, she and an operative were on their way back to the base, they stayed over at a lodging for the night. Armed bandits tried to rob them; between Lee and her companion, they had several hundred won, a large sum of money in those days. The bandits fired guns in the air and threatened to shoot them, whereupon Lee's companion handed his money to the bandits and begged for mercy. But not Lee; she hollered at her would-be robbers and scared them away by her sheer behavior.



Even though there were quite a few female fighters in my guerrilla army, none compared to Lee. Early in her life, she studied sewing and embroidery at school, but later, she became a fearless warrior for independence. Newspapers such as Dongah-ilbo and Chosun-ilbo raised much ado about Lee's feats. She was strong-willed and fearless. In the aftermath of the March First Movement, Korean nationalists tried to form a united front in south Manchuria.

There were numerous Korean nationalist factions, each jockeying to dominate other factions; people paid a lip service to a united front, but no one knew how to unite or lead the factions. Father thought that the best way to form a united front was to get the nationalist leaders behind it, and decided to start with Yang Ki Tak, hiding out in Seoul. Father needed a reliable person to get Yang out of Korea; after a great deal of

considerations, Father picked Lee Kwang Rin for the mission. Lee sneaked into Seoul carrying a letter to Yang. *(Photo: Yang Ki Tak).*

Yang Ki Tak was an influential nationalist; he was born to a scholarly family in Pyongyang. Early on, Yang became active in patriotic mass enlightenment and education activities. Yang was the first Korean to compile Korean-English dictionary and led the fight to force Japan to pay for our national treasures. He was in jail for several years for his involvement in the "105" affair; he was a member of New People's Association, sin-min-hoe, Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, and chairman of Korean Revolutionary Party. He and Oh Dong Ji established Jung Military Command, jung-yi-bu, in Manchuria. He was respected by all Korean nationalist factions.

Lee Kwang Rin was arrested by the Japanese in Seoul and locked up in Chong-ro police station. She was tortured by the police; hot pepper powders were shoved into her nostrils; sharp needles were stuck under her finger nails; she was hanged by her arms behind her back from a ceiling; he was forced to lie on her back with a wooden plank placed over face, and her torturers stood and stomped on the plank. Her torturers wanted to know if she came from China, from Russia, what her mission was. She was beaten and stomped on, days in, days out. She was threatened to be burned alive; the police brought in kerosene and lit it on fire. But, no matter what the Japanese did to her, Lee did not break and insisted that she was only a jobless wonderer; that she came to Seoul, hoping to find a maid's or a servant's position with a rich family. She demanded to know why they were torturing an innocent woman. After one month of fruitless tortures, Lee was let go.

Lee could hardly move her body, but she managed to escort Yang Ki Taek to Hunggyong. Upon arriving at Hunggyong, she collapsed and became seriously ill. Her comrades tried to nurse her back to health as best as they could, but her health deteriorated. They brought in an old medical doctor to examine her. After taking her pulses, the old doctor pronounced that he needed to examine her uterus. The old man probably had an evil design for this famous beauty. Lee was shocked by the old man's outrageous move and demanded to know what he was up to. He told her that she was pregnant, upon hearing this, Lee took off her body belt and exposed her belly, shouting to the old doctor: "Look at me, you old bastard!"



"Are you trying to take advantage of this young woman who has taken up arms to fight the enemy? Let me hear your diagnosis again." The old doctor ran away, bare-footed, for his dear life.

Such was the pluck of this woman warrior. Father entrusted her with critical missions and Lee carried out her missions with no complaint; she went to Pyongyang and to Seoul many times for Father; she promoted women's rights for Father. She accompanied Father as his bodyguard and his personal aid on his missions. She journeyed tens of thousands of ri; Yiju, Sakju, Chosan, Kanggye, Byokdong, Hoerying, Haeju and other regions of Korea. There was virtually no place in Korea that her feet did not touch. She was the first single woman to roam Mount Baikdu.

She dedicated her prime years, which she could have spent in comfort and pleasure, in hardship and sufferings for Korea, serving in the independence army. It made me sad to see her spirit wane; she saw the falling out of Korean nationalist movement and was dejected; she saw no hope for Korea. As I got ready to move to Jirin, she told me that someday, she would go to Jirin and do something useful there, too. But, she never made it. I met Lee in Jirin twice at Son Jung Do's house. She wanted to hear my take on the world situation. I gave her a long speech on the status of our revolution. Although she told me she liked my idea of revolution, she stayed loyal to Jung Military Command, jung-yi-bu. Lee was sympathetic to communism but she remained a leftist nationalist.

Lee's agonizing over the declining Korean nationalist movement pained me; numerous patriots, like Lee Kwan Rin, gave up everything and joined the nationalist movement. But they were by and large leaderless and wasted their energy and life on meaningless activities; they had no clear direction to follow; "Down with Imperialism" Association was in its infancy and was not ready for her. She was loved and trusted by Father, but after his death, Lee lost her anchor and lived confused and in agony; once again, I felt the crying need for an effective, unifying leadership. Lee's laments enforced my conviction that it was up to the new generation of Korea to take the torch of revolution and independence.

I left for Jirin determined to accomplish my aspirations. Half a century passed since I met Lee Kwan Rin in Jirin. During this long time span, I kept on searching for her. There were a number of 20-ish female guerrillas in my army; every time I saw them fight side by side with men, I thought of Lee. Where was she? What was she doing? Not knowing if she was alive or dead agonized me and I had done my best to track her down. After Liberation, I searched for her in her home village of Sakju; but there was no Lee Kwan Ju there. She had disappeared in thin air.

It was in early 1970 when I finally found her. The Party historians discovered that she lived in China and that she had a son, a daughter, and several grand children. Some of Lee's comrades, such as Gong Young and Park Jin Young, became communists through "Down with Imperialism" Association and joined our revolution and died fighting for our cause. But, Lee failed to find a leader to lead her and had to abandon her fight for independence. When Oh Dong Jin was alive, Lee rallied to his leadership and worked hard to implement the Kwanjun Manifesto for mass revolution. In the Summer of the year (1927) I left for Jirin, Lee, Jang Chul Ho and others pitched a tent village in Naedo-san and started potato farming and

mass enlightenment activities. Oh Dong Jin may have wanted to make it a support base for nationalist movements.

Unfortunately, Oh Dong Jun was captured by the Japanese and his movement fell apart. Oh Dong Jin was the most progressive of the left-wing nationalists and his fall was the death toll for reconciliation and a united front. There were some leaders in Jung Military Command who were sympathetic to communism but they had no influence. After the three major commands of Korean nationalist armies were merged into a united command, National Command, ultra-right-wingers took over and communism was banned. The new command betrayed leftists to the Japanese police or assassinated them. Lee Kwan Rin was fingered a leftist and went into hiding. She went from one hiding place to another; finally, she gave up and married a Chinese and raised a family. To pour salts on her wound, even her marriage did not work out.

Lee Kwan Rin appeared in the skies over Manchuria like a shooting star and put fears in the enemy ranks; she became the "Flower of the Independence Army", "the Joan of Arc of Korea"; but she faded away. Allegorically speaking, she boarded a wooden ship called Nationalism on a long voyage, but the wooden ship was too fragile for the incessant, violent waves of the ocean and there was no way the ship could complete her voyage. At first, the ship had many passengers aboard, but most of them abandoned the voyage and sought to live in comfort pretending to be moving toward their goal. Those elite who "represented" Korea became merchants of business or escaped into monkhood. At least, these people, though they had gotten off the ship, did not betray the voyagers. Some of Lee's comrades betrayed our cause and became Japanese collaborators.

Lee Kwan Rin returned to Korea after half a century of misery in a foreign land. After learning that Kim Il Sung was in fact Kim Sung Ju, the son of Kim Hyong Jik, she wanted to come back to Korea. She thought that Sung Ju would realize his father's dreams for Korea and wanted to see the new Korea before she died. Every night, when she laid down to sleep on her pillow and gazed at the stars in the sky, she wept silently for Korea. Yet, she was hesitant to part company with her beloved family in China. She had a son and a daughter, and several grand children. It was not easy for her, in her twilight years, to leave her family behind and travel ten thousands ri to Korea alone. Eventually, she made up her mind to come back to Korea. It took a strong-willed woman like Lee to make such a far-reaching, heart-breaking decision. Only those who have wept, laughed and spilled their blood for their country can understand her decision.

When I heard that she was coming back to Korea, leaving her family behind, I was deeply moved by her patriotism. She was only 28 when I parted company with her in Musong, but now she was a gray-haired woman of 80. There was no trace of the famed beauty maiden who pumped up young men's heart. After having searched for her for over half a century, there she was bent over and ravaged by time beyond recognition. I hated Mother Nature that had consumed her; I was sad.

I found her a comfortable living quarter in the center of Pyongyang and had a maid and a doctor to care for her. The place was close to the school she attended in her youth. Secretary Kim Jong Il made the

arrangement for her, making sure that she had all the comfort and conveniences - furniture, kitchen utensils, heating, cooling, lighting and refrigeration. In spite of her poor health, Lee raised corn in her front yard; she remembered, after 50 or so years, that I loved corn and wanted to cook me corn meals using her own home-grown corn. When I was in Musong, she would roast corn for me and my brothers.

In consideration of her services to Korea, her prime years sacrificed for our independence, we gave her a fine funeral upon her death and interred her body in the Martyrs' Cemetery. Those who truly love Korea and their countrymen, no matter which corner of the earth they may be, will return to the land of their forefathers and the place where they were born. Although their paths and ours may be different, our paths will cross sooner or later.

# Ahn Chang Ho's Lecture

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In February 1927, the Korean community of Jirin was seething with unprecedented excitement. Ahn Chang Ho, the most notable independence activist and a key figure of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai came to town from Beijing. Ahn was received with pomp that even a head of state would envy.



I joined the welcoming party singing "Rise Up for Korea" (guh-gook song), which was composed by Ahn himself after his escape from Japanese-occupied Korea. The song starts with "I am leaving, I am leaving, I am leaving you behind..." and ends with "...Do not feel sorrow over my leaving, my beloved Korea." This song became popular among Korean youth and students after Korea was annexed. It was also popular with Korean exiles and the song was known as "Song of Exiles". The song was loved by many Koreans and its composer was honored and respected. *(Photo: Ahn Chang Ho, 1878-1938. Dosan, meaning 'island mountain' was his penname.)*

Many people thought Ahn was of presidential caliber and even the leaders of Independence Army hostile to the Shanghai government respected Ahn as the senior nationalist leader. Ito Hirobumi, Japan's architect of Korean colonization, thought so highly of Ahn that he had offered to set up a cabinet under Ahn, provided that he supported Japan's policies for Korea.

Ahn was born in Gang-suh, South Pyongahn Province, famous for giving birth to many noted patriots. Today, it is famous as the cradle of Chul-ri-ma movement, Chung-san-ri patriotism and methodology. Ahn believed that the main reason why Korea was lost to Japan was that the Korean people were backward. He formed Gongrip Association, New People's Association (sin-min-hoe), Youth Alumni Association, Korean People's General Association, Hungsa Corps and other independence activist organizations. In addition, he established educational institutions such as Jungjin, Daesung and Taehguk; he started the Independence News paper for mass enlightenment.

Lee Sung Hun was one of the independence leaders, best known for his educational activities including Ohsan Institute. Lee's zeal for education was duly recognized by the King of Korea, Yoong-whi, who invited Lee to a royal audience. During the 400-year rule of the Yi kings, this was the first time a commoner met a king face to face. Such was Lee's fame in Korea. Ironically, Lee began his career as a traveling salesman peddling brassware, bent on making quick bucks. His wealth grew and grew to 500,000 won, an astronomical figure in those days. One day in Pyongyang, Lee heard Ahn Chang Ho's lecture on how education would nurture our strength and eventually free Korea; Lee was so impressed by the lecture that he cut off his hair-knot and began his own educational activities. Ahn's famed eloquence

changed Lee's life, which illustrates how fiery and persuasive Ahn's oratorical skills were.



Ahn's arrival in Jirin was headlined by Dongah-ilbo, Chosun-ilbo and other newspapers in Korea. A delegation of youth and students went to see Ahn at his hotel, Sampoong, and begged him to give them a lecture. Various independence activists supported the students' request and Ahn readily agreed. Ahn's impending lecture on the current status was widely publicized; large posters were tacked on walls on Sangbu, Charu, Tongchun, Hanam, Bukdae, Uma and other streets of Jirin. Korean expatriate in Jirin were excited about the oncoming lecture by the famed nationalist; "Did you know Master Ahn is in town?" became the common greeting among the Korean residents of Jirin. *(Photo: Ahn Chang Ho, an orange picker at Cornelius Rumsey's orange grove in Riverside, California, in 1904. Ahn came to America as a farm worker in 1902.)*

The night before his lecture, Oh Dong Jin met me and discussed Ahn Chang Ho for several hours. Oh was emotional about meeting his former teacher of Daesung Institute, after 17 years in a foreign nation. Oh recalled how kind Arn was to him when he applied for the school, and the helps he had received from Ahn while attending the school. Oh still remembered the "Marching Song of Young Students" composed by Ahn and sang it for me *(Lee Wha Rang note: click <http://www.independence.or.kr/warsong/warsong6.htm> to hear this song).*

Oh respected Ahn Chang Ho very much and told me how hard Ahn had been working for Korea. Oh said Ahn's oratory was exceptionally effective; my father told me about this, too, several times. I heard about Ahn when I was in Mangyong-dae; Ahn's independence work started with a speech and without his oratorical skills, he would have been less effective. I was told that Ahn's speeches were so enthralling that even servant women and housewives were sold on his ideas and donated their gold rings and hairpins to the cause of independence. Would that be true? If so, how does he do it? How nice it would be, if he stayed here in Jirin instead of Shanghai or America.

Oh Dong Jin told me, "After our independence, I will vote him for Presidency, if I had the opportunity". That talk by Oh made me more eager to hear Ahn speech next day. The event was held at Daedong Public Hall in front of Joyang. Ahn eulogized Doctor Ra Suk Ju first and began his much awaited lecture. It was a memorial service and a lecture on the current status of our independence movement combined. In attendance were leaders of the three major independence army commands who came for the memorial service and local nationalists, students, youth and other concerned citizens. The meeting hall was packed full and many had to stand outside listening in.



*Photo: Kim Il Sung in Jirin, a Chinese Middle School pupil.*

Ahn's lecture was titled, "Future of Korean National Movement", and he lived up to his fame. His eloquence was met with wild applause from the packed audience. He cited from his erudite knowledge of ancient and modern history of the world and pointed to the road ahead for the Korean people. However, I found problems with his themes. He said that the primary reason why Korea was taken over by the Japanese imperialists was that Korea was backward, and the reason why Korea was backward was due to the defective character and low level of morality. In order to free Korea, the Korean people must correct these shortcomings. Every Korean must endeavor to be moral and civilized. His other theme was Korea must be developed economically.

Ahn's thinking was influenced by Tolstoy's self-salvation theme and Gandhi's self-purification theme. At the time, world-wide depression was setting in and people lived in fears of unknown and terror; Fascism spread like a forest fire and innocent people were being massacred by the Fascists. *Petit bourgeois* intellectuals kowtowed to the military might of the imperialists and came out with their ingenious spiritual escapism - nonresistance, the last safe haven for those weak in revolutionary conviction and courage. They had no will to resist reactionary forces and the best they could do was quiet submission to the naked force.

In Korea, non-resistance appeared in the form of reform movement. After the March First Movement, some nationalist leaders deserted our revolutionary path of armed struggle for independence and became

pacifist reformers and enlightenment educators; they worked to improve educational, cultural, moral and economic levels of the Korean people. Korean intellectuals educated in modern science and technology promoted 'use made-in Korea only' and economic development in Korea by Koreans. " They shouted "Let us live on what we make" and promoted self-reliance and sufficiency. Cho Man Sik was the leader of this movement; Cho wore only traditional clothes made in Korea; he used papers made in Korea for his business cards; he wore shoes made in Korea.

Author Lee Kwang Soo's thesis, "National Reformation", played important roles in spreading the gospel of reforms in Korea. This thesis brings up highlights and dangers of Korean reformism. The most disturbing thing about this thesis is its premise that the Korean people are inferior. I knew Korea was backward but never thought the Korean people were second-class denizens of the world community. The Korean people built world's first ironclad warship and invented metal fonts for printing; they are ethical and intelligent people; they have made significant contributions to Eastern civilization; they have long track records of achievements; any nation would be proud of. Korean people's courageous stands against foreign invaders, in spite of all odds. Korean people's mores is as pure as fresh snowflakes.

It is true that our habits and customs have some shortcomings, but they are only secondary and incidental, not flaws in our basic national character. They must be viewed in proper perspectives. Lee Kwang Soo's thesis implied that Korea went down because the Korean people were inferior in character. I would say Korea's demise was due to our corrupt, inept leaders and not due to any intrinsic defects in our national character. Lee's thesis echoed Japanese imperialists' view of the Korean people. The Japanese looked down on the Korean people as an "inferior" race, needing protection, guidance and governance by Japan.

"National Reformation" was Lee's way of publicly submitting to the Japanese imperialism. For this, his prior records of anti-Japanese activities were forgiven and he was allowed to write romance novels right in front of the Governor General's office in Seoul. In the early days, Lee the novelist was popular among the mass, because he delivered what the mass liked to read. Lee, a prolific writer, is justifiably the father of modern Korean novels. Lee's novels hinted at national character reformation, but this thesis brought it out in the open. Many nationalist leaders became reformists and raised money for reform activities. They raised money to build a Korean university, but the Japanese squashed the plan, fearing that such an institution might become a hotbed of Korean nationalism.

The "Koreans for Korean goods" movement was stopped by the Japanese. The Governor General would not allow the Korean people to boycott Japanese products. The non-violent movement was labeled anti-Japanese and suppressed ruthlessly. The reform movement to strengthen Korean economy and people appeared patriotic and nationalistic in principle, but in practice, it was led by non-violence advocates with little stomach to face down the Japanese. The notion that by developing Korean economy within the limits set by the Japanese and that one could build up our national power to break the Japanese grip on Korea was a ludicrous pipedream. That Japan would not allow any development that would bury her interests in Korea is the most elementary of elementary common sense. How can such naiveté be interpreted?

The reformists-turned nationalist leaders either failed to see the true nature of imperialism or opted to look the other way. Their abandoning military means for peaceful cultural activities signified their defeat and submission; they wanted to coexist with colonialists and accept the status quo. Peaceful coexistence and compromise would inevitably lead to betrayal of our nationalism. In fact, numerous nationalist leaders left independence movement, after becoming reformists; many of them became Japanese collaborators and turned against their former comrades in arms.

Ahn Chang Ho's "power development" or "preparation" theme was a variation of reformist "self-strengthening" theme. Ahn said that the Korean people were the least spiritual in the world and that until the Korean people attain spirituality on par with that of the people of America or England, no independent Korea would be feasible. I saw that the majority of the audience agreed with Ahn's premise; many in the audience were so moved by Ahn's speech that they wept openly. I must say everything Ahn said dripped with his love for Korea.

I realized that Ahn's theme contained seeds of self-destruction of our independence movement; I was disappointed. I thought he had some good points but there were some major problems. I agreed with Ahn that every Korean must be educated and achieve higher status of awareness and that such would make us strong. I strongly disagreed with Ahn's claim that the Korean people were the least spiritual; I also did not buy his assertion that reforms would empower the Korean people. Reforms are good and necessary, but it is no substitute for our revolution. Ahn wanted to replace our revolution with reformism. Reforms do not automatically bring independence, yet Ahn had nothing to say about how his reforms would lead us to independence. He did not say a word on military actions for independence.

It was not clear how developing economics in Manchuria would help the Korean independence. Who would let state-less people build power generation plants and farms in Manchuria for the Korean people? Would the Japanese allow such activities? Of course, not. I could not stand it anymore and jotted down some questions on a piece of paper and passed it to Ahn. I asked: 1) "You said that we must nurture our strength by developing our economy and education our youth, but how can you do so while Japan controls Korea?"; 2) "You said that the Korean people have the lowest spirituality in the world. In what way?"; and 3) "You mentioned America and England for Korea to emulate. Do we must emulate them? Can we count on their assistance for our independence?"

My piece of paper was passed along to a student in the front seat, who handed it to the master of ceremonies. The rebel in me made me to write the notes, but when I saw the master of the ceremonies looking in my direction with a look of disturbance, I had some second thoughts. I was afraid that if Ahn got offended by my questions, Ahn's fans in the audience would get upset with me. Furthermore, Oh Dong Jin, who had worked so hard to arrange for Ahn's appearance, would be offended by my impunity. I did not plan it that way. My only intention was to force Ahn to pause a moment to reflect on his theme, that I believed would do us harm. I hoped that he had something new in his sleeves that might be revealed to us at this time.

But unanticipated events developed. Ahn stared at my questions for a long time and asked the master of



ceremonies a few questions. I was to learn later from Rev. Son Jung Do that Ahn asked who Kim Sung Ju was. After that, Ahn's speech lost steam and became flat. His mind was elsewhere and he cut his lecture short. Ahn was visibly upset by my questions and did not respond to them as I had hoped. The audience left the lecture hall, bewildered and disappointed by Ahn's unexpected behavior. *[Lee Wha Rang note: According to Ahn Chang Ho's own account, he cut short his lecture on "The Only National Party" on the tip that a Chinese police raid was imminent. It was February 14, 1927.]*

Another unexpected event unfolded at this moment. Several hundred Chinese military and civil police surrounded the lecture hall and arrested more than 300 attendees. Ahn Chang Ho, Hyong Mook Gwan, Kim Lee Dae, Lee Gwan Rin and many other nationalist leaders were also arrested. This mass arrest was engineered by Gunitomo of the Governor General's police bureau in Seoul. Gunitomo showed up in Bongchun at about the same time Ahn arrived at Jirin. Gunitomo asked Yang Wo Jung, the Chinese military police commander to arrest the Korean communists gathered for a meeting in Jirin. Under Yang's order and Gunitomo's direct guidance, the Chinese security forces of Jirin conducted house to house searches of Korean residents and the unprecedented mass arrest at the lecture hall.

We were angry at the Chinese action. Even though Ahn's lecture fell short of our expectations, his arrest caused general indignation in Jirin. The mass arrest occurred right after my questions and this coincidence bothered me. Chiang Tzolin, the warlord of Manchuria, signed the Mitzuya Agreement and agreed to work for the Japanese and suppress Korean nationalists in Manchuria. Japanese reward money for captured or dead Korean nationalists spurred Chinese reactionaries on a witch hunt for Koreans.

I convened an emergency meeting of 'Down with Imperialism' Association and discussed measures to free the captives. We visited with the captives themselves and asked for their assistance; but they had no bright ideas. We stressed that we must unite and mobilize the mass, and work together. Some nationalist leaders wondered how we could fight the heavily armed Chinese police and asserted that the best route was to bribe the officials. They did not think much of the power of the mass. I told them to trust the power of the people united and properly motivated. We held a mass meeting at Rev. Son Jung Do's church; attending the meeting were nationalist leaders, concerned Korean expatriates, youth and students.

We informed them what had expired: the Chinese officials, under Japanese command, had arrested Korean patriots and innocent people, and that the Chinese were about to hand them over to the Japanese for reward money; once in Japanese hands, they would be tortured and imprisoned. We appealed to the attendees to stand united and work together to free our compatriots. Some people wondered why I would strive to free Ahn, after what I had done to him. I told them I objected his ideas only and that I had nothing against him in person; Ahn was a fellow countryman and a noted patriot; how could we leave him in jail?

I had questioned Ahn's lecture because I wanted to shake up his toadyism (flunkeyism) and national nihilism; I wanted them to break out of their reformist illusion and stand on the firm ground for independence movement. The reason why we fought nationalists ideologically was not to destroy them

but to enlighten them ideologically so that they would join the united front for independence movement. After the mass meeting, numerous posters denouncing the Chinese officials appeared on walls and powerline poles: the posters said: "Chinese police have arrested innocent Koreans", "Chinese officials should not take orders from the Japanese", "Free the Koreans in prison now!" We sent letters to various Chinese newspapers for publication. Youth and teenagers demonstrated in front of the military police station shouting for immediate release of the prisoners. The Chinese officials, after 20 days of our mass protests, released Ahn and all other prisoners.

I was happy to see Ahn freed and was proud that I had something to do with his release. I went to see Ahn, hoping to clear the air. But he left Jirin right after his release. I have no way of knowing what was going through his mind on his way to Shanghai. I believe Ahn realized that his theme for independence was faulty. His unwavering patriotism to death attests to this belief. That was the last time I saw Ahn. Some ten years later, while conducting armed raids in Mount Baiktu region, I heard the news of Ahn's death from Japanese tortures. I was sad that Ahn, a lifelong patriot and independence activist, did not live to see free Korea.

That was not the end of my relation with Ahn Chang Ho, however. Although Ahn Chang Ho was gone, his younger sister, Ahn Sin Ho, joined our camp after Liberation. She became vice chairwomen of the Korean Democratic Women's League. Upon my return to Korea, I was informed that Ahn Chang Ho's sister lived in Nampo. Comrade Kim Gyong Suk worked in Nampo in those days and I asked him to find her. A few days later, I received a message that she had been found, whereupon, I phoned Kim and asked how she was. Kim said: "She carries the Bible day and night. She is a devout Christian".

I believed that she, being Ahn Chang Ho's sister, must be a patriot, too, although she believed in Christ. I told Kim to take care of her and guide her well. Kim replied that he would, but his words sounded hollow. In those days, our Party workers saw Christians through colored lenses and distrusted them in spite of my admonitions otherwise. Several months later, Comrade Kim informed me that Ahn Sin Ho had become an active member of the Party and that she carried her party membership card in her Bible. I was happy to hear that.

Ahn Chang Ho's spirit of patriotism lived on in his sister. Every time I saw his sister at work, I could not help but recall Ahn Chang Ho's lifelong fight for Korea and all the sacrifices he had made for the Korean people. Kim Gu, who fought communism all his life, met Ahn's sister when he came to Pyongyang to attend the North-South leadership conference in 1948. Kim Gu never dreamed that communists would embrace a younger sister of the most prominent member of the Shanghai provisional government. Years ago, Kim Gu fell in love with Ahn Sin Ho, and they were engaged to be married at one time.

Our faith in Ahn Sin Ho was our faith in Ahn Chang Ho. Patriotism transcends one's religion or ideology. All Koreans live in the same community tied together by our common bloodline. We are inseparably tied by our love of Korea, of the Korean people, to our forefathers and elders who had fought for Korea in their own way, to the best of their ability.

Our faith in Ahn Sin Ho is our expression of respects to all those who loved and fought for Korea.



# The United Front of 'Three Commands'

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Generally speaking, the 1920s saw major moves toward an alliance of Korean independence activists. Progressive nationalists were concerned about the future of Korea and many patriots realized that the only way to free Korea from Japanese occupation was to get united and pool all resources. They worked hard to form a united front. After the October Socialist Revolution in Russia and the March First Movement of 1919, there sprouted numerous anti-Japan groups and organizations. In 1920, several workers' groups got together and formed the Korean Workers and Farmers Alliance. Nationalist groups formed their own alliances for joint anti-Japan actions.

In 1927, communists and nationalists joined to form an alliance, Sin Gan Federation, and mustered a membership of several tens of thousands. After Korea was annexed by Japan, anti-Japan groups sprang up everywhere like so many weeds after a spring rain. By this time, the main stage for Korean activists had moved from Siberia to Manchuria, and naturally, efforts to form a united front were focused on the groups active there. By 1925, anti-Japan groups gravitated into three major groups: Jungyi Command (jung-yi-bu), Sinmin Command and Chamyi Command. These commands, however, acted independently. *(Lee Wha Rang note: the Korean word 'bu' stands for a 'seat of power' or a 'governing body'. Three 'bu's were in all practical purposes governing bodies that collected taxes, ran schools and welfare programs. But their primary function was military - recruiting, training, equipping, and conducting military operations.)*



The three commands carved out a territory and behaved like medieval fiefdoms. They refused to work together and became easy prey to the Japanese. Japanese troops massacred Korean residents at Hunchun, Honggyong and Gomaryong, and bought out Chinese warlords in the Mitzuya Agreement. These events struck major blows to the independence fighters. After suffering major defeats in Bong-oh-gol and Chung-san-ri battles at the hands of Korean troops, Japanese poured in reinforcements into the border regions and conducted scorched-earth campaigns against the Korean people. For each Japanese killed, 10 innocent Koreans were executed. *(Photo: Gen. Hong Bom Do in the Bong-oh-gol Battle).*



*Lee Wha Rang note: In June 1920, the Japanese 19th Division mounted a major offensive aimed at wiping out the Independence Army based at Bong-oh-dong. Hong Bom Do, commanding a force of 700 men, scored a major victory over the Japanese at the Battle of Bong-oh-dong, in which his troops killed more than 120 Japanese troops. Four months later, Hong commanded the First Regiment of the North Route Army of the Korean Provisional Government at the Chung-san-ri battle, Gen. Kim Jwa Jin commanded the Second Regiment and Gen. Choe Dong Jin commanded the Third Regiment. The battle raged from October 21st to 26th in the vicinity of the Paikdu Mountain. There were at least 10 major clashes. The Azma Unit of the Japanese Army had 5,000 men equipped with canon and heavy machine guns. In contrast, the Koreans had 700 men, 4 machine guns, 500 rifles, 1,000 grenades and 20 horse-wagons. More than 1,000 Japanese were killed or wounded in this famous battle. After the Chungsan-ri fiasco, Japanese Kwangtung Army, Expeditionary Army in Siberia and garrisons in Korea were rushed in to crush the Korean armies.*

Such barbaric actions broke the back of the victorious Korean armies and forced the faction-ridden nationalists to seek a united front.. Ever since the formation of the three Commands, progressive leaders tried hard to forge them into a single unified command. The three commands were more interested in expanding their territory and fighting each other than fighting the Japanese. Koreans killing other Koreans was too painful to watch. In the Summer of 1925, I saw my father presiding over a meeting of nationalist leaders in Musong. The three Commands were represented at the meeting. The meeting

moved from Musong to Malrihuh and to Yangji village and lasted ten days. They discussed how to form an alliance and agreed to form National United Front Promotion Committee.

The Committee held numerous hearings to form a consensus among the leaders for a self-governing body of the Korean expatriates in Manchuria and a united army. They met at various sites. Then an unbelievable, stranger than fiction event, the Wangba Incident, occurred. Kim Dong Sam, Choe Dong Oh, Hyong Muk Kwan, Lim Byong Mu, Kim Don Gul, Lee Youn Gul, Song San Ha and other leaders of the three Commands met in Sinahntun to discuss alliance and cooperation. Sinahntun is located some 30 ri southwest of Gilchang railway. It was one of the three remaining political hotbeds in Manchuria (Honggyong and Whajun were the others). The Japanese police were tipped off about the meeting and sent five spies to the village. The spies watched the meeting, pretending to be snapping turtle hunters, until they were detected and captured by the village youth. The captured spies were killed and their bodies were tied together and thrown into Songwha River.

The Japanese Consular police in Jirin told the Chinese authorities that innocent Japanese were murdered by Koreans and demanded a joint investigation of the murder. This information was secretly relayed to the meeting attendees by Oh In Wha, an interpreter working for the Chinese, whereupon the meeting was adjourned and the attendees left the area in a hurry. This incident became known as the Wangba Incident, 'wangba' means 'snapping turtles' in Chinese.

The National Alliance Promotion Committee worked to overcome not only the obstacles placed by the Japanese, who feared any alliance of Korean activists, but also the rampant factionalism within each of the three Commands. Jungyi Command was split into a 'go alone' faction and a pro-merger faction; Sinmin Command was split into a military faction and a civilian faction; and Chamri Command was split into an anti-merger and a pro-merger faction. The factions within the Commands fought for supremacy and eventually split the commands. Kim Dong Sam, Lee Chung Chun, Lee Jong Gun and other anti-merger leaders left Jungyi Command. Likewise, Kim Jwa Jin and Whang Hak Soo led the military faction away from Sinmin Command.

Jirin was the favorite meeting place of the Committee. There was a rice mill called, Bok-hung-tae, located in Jirin. The mill was operated by a Korean and its office became the living quarters and the meeting place for Korean activists. People from northern and southern regions of Manchuria stopped by there as a way station. It was crowded everyday. It was here that the Committee met burning midnight oil. This mill was located near my school (Yukmoon Middle School) and I daily dropped by the mill and mingled with the attendees. The mill owner was a nationalist sympathetic to communism. He made living by charging for refining rice, that is, separating bran off rice grains. He made a comfortable living.

One day, the mill owner introduced me to the meeting attendees: "Folks, this is Kim Hyong Jik's son". I met Kim Jwa Jin, Kim Dong Sam, Sim Yong Jun and other bigwigs attending the meeting. The owner jokingly said: "Sung Ju's ideology differs from ours". I replied smiling: "Oh, no. You should not put it that way. You all want Korean independence and I, too, want it. How can our ideologies differ?" They said: "Well, we hear that you are a socialist". I thought it was an opportune moment to do some



communist propaganda and said: "In this day and age, young people all over the world are pushing communism. Why should you object young Koreans pushing communism? If we do not accept new ideas and cling to the old instead, how can Korea advance? You and I are of two different generations, two different eras, and if you block or ignore the young generation's aspirations, Korea will not be helped." The old leaders shot back: "We don't want to stand in your way. Do you plan to overthrow us?" I told the old veterans that was not our intent and did my best to put their unfounded concerns to rest. I ran into this kind of questioning several times later.

I anxiously waited for the news of merger agreement, but the negotiators were in no hurry and dragged their feet. After a few days of hanging around the meeting place, I got to see how the old leaders lived and worked. They were from another era, long gone. There was a hotel called Sangpoong. located outskirt of Jirin, near Joyang Gate. When merger meetings broke for rest, the Command leaders went there to draw up plans for their next move. Near the hotel was Rev. Song Jung Do's chapel, which doubled as our recreational meeting place. I spent hours there on weekends and got to observe the old veterans staying at the hotel. Their room had a well-used chessboard, which the hotel proprietor made specially for the veterans in order to keep them occupied. The venerable veterans spent days arguing amongst themselves and playing chess games.

The hotel manager bent backward to accommodate the old men to the point of going bankrupt; he bought the best-grade rice from Tae-poong-ham rice mill and somehow managed to hustle up scarce meats, fish and tofu. In addition, the old men were fed noodles during the night so that they could enjoy their all-night chess games. The hotel owner's daughter told me that all these services were provided free of charge. She said the old men kept her busy asking for cigarettes and drinks - all gratis. She told her mother; "Mom, three months of free-loading by these old men and we will go belly-up and we will be out in the streets begging for foods." Her mother was angry at her and said: "Look here. These guests fight for our country and they deserve to be served. Soon they will be leaving us to do battle with the enemy. Don't you ever talk like that again!"

But doing battle with the enemy was the last thing on these old men' mind. They locked up weapons, bought with money collected from the working poor, in their armory and idled away arguing and playing chess games through the nights. When they saw me coming, they would open a ledger book and pretend doing something useful. The old men did not wish to be seen as a bunch of lazy bums to the youngsters. There were days when the old men threw filthy epithets at each other, pounding the desk with clenched fists. The stumbling point was which faction would manage the united front. One faction claimed that it had the longest track records and so it should be in charge; another faction claimed that it had the largest territory and people and so, it should be in control. Each faction fought to dominate others. After a day's of shouting and screaming at each other, the old men would eat and drink together all night long.

On one Sunday, I ran into a man, said to be the finance minister of Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, at Tae-poong-ham rice mill. He and associates had been in Jirin for months attending the merger conference. He readily mingled with young people and appeared progressive; the man even used some progressive terms. I called him "Master" with respect and confided my inner thoughts to him. On that day, after chit-chatting with him for a while, I sputtered out some words critical of the provisional

government. I said: "The people in Shanghai are more interested in defending their stinking dunghill and getting a fancy title than caring for Korea or the Korean people. How can you talk about patriotism? Doesn't that hurt your conscience? A fancy title here means little more than lording over a handful of poor peasants. Why fight over empty titles?"

The man did not know what to say for a few moment and then lost his temper and screamed at us, "That is an outrageous insult to me. How dare you say such things to a government minister? So, you are against me? Ok, you are right and we are wrong, is that it? If that's the case, I will shame all of us together!" Whereupon, he started to take off his cloth. His intention was to run into the street stark naked and bring shame to all Koreans. His rational was that since he was shamed by us, he would shame all Koreans in retaliation. In my life, I have met many, many people, but none quite like that man from Shanghai. He was a 'government minister', but he acted like a weird bum with some marbles missing. We did not want a Korean government 'minister' running around naked in the streets of China; it would have been a disgrace to the Korean people; we restrained and forced him to be clothed.

On my way home, I resolved not to associate with anyone like that man from Shanghai. How can anyone, who responds to constructive critiques by jumping out of cloth and exposing his naked body to foreigners, achieve independence for Korea? A grownup acting like a child and exposing his belly button to get "even" with his critics! How can a guy like that be in politics?

The Shanghai provisional government was not popular in Manchuria. Many Korean activists in Manchuria were critical of factionalism and toadyism of 'government' leaders in Shanghai; they were not happy about their misuse of funds collected for military supplies. The provisional government collected 'head taxes' and 'special taxes for independence' from Korean expatriates, and in addition, they handed out 'government appointment' papers to rich Koreans; they collected so many won for 'governor', so many won for "county chief", so many won for "minister" and so on. Every imaginable office in Korea had a price tag and for sale.

While the nationalists were haggling over their turf, the Japanese took advantage of the rifts in the Korean ranks and planted informers everywhere. Nationalist leaders became sitting ducks for the Japanese hunters. The most tragic and devastating was the capture of Oh Dong Jin. A Japanese informant, Kim Jong Won, told unsuspecting Oh Dong Jin that Choe Chang Hak, a rich gold mine owner, wanted to meet him to discuss money matters. Oh was told that Choe was ready to donate a huge sum of money. Unfortunately, Oh took the bait and was captured by the Japanese near Mount Hongyoong. Oh's capture hit me hard and I could not eat or sleep for several days.

Adding to the tragic, Oh Gyong Chun, Oh's son, was killed in a fire at a Jirin movie house. I jumped in and dragged him out of the fire, but it was too late. After losing her husband and her son at about the same time, Oh's wife lost her mind. The two tragedies were too much for her to bear. We did our best to care for her, but she passed away. While Oh Dong Jin was fighting for his life in a Japanese court of law, the old men at the merger meeting wasted time arguing and having daily drinking parties. We the young Koreans of Jirin were not amused by their actions.



After capturing Oh Dong Jin, the Japanese saw an opening and went after other leaders. Oblivious to what was happening around them, the old leaders went on business as usual. One day I witnessed a strange unreal scene: for some reason, the old veterans decided to run around with sand bags strapped on their legs in the courtyard of the rice mill. I don't know what they were thinking; it appeared that they were trying to show their martial prowess. I felt sad. On the eve of Japanese invasion of Manchuria and daily deterioration of our independence movement, our so-called leaders were running around with sandbags.

I could not stand it any more and told the old men: "Sirs, I am sure you are aware of the gravity of the situation after Oh Dong Jin's capture. While the Japanese are grabbing and killing our leaders left and right, you are still here talking. Is this the right thing to do? We the young Koreans in southern, northern and eastern regions of Manchuria beg you to stand and work together for Korea. We beg you to merge the three Commands now." Our pleadings fell on deaf ears and the old men continued their old ways.

I cannot express in word how disappointed and helpless we felt about the old leaders' ineptitude. Korean communists were too busy with factionalism and did precious little for Korea; the nationalists, even though they had some military muscles, were also immobilized by factionalism. We had to come out with something to shock them out of their stupor. We decided to stage a drama, a satire on the fractional fights among the nationalist leaders. It was called "Three Men, One Team". When the stage was all set, I went over to the old men and extended our invitation: "Sirs, we have a special entertainment for you. You have been working so hard for so long and deserve a break." They were happy to accept my invitation and we walked over to Rev. Son Jung Do's church.



*Photo: Rev. Son Jung Doh and his daughter. His church was the main meeting place of Jirin Korean expatriates; young Kim Il Sung attended Rev. Son's Sunday services while studying at a Jirin middle school.*

The drama was preceded by several song and dance routines. At first, the old men clapped their hands laughing and enjoyed the show, until it came to the scene of three actors jostling for a seat. It dawned on the old men that the drama was pun on them and they left angry at us screaming, "You are bad people. How dare you defame us like that? You, Sung Ju, are no good." Early in the morning next day, I went to visit the old men as if nothing had happened. I asked them: "Sirs, why did you leave in the middle of our show? You have to see a show in whole to appreciate it. Right, sirs?" The old men blew their stack and came at me: "You defamed us last night. Why?"

I spoke my mind: "Sirs, what was so defamatory? You have been arguing with each other for so long now and we thought that, perhaps, a satirical drama might carry our message to you. The drama expresses what young Koreans feel and want. Don't you think you should know what we the young Koreans and the Korean people in general want?" This finally got through the old men and they said: "You are right. We must do something; otherwise, how can we face those people?"

Shortly thereafter, the old men agreed to form a united front, National Command (guk-min-bu). However, the 'merged' command included only Jung-yi Command's pro-merge faction, Sinmin Command's civilian faction, Chamyi Command's Sim Yong Jun faction. Other factions refused to join this coalition and set up their own alliance - Provisional Reform Federation (Hyok-sin yihoe). Instead of one united front, there were two opposing camps. National Command was a name only and the old men who had joined it refused to give up their old ways and continued factionalism.

This is how the old nationalism died; the old men refused to change with time and consumed themselves in self-inflicted wounds of fractional turf war. They had no intention of leading us into battle fields against the Japanese; rather they were more interested in ego trips and defending their dunghill. These leaders had never believed that the Korean people could free Korea on their own.

The time had come to take the torch away from the old generation. It was our turn to carry on. I believed that only the communist youth of Korea could lead our new nationalism.

# Cha Kwang Soo's Chosen Path

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Whenever I recall my days in Jirin, I see many unforgettable faces, but Cha Kwang Soo's face remains one of the freshest. It was Spring of 1927 when I met him for the first time; Choe Chang Gul, my Whasung Military Academy classmate, introduced Cha to me. Choe, upon close-down of the Academy, was assigned to a Jungyi Command post in Samwon-po, Yuha Province.



One day a runner from Choe's unit delivered a message to me. The message said that a Cha Kwang Soo would be looking for me and that Choe would be coming to Jirin. Several days later, I gave a talk at the Jirin YMCA and on my way home, a bespectacled-man with his head noticeably tilted to one side suddenly stepped in front of me and bluntly asked me if I knew Choe Chang Gul. I told him that I knew him, upon which he extended a hand for handshake. His name was Cha Kwan Soo. He said little and let me do all the talking. He kept on asking various questions. After a while he walked away and disappeared without saying much. *(Photo: Cha Kwang Soo).*

Some time later, Choe Chang Gul showed up in Jirin as he said he would in his message and looked me up. Jungyi Command was headquartered in Jirin and a company of soldiers was assigned to guard the HQ. Choe, using the occasion of doing something with the HQ Company, came to see me. I told Choe that I had met Cha and that Cha did not open up to me; and that his first impression was not good. Choe said he had the same problems with Cha the first time he met him.

Choe assured me that Cha was really a nice man and related how he met Cha. One day Choe's company commander received an intelligence report from the HQ about a communist agitator, a teacher at Yusuha School. The company commander ordered Choe to arrest this man immediately. Choe was well aware of how communists were treated by the army and dispatched his most trusted soldiers to fetch Cha for interrogation. The soldiers were served dinner at the lodging where Cha was staying. The soldiers deemed the meal beneath their status, especially after finding dead bugs and few rice grains in their rice bowls. The soldiers were used to much better meals and felt insulted by the owner of the lodging, and began to dress down the cowering owner. At this point, Cha stepped in defense of the owner.

Cha told the soldiers: "This man has not seen a single kernel for days and living on grass. He borrowed rice from his landowner just for you. If you want to fault anyone, why not fault his landowner? You should not be angry with this owner, who had done the best he could for you." The soldiers stopped yelling and fell silent embarrassed. They were sent to arrest Cha, but they left without him and reported to Choe Chang Gul that Cha was no communist; the soldiers swore that Cha was a patriot. Choe met Cha himself and found Cha to be a honest patriot.

I took Choe's word and accepted that Cha must be a real McCoy. About one week after Choe left Jirin, Cha reappeared from nowhere and told me that he had done some sightseeing of Jirin and asked me how Korean nationalists and communists could be united. Earlier, Chiang Kaisek had betrayed Chinese communists, and Korean communists debated hotly if they should work with Korean nationalists or not. The question had become the touchstone for separating opportunists from real believers of communism. Cha's question was apparently meant to determine where I stood. The truth of the matter was that Chiang's betrayal had put Chinese communists in a bad shape. Until the betrayal, Chinese communists were making tremendous advances, which were driven, among other factors, by the alliance of Chiang's nationalists and communists.

Since the 1920s, Chinese revolution waged effective campaigns against Chinese reactionary forces. Starting in Summer of 1926, Chinese revolutionaries, shouting such slogans as "Down with Imperialism!", "Down with Warlords!", and "Purge Feudal Powers!", marched north and occupied Hunan, Hobei, Gansi, Poching (Bok-gun) and some other provinces; the victorious revolutionaries occupied key cities along Yangtze River; they attacked Chiang Tzolin's warlords, who were supported by the Japanese imperialists.

The workers of Shanghai waged three heroic uprisings and seized the city. Citizens of Nuhan and Gugang occupied the British section. Workers went on general strikes in support of the revolutionaries. Peasants and workers, risking their lives, joined the revolutionary ranks. At this point in time, Chiang Kaisek broke the nationalist-communist alliance and joined the reactionary camp, he purged communists from leadership positions and held secret negotiations with imperialist powers to curry their favors. If Chiang had not perpetrated this betrayal, Chinese revolution would have achieved a great deal more and conflicts between Chiang's nationalists and communists would have been avoided - said Cha with much indignation.

Upon securing Kwangdong revolutionary base and successful execution of Northern Expedition, Chiang Kaisek established a military dictatorship and mounted Fascist terror campaigns against his former communist allies; he faked the Jungsamham incident in March 1926 in order to drive out Chou Enlai and other communists from Wangpao Military Academy and the First Army. In March 1927, Chiang forcibly disbanded Namchang and Gugang organizations that supported Sun Yatson's Three National Principles. On March 31 that year, his forces attacked a mass meeting in Chunking and murdered many innocent citizens. On April 12, 1927, Chiang's forces committed barbaric atrocities against Shanghai citizens; the atrocities spread to other regions. Chinese communists had suffered stunning setbacks. Some Korean communists asserted that the Chinese case showed the danger and futility of working with nationalists. This was what Cha had on his mind.

It had been my position, since the inception of 'Down with Imperialism' Association, that Korean nationalists and communists must work together. I told Cha: "It is true that some Korean nationalists have yielded to Japanese pressure and are promoting 'self-rule' and 'reformism' for the Japanese, but the great majority of Korean nationalists and progressive intellectuals, both in Korea and abroad, are working for Korean independence. Korean nationalists have withstood the most cruel and barbaric acts of the

Japanese and yet, stay firm in their faith in Korean independence. Therefore, we must join hands with nationalists and patriotic capitalists." I believe, then and now, that Korean nationalists were the first to get on the stage of independence activities and had played key roles.

In the beginning, Korean nationalism sprang up to protect Korean people's interests, a progressive idea. In the years when the Yi kings were helplessly rolling downhill, when foreign troops occupied Korea, and when imperialists forced their way in, it was Korean nationalists who rose up to defend the nation; it was they who had lit the torch for mass enlightenment, and promoted "self-rule and independence", "defend nation and protect people", "expel foreign devils, expel Japanese". It was a natural phase in our history that Korean nationalism came forth to defend Korea and the Korean people against foreign powers, which used Korea a pawn in their power games.

That fact that Korean nationalism was led by newly emerging Korean bourgeois does not mean that Korean nationalism was capitalistic in ideology. Labeling it so would be unfair. The bourgeois nationalism opposed feudalism and fought for the common interest of the Korean people and the Korean bourgeois. Later on, as capitalism developed in Korea, some nationalists had become instruments of oppression and exploitation by capitalists. It is important for us to understand that there were Korean nationalists who did not work for capitalists and who worked for the Korean people. To lump all nationalists in one single category is a grave error.

We are opposed to and wary of bourgeois nationalism, but we support and welcome genuine nationalism. Why? Because genuine nationalism is based on patriotism, and patriotism is shared by Korean communists and Korean nationalists. Patriotism makes it possible for communists and nationalists to walk on the same path as comrades. Love of Korea and the Korean people runs in both camps and it binds communists to nationalists. In the past, genuine nationalists fought to modernize Korea and free Korea; they did this because they loved Korea. They had achieved a lot and done much for Korea.

Today, Korea is divided into North and South, under different laws and ideologies, but the belief that Korea can be united is shared by both communists and genuine nationalists; both are driven by patriotism. Korea is one nation and genuine nationalism is patriotism; patriotism is genuine nationalism. In this sense, I am a communist and a nationalist. I have held this belief all my life, since my student activist days till today.

I emphasized to Cha Kwang Soo that genuine nationalism must not be mixed with bourgeois nationalism. They were two different animals. After hearing me out, Cha grabbed my arms and said out-loud "Sung Ju!" I believe it was not my oratorical skill that moved Cha, but rather, it was my practical down-to-earth analysis of the situation at hand. After this, Cha began to open up to me. He was a changed man. Until then, he had been a man of few words and I did most of the talking. But now, words came out of his mouth in torrents.

Cha was quite a man. He was seven years older than I was and had studied at a college in Japan. He was an excellent writer and orator. He was kind and sociable, and many young Koreans followed him. His

young followers vied with other to be the most expert on Marxism. Kim Chan, the Whayo ("Tuesday") communist faction boss, was no match for Cha when it came to Marxism. Cha used to think that Kim Chan was a Marxism scholar, but after having seen him a few times, Cha rated Kim Chan not much better than a middle school pupil of Marxism. Sin In Young of the other communist faction, Suh-sang, fared no better; Sin turned out to be a junior league when matched against Cha Kwang Soo.

Cha's head tilted slightly to a side when he walked. When he was a child, he had a growth on his neck that forced him to tilt his head. Even after the growth was gone, this habit stayed with him. Cha was born in North Pyongahn Province. He was noted for his unusual brightness by the villagers, and at the tender age of ten he went to Japan to study on his own, working to support himself. That was when he was exposed to Marxism-Leninism; he read extensively and became interested in communism. Cha's life of working and studying at the same time, with no help from anyone, was extremely hard. Communists in Japan at the time was in chaos. Soon after its formation, key leaders of Communist Party of Japan were arrested in June 1923. In addition, white terrorism against communists spread all across Japan after the Kando earthquake that destroyed Tokyo. After that, opportunists took control of the Party and eventually brought the Party down.

Cha felt that Japan was no place to study Marxism or plan any socialist actions, and so, he returned to Seoul, Korea, where he met so-called Korean communists. Cha learned that the Korean communists were more into factionalism than communism; there were so many factions fighting for the control of the Party that it was difficult to see who was who. Cha studied the themes put forth by the factions and soon found that the Korean communists were short on Marxism and long on egoism. What made the factions different had nothing to do with any ideology or political agenda, but had everything to do with personality.

The most disgusting event Cha remembered from his Seoul days was the Nak-yang Restaurant (rak-yang-gwan) incident. 'Tuesday' and 'North Wind' faction leaders met at this restaurant to bury their hatchets and merge. Upon learning of this peace confab, 'Seoul' faction members, fearing an uneven playing field, surrounded the eatery and broke up the meeting, whose attendants were beaten. Several of the attendees were seriously injured, and to make the matter more disgusting, the injured men filed lawsuits in a Japanese court of law against their assailants. After this incident, each faction formed its own terrorist gang. Cha Kwang Soo could not believe his eyes; how could communists be so stupid and stoop so low? Cha could not take it any more and left Seoul on his way to Manchuria. Cha figured that surely communists in Manchuria, being so close to Russia, would be more genuine and enlightened.

By the time Cha reached Manchuria, Korean communists announced "Jungwoo" declaration, whereby the factions would air their themes in public debates and achieve some kind of consensus and unity. The faction leaders asserted that open public debates would be good in getting the mass behind communism. But the sad fact of the matter was that such open public debates benefited, not the Korean people, but the Japanese police detectives. Soon after the formation of Communist Party of Korea, 'Tuesday' faction and 'Seoul' faction fought over the control of the Party. In a show of force, 'Tuesday' faction made public a list of its 72 members on newspapers; in effect, they were so blinded by factionalism, they handed the Japanese police the names of key communist leaders. The Japanese wasted not time and arrested the

communists on the list. Most leaders of 'Tuesday' faction ended up in jail because of their stupidity. In spite of this bitter experience, the Korean communist factions wanted to hold public debates! It was unbelievable.

Cha Kwang Soo saw a parallel between 'Jungwoo' declaration and Hukumoto movement of Japan. After the mass arrest and collapse of Communist Party of Japan, Hukumoto asserted that through public debates, genuine communism believers could be separated from opportunists, and then the Party could be rebuilt with genuine communists. Hukumoto was a factionalist bent on splitting communists in Japan and had done enormous damages to the labor movement of Japan. Cha Kwang Soo saw that the Korean factionalists had copied Hukumoto's theme verbatim; Cha spat on the Korean factionalists and moved away from them. Thus disillusioned by Korean communists, Cha became a village school master in Yuha and taught Marxism to his young pupils. He was set to lead a quiet teacher's life in a remote village. That was when Choe Chang Gul discovered him.

Cha told Choe that he had been looking for someone to lead him to the correct path of struggle; Cha was walking alone in a foreign land under freezing rains hoping for a Messiah. After telling me his life story, Cha said: "Hi, Sung Ju, can we trust and love each other and promote communism together? Without fractional hegemony?" It was as if Cha found his salvation after years of wandering in a desert. I held his hands and told him: "We the youth of Korea must unite in one mind and follow the correct road of revolution." Cha confessed that when he heard about me from Choe, he thought, "Well, how much can a middle school kid know about Marxism or do anything about Marxism?" Cha joined 'Down with Imperialism' Association soon after our talk.

That Summer, I sent Cha Kwang Soo to Sinahn-tun, a small village created by Korean patriots. It was to be a model village to be replicated at other sites. It was one of the few Korean villages in Manchuria primed for political activism. If we could educate and recruit the peasants of the village, we would be well on our road of revolution. I gave Cha that task. When I told him to go to that remote village, Cha was aghast. He had just left the isolation of a remote village in search of a wider arena and was reluctant to go to another remote isolated village. He asked me in half jest and half earnest, "How come you are sending me to another boondocks, when I just left one? People go to Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and other cosmopolitan cities for politics and some even find these cities too confining and hit the international stage. How much can one accomplish in a remote village?" Cha opposed old ways but he could not break clean of the old mold.

I explained to Cha: "It is wrong to think that you can revolution working in a large city only. We must go where people are, be it a city or a village. The majority of the Korean people are peasants; the majority of the Koreans in Manchuria are peasants, too. There will be no revolution unless we have the peasants with us. Unless we work with the peasants, we will be unable to mobilize them for independence activities. Without the peasants on our side, there will be no communism in Korea. After graduation, I will work in villages myself."

"Hanging around with Communist International does not make anyone a communist. The reason why communism is international is because unless the working class of the world unite, the united capitalism

of the world cannot be shaken. If we fulfill our tasks for national and international revolution, then we would be recognized and supported by the world parties, and our independence movement will be helped."

"Most people today have their eyes focused on the big picture; they leave villages for towns, leave towns for Seoul and leave Seoul for world stages. They want to move up in order to be recognized and put their names on the book. We want to move in the opposite direction; we want to move from cities to towns, from towns to villages. We want to be with our workers and peasants."

"We must move down, not up". Cha repeated this phrase to himself over and over. After some moments of reflection, Cha pounded the desk with his fists and shouted: "That is truly an eye-opener!" Thanks to Cha Kwang Soo, 'Down with Imperialism' Association now had a Marxist theoretician, who could stand up to any Marxist scholars. Since then, Cha was with us for three years and shared our trials and triumphs. Cha laid the foundation for youth and students activism, revolutionary indoctrination of the people; he made invaluable contributions to formation of anti-Japan military organizations. His name is indelibly inscribed in revolutionary places such as Sinahn-tun, Gangdong, Gyoha, Gohyu-soo, Kayun, Ohgaja and Yuha

Cha Kwang Soo helped place Korean villages in Jirin region on revolutionary footing; after Jirin, he spread his revolutionary zeal to other regions: Yuha, Kayun, Goyu, Ohgahja and regions in central Manchuria; he rallied comrades Kim Won, Geh Young Chun, Chang Wul Wha, Park Gun Won, Lee Jong Rak, Park Cha Suk and others. Cha spent his last days forming anti-Japan armed units in Ahndong. Cha had a mass appeal and was well received by the people wherever he went. His education, cheerfulness and openness made him popular with the people. Cha's lectures on social science were popular with young students. He gave many lectures and taught numerous songs to lowly peasants.

Sinahn-tun was Cha's favorite village; he taught at Gilhong school for some time and stayed with the school principal's family. He worked to indoctrinate the village women, youth and peasants, and formed Anti-Imperialism Youth League, Peasants Association, Women's Association, and Children's Association. Until then, the village was under the influence of Korean nationalists and communist factionalists, who came to the village now and then, talking about "proletarian revolution" and other fancy words to a bunch of feudal peasants. Consequently, the village elders did not want anything to do with socialism or communism. They would not touch communism with ten-foot poles and Cha was shunned at first by the villagers.

Cha rented a room from a villager and invited a select group of village elders for harmless chit-chats and refreshments. Soon, Cha had converts and these converts worked on other villagers. They used lines like: "We live in a rotten world now. The only way to get out of this hell-hole is to get rid of landlords. Right?" There was no fancy communist slogans or terms mentioned. After getting the elders' trust, Cha went after the rest by conducting evening classes, giving lectures, singing and dancing with the villagers. Soon the villagers volunteered that socialism of Cha's kind would be welcome and joined Cha's bandwagon in droves. Once Cha was firmly rooted, I spent weekends in the village and worked with



him. In order to throw off prying eyes of the enemy, I change into peasants wears in the millet and corn fields outside Jirin. I got to know Cha very well and likewise, he got to know me well.

One day, Cha came to see me in Jirin and took me to a park for a walk. After we sat down by a tree, he whispered to me that there was a man called, Huh Yul, in town whom we should keep an eye on. Cha said Huh had been a revolutionary since his school days. He came to Jirn to study law at Jirin College of Law, but he had to drop out because of money problems. Cha was concerned about Huh because he thought Kim Chan sent Huh to Jirin. I was surprised to hear that. Kim Chan was a noted Korean communist, one of the founding fathers of communism in Korea. He served as the propaganda chief of the first communist party in Korea and had played a key role in forming the second communist party. He escaped to Shanghai and established Shanghai branch of Communist Party of Korea. Kim was representative of 'Tuesday' faction and the real founder of Manchurian General Bureau of Communist Party of Korea.

The reason why Kim Chan sent his man to Jirin was because he had some designs for us. The news of our communist activities in Jirin spread to far places and many eyes were on us. Seeing that we were onto something, they sent their best talents to Jirin to influence us. Kim Chan himself came to Jirin several times and contacted young students there; he gave several lectures. I had attended one of his lectures myself. I heard that a Marxism guru was to give a lecture in town and went to see Kim Chan with Cha Kwang Soo, Kim was staying at Lee Gum Chun's house near Daedong Gate. He talked about some gibberish on how to apply Marxism to Korea; we left him disappointed.

In his lecture, Kim claimed that his faction was the only true Communist Party of Korea and talked evils of other factions; he asserted that Korean revolution was for Korea's toiling mass only and so, only workers and poor peasants should carry out the revolution; no non-proletarian classes were welcome. It was clear to me that Kim's line of argument would harm our revolution by confusing the mass and I was determined to counter Kim's grotesque assertions. Cha Kwang Soo agreed with me and confessed that he worshipped Kim Chan without realizing what he really was.

Korean communists were divided into various factions, each faction tried its best to recruit young Korean to its camp. A man called Ahn Kwang Chun, from "ML" faction came to Jirin wearing a white Korean cape. He claimed that he was the boss of Korean Communist Party and tried to muscle in. At one time, he served as general secretary of "ML" communist faction and he ego was sky-high. There were people in Jirin who actually worshipped him as "the Marxist guru". Cha Kwang Soo told me that Ahn was in fact a noted Marxist theoretician and so, I went to see him several times, hoping to learn some lessons from him. Ahn, like Kim Chan, was an eloquent speaker.

His opening statements made sense and the audience was impressed; but as his lecture progressed, his true character became more and more evident. His statements were derogatory of the common people. He claimed that Communist International or some big brother nation would communize Korea and therefore, there was no need for the Korean people to struggle for revolution. "Korea is a small nation and the Korean people should work for other communist parties and in time, they would take care of us. Why should we shed our own blood for revolution? Let others do it for us." I found his thesis totally out of

touch with reality. I concluded that Ahn was another communist opportunist and told him that his assertions were nonsensical.

I said to Ahn: "Sir, you seem have a low esteem for the common people. Why do you mess with communism? Why did come to Girin and urge the people to join revolution?" I also told him that there was no way a handful of Marxists could achieve revolution on their own without the mass behind them and that it was a sheer fantasy to think that foreign nations would achieve independence for us. Ahn shrugged off my critiques saying that I was too young to understand and that I should face the fact and accept the truth. Ahn left Jirin. That was the last time we took him seriously.

Korean communist factionalists shouted such ultra-left opportunist slogans as "Korean revolution is a proletarian revolution!" and "Let us first build Korean socialist state in Manchuria!" as well as such ultra-right opportunist slogans as "Korean revolution is a bourgeois democracy revolution and its primary objective is Korean independence!" and "National bourgeois must lead our revolution!". Some communists claimed that in a country like Korea, where political situations were unsuitable, although ideological struggles were feasible, but no political movement was possible. Some people claimed "independence first, revolution second!" Some shouted hyper-revolutionary slogans such as "Let us oppose capitalism and achieve worldwide proletarian revolution!" and spread mass confusion.

Sin Il Yong was another Marxist theoretician, who Chan Kwang Soo and I debunked. We had met many Korean communists and found that, without exception, they were fame-seekers and petit bourgeois megalomaniacs; they were seeped in toadyism and blind dogmatism. I told Cha that Kim Chan might be famous to some people, but he was nevertheless a worthless factionalist and therefore he should be shunned; I told him that we should not be fooled by people's titles or reputation, instead we should examine what they believed in and where they stood on mass movements. Cha Kwang Soo said that he thought it would benefit our nascent communist revolution if we had support from people like Kim Chan; but now, he realized that it was wrong. Cha said he would cut ties with Huh Yul immediately.

I did not agree with his position on Huh Yul. If Huh Yul was tainted head to toe with factionalism, I would agree with Cha's position. However, if Huh went astray temporarily, then we ought to correct his mistake and bring him into our camp. I decided to meet Huh myself. Several days later, Cha led me to Gandong village where Huh lived. We crossed Songwha bridge and walked toward Donwha to Mount Yongdam. The village was nestled at the foot of this mountain. We had formed Anti-Imperialism Youth Association there and planned to turn this village into another Sinahn-tun. I found Huh Yul honest and sincere. I decided that he was too valuable an asset to be wasted away in factionalism. I told Cha to work with him and I, too, worked with him in various ways.

Huh Yul did not let us down. He was sent to plant the seed of factionalism, but he became an ardent fighter against factionalism; he turned his back on his former mentor Kim Chan. Huh joined "Down with Imperialism" Association and was instrumental in bringing revolution to Gandong. Later on, Huh Yul became a key leader of Anti-Imperialism Youth Association and Communist Youth Association.

# Lessons of Wanchungmun Massacre

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In the Autumn of 1929, National Command (gukmin-bu) convened a conference of East Manchuria Youth Association and South Manchuria Youth Association for the purpose of merging the two. Leaders of National Command wanted to unite youth activities in light of the merger of "Three Commands" (sam-bu). They wanted to eliminate factionalism and form a unified organ, Korean Youth Federation, to coordinate all youth activities. What they really wanted was to place all youth and student activities under National Command.

Since we were not associated with either of the two youth organizations and were not obligated to be present at the conference. However, we did not want National Command to dominate the conference. Also, Korean communist factionalists had many followers in both East and South Manchurian Youth Associations, and we feared that the conference might cause more breakups than union.



Upon arriving at Wangchungmun, I looked up Hyon Muk Kwan. After National Command was formed, Hyon moved from Jirin to Wangchungmun. He was glad to see me and said the National Command had great expectations of me at the conference. He asked me to stay at his house for the duration of the conference, so he and I could discuss future youth activities. I appreciated his generous offer but declined and stayed with Kang Hong Rak, a distant relative on my mother's side. Hyon's house was crowded with people setting up the conference and I felt it was not the right place to be.

*[Lee Wha Rang note: Hyong Muk Kwan (see photo at left) was born in 1886 as Hyon Ik Chul (Muk Kwan was his penname). He served with various anti-Japanese organizations in Manchuria, until his capture in 1931 by the Japanese. He served a 7-year prison term and went to Shanghai after completing term. On May 7, 1938, he was shot and killed, while attending a meeting with Kim Gu, Lee Chung Chun and Yu Dong Yul. His assailant Lee Woon Whan worked for a pro-Japanese group headed by Park Chang Se. Kim Gu gave Hyon a state funeral.]*

Kang Hong Rak was a leftist nationalist intellectual and taught at Hwahung Middle School. Hwahung was a political indoctrination school for Korean Independence Army just as Daesing Middle School was in Eastern Manchuria. The problem was that no matter how hard the school teachers tried to instill nationalism, most graduates turned into communists. Kang Hong Rak's wife was Oh Sin Ae, a good-looking modern woman. She was a good singer, known as "Songbird" in southern regions of Manchuria.

National Command opened a preparation meeting of the youth representatives in town and appointed a steering committee. Choe Bong and several other friends of mine were on the committee. Choe and I

went back to my Whasung Military Academy days. He was a key leader of South Manchurian Youth Association and gave many speeches to Korean residents in various towns and villages. Choe came to the Academy and gave a speech that was received well. He was intelligent and well educated. Since then we stayed in contact and he began to lean towards communism.

I, too, was elected to the steering committee. After hours of hot debates and we hammered out a resolution draft for the conference. We believed that it would be acceptable to all. In addition, we drafted some other documents to our satisfaction. I began to work on the representatives starting the day after my arrival in Wangchungmun. I held a meeting of the representatives at the school yard of Whahung Middle. I wanted to get to know them and warn them about National Command's dark intentions. I told them that in order to be united in action, we must be united in ideology first, and the ideology must be modern and progressive. My speech was relayed immediately to National Command leaders. Kim Lee Gap informed me that the leaders were keeping a close tap on me, thus confirming Cha Kwang Soo's premonition when I left him in Yuha.

Kim Lee Gap was a founding member of "Down with Imperialism" Association; after Whasung Military Academy was closed, he moved in with his fiancée, Chun Gyong Sook, who lived not far from Wangchungmun. Kim worked in nearby villages spreading revolution. He was quick and daring, and was effective even in the regions controlled by anti-communist nationalists. He came to the conference as an observer. The day after my speech at the school yard, he came to me and invited me to dine with him at his fiancée's house. He wanted to spend an evening talking about our good old days at the Academy. But his real intent was to fill me in on what National Command leaders were up to.

Kim Lee Gap told me that the Command planned to arrest all members of the preparation committee. He told me that I should get out before the Command made its move and that he planned to leave that night himself. He said that the Command leaders had met at Hyon Muk Kwan's house and decided to eliminate me because of my communist belief. However, I decided to ignore his warning and stay put, because I had done no harm to National Command and they would not dare to arrest me. That fact that I was a communist was a public knowledge known to all leaders of National Command and Hyon Muk Kwan, who had invited me to stay at his house only two days ago. Why would they arrest me now? I had not done anything against them, and all I had said to the youth representatives was that we should be united in ideology.

I was determined to face down National Command leaders, if necessary. I went to Kang Hong Rak's place for dinner that night. His fiancée, Oh Sin Ae, returned from somewhere with an ashen face; she said that Choe Bong and several other members of the committee had been arrested by National Command soldiers. She said they were looking for me and that I had better get moving. We wanted to form a coalition of all Korean youth for pan-nationalist movement for Korean independence, but National Command leaders had responded with white terrorism against us. I decided to face down with Goh Yi Huh, the youth commissioner of National Command.

Cha Kwang Soo had heard of the arrest and came running to Kang Hong Rak's place with several

associates. They insisted that all members of the steering committee, still free, should leave Wangchungmu at once, but I could not run away from such illegal threats. I thought that the best course of action was to meet the terrorists face to face and resolve this problem; I wanted to present our position in a frank and open manner to the nationalists and try to talk them into understanding where we were coming from; besides, I had to do something to free our comrades under arrest.

I put Cha Kwang Soo in charge in case of my demise and set out to face down Goh Ih Huh. Goh was the most extreme of ultra-right nationalists of National Command. Goh was known as the "theorist" in the nationalist camp. When I walked into his office, he was surprised to see me and did not know what to do. I was the last person he expected to see in his office. I demanded to know why Choe Bong and other members of the steering committee were arrested. Goh claimed that he did not know and he was wondering the same thing. I saw through his duplicity but I suppressed my simmering anger at him and tried to reason with him. I said: "It was National Command that arranged for the conference and we drafted a resolution for all representatives to debate on. But even before the debate, you arrested the committee members because you did not like our draft. If anything in the draft that offends you, that can be changed. It was only a draft. You called the meeting and you have every opportunity to change things. If you arrest innocent people like this, how can you unite our people? How can young Koreans grow up to be fierce anti-Japanese fighters?"

Goh claimed that it was true that the students went too far left in the draft but he had nothing to do with their arrests. I could tell that he was lying to me. I told Goh: "I know you were once a student activist in Seoul and had attempted to escape to the Soviet Union, and so, you must be aware how wide spread communism is worldwide. Today, just about everyone who is in some kind of revolution is likely to be leaning to communism. That is the case with me. I attended Whasung Military Academy run by nationalists and I stayed for three years at a nationalist leader's house in Jirin, and yet, I am pushing communism, not nationalism. We the youth of Korea are in tune with the trend in the world today and believe that communism is the way to go for our independence and for our prosperity and happiness. You are fighting for our independence and even if you do not support the aspirations of young Koreans, you should not arrest them."

I added that instead of going after Korean youth and students, National Command should work with them hands in hands and fight together for our independence. I told him that South Manchurian Youth Association would be nothing without its communist members. Goh Yi Huh sneered and said: "There is no way National Command will let communists take over that Association. We would rather dissolve it than let that happen."

I asked him why and he said: "In Bansuk Province, members of "ML" communist party organized "The Club", a terrorist group, and attached Korean nationalists. How can we work with people like these?" I knew that in Summer of 1929, "ML" members tried to get Korean nationalists in Sampo arrested by Chinese authorities. They fed Chinese police false information on the nationalists. The "ML" factionists came after us as well; The Club terrorists had attacked our Anti-Imperialism Youth Association members. In Yuha region, Choe Chang Gul's soldiers had to be mobilized to counter these communist terrorists.

I told Goh Yi Ha that; "We have nothing to do with those communist terrorists. They attack not only nationalists but also us as well. They fight amongst themselves. You should not place us in the same category with those terrorists." Goh was not convinced and did not buy my argument; so I went for broke. "If you insist on suppressing the youth movement, you will be committing crimes against the nation and you will be remembered as criminals in our history. You may be able to stop a few bodies, but you will never stop the will of the mass for communism. Ok, you want to kill me? Here I am. Go ahead, kill me now. I am ready." That did not budge him, rather it made him to dig in deeper in their trenches.

That night, National Command mobilized troops to arrest us. I told Cha Kwang Soo and company to leave the area and go back to their base in Samwonpo, because I feared that Command might try to arrest our people in Yuha. I told members of Communist Youth Association and of Anti-Imperialism Youth Association to leave the area that night. I told them that National Command was about to arrest them and that they should let the world know of what was happening here. That was how the conference was aborted.

I decided to get out of Wangchungmun. My friends suggested that we should convene our own conference in Samwonpo, which was under Choe Chang Gul's military control, but I told them that National Command was too strong in that region and going there would endanger us all. For myself, I debated if I should go to Samwonpo or to Rungga. I settled on the latter; I would go there and plan our next move; I would hide out there for a while and then go to Jiririn. If things did not work out in Jiririn, then I would go back to Musong and work the mass until things settled down.

I went to Kang Hung Rak's house and said: "I will be arrested if I stayed here tonight. I am heading out to Rungga now and I need something for my journey." Kang Hong Rak was worried and sighed: "You don't know the way there! How will you make it there by yourself?" I said, "It is only 80 ri on the highway and I will make it OK. Please. don't worry." I told them that I had a friend there, a graduate of Moonkwang Middle School, who would help me. The Kangs put together some food for my journey and wished me good luck.

Sin Young Gun was my friend who graduated from Moonkwang Middle School. He headed Hanhung School in Rungga. By the time I reached him, it was noon the following day. Girls of the school attended to me. Ahn Sin Young was Sin Yiung Gun's girl friend; she was active with our Anti-Imperialism Youth Association in Gandong until she joined her boy friend in Rungga. She and her friends brought me a delicious bowl of cold noodles and other welcome foods. How delicious those meals were! I can still taste them in my mouth. After gulping down the foods, I started asking them about the school and before long I fell asleep. Sin Young Gun hand-signaled his students from the school yard for his class, instead of the normal school bell that told the students to get in the classroom. Sin was afraid that the bell might wake me.

While hiding out in Gungga, I received the sad news that National Command executed the members of the steering committee under arrest. They shot and killed Choe Bong, Lee Tae Hee, Ji Woon San, Lee

Mong Yul, Lee Kwang Sun and Cho Hee - six youth in their early 20s. They murdered six bright Korean youth with bright future ahead in cold blood. Choe Bong and the others shouted at their executioners: "We have sworn to die for the toiling mass of Korea, but being killed by fellow Koreans is the last thing we had anticipated." They proudly sang the Song of Revolution and shouted "Long Live Our Revolution!" at the very last moment.

National Command terrorists went after family members of the six youth executed; Goh Yi Huh arrested and killed Oh Sin Ae because she had informed me of his plot to wipe out us all. I wrote out a protest bulletin with tears in my eyes and had it copied in Samwon-po and distributed to our organizations. Protest meeting broke out. "We denounce National Command which murdered our youth movement leaders in cold blood; the Command is nothing but a den of reactionaries, murderers and conspirators; they are in cahoots with Chiang Kai Sek's terrorists who have murdered Chinese workers and farmers; National Command is nothing but a snake pit of traitors."

This was the end of collaboration between National Command and the new generation of Korean communists. The split became open and National Command terrorists killed our youth activists left and right. No one knows how many Korean youth, the flower of our nation, met gruesome death at the hands of National Command terrorists. Deep inerasable hatred for National Command remains in my heart. After the murder of the youth leaders, I could not sleep for several days; my heart was broken and bleeding. We joined the revolution to free Korea and getting persecuted by our own kind was beyond belief.

Since the day I formed "Down with Imperialism" Association, I always wanted to work with nationalists. When I learned that Ahn Chang Ho was toting reformism, I attacked his ideology but fought to free him from jail. I worked hard to see union of "Three Command" and was happy when it happened. In spite of this, National Command turned against us and committed barbaric acts against us. I recalled an old man's saying, "Koreans, even if there were only three, should unite and fight Japanese imperialists". Many nationalists cried for alliance and cooperation. The Korean people wanted all Koreans work together irrespective of religion or political affiliations. But National Command ignored people's demands.

Even today, after so many decades past, whenever I recall that tragic event in Wangchungmun, my body shakes in anger and sorrow and I reaffirm my resolve that never again such a national tragedy be allowed to occur. I believe that even Goh Yi Huh and Hyon Muk Kwan, if they were still living today, would agree with my conviction. Hyon, a long-time friend of mine, was killed by terrorists in Jangsa. His terrorists killed many youth leaders and he died by his own medicine. Hyon Sook Ja, his daughter, returned to Seoul with the Shanghai Provisional Government. It should be recorded that Hyon's descendents live happily in the northern half of Korea. *[Lee Wha Rang note: Goh Yi Huh rose to command the Korean Independence Army. But by 1938, his 'army' was reduce to less than 10. He was captured by the Japanese in August 1936. It is not clear what happened to him after that. Some people say he defected to the Japanese side.]*

Korea's history of liberation war tells us that the path of Korean communists is the path of patriotism;

that Korean communists are true patriots who love Korea and the Korean people. Today, Korea remains divided under foreign intervention and uniting the Korean people is our life or death mission; the specter of Wangchungmun tragedy does not let me forget this mission.



# In Search of Progressive Ideas

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I returned home to Musong and rested for about a month there. After spending New Year's Day with my family, I left Musong middle of January. I returned to Jirin during busy day hours. I recalled the day I arrived at Jirin for the first time. I had written down my father's friends' home addresses in my black book, but I thought looking it up one by one in public would not look right and memorized the addresses. Jirin was bustling city boasting a long history and a country boy that I was found it awesome. After leaving the station, I could hardly walk with the excitements of starting a new life. I took a long, hard look at my new environment.

One of the most striking scenes was the hordes of water vendors. Jirin used to be famous for its abundant clean fresh water, but apparently, water was running out; I wondered what would happen to its citizens in the future. In Jirin, even a gulp of water was not free and I felt uneasy about my empty pockets; but such was life and I strode toward the downtown section with my chin up. A short distance from the station on Charu street was a wall that enclosed the old Jirin city. There were 10 gates around the city: Joyang, Singae, Paho, Rimgang, Boksoo, Duksung, Bukguk, and three other gates. The gates were guarded by Chiang Tzolin's troops. The wall had numerous gaps due to the elements, attesting to its antiquity.

Although I had never been there before, Jirin did not look totally foreign to me, perhaps, because, I wanted to visit this city since my early years and many of Father's friends lived there. I had about ten names to look up in my address book; among them were Oh Dong Jin, Jang Chul Ho, Son Jung Do, Kim Sa Hun, Hyon Muk Kwan (aka Hyon Ik Chul), Goh Won Ahm, Park Ki Baik and Whang Baik Ha. They were my father's friends and I wanted to pay them a courtesy visit.

Oh Dong Jin was the first on my list. His house was located between Charu and Sangbu. I was somewhat apprehensive about meeting Oh because of my early separation from Whasung Military Academy, that he had worked so hard to get me enrolled. Luckily, Oh received me with no visible hard feelings. I related to him why I quit the Academy and came to Jirin. Oh nodded his head and fell silent for a while in deep thought and said: "Looking at you showing up here out of the blue sky, I cannot help but recall your father. He, too, dropped out Sungsil Middle School. I was concerned when I hear about it, but later I came to believe your father did the right thing. Well, anyway, you had the guts to quit the Academy after only six months and came here. If you like it here, you should make your home here." That was all what Oh said about my quitting the Academy and I was glad that he was such an understanding man.

He said that it would have been nice, if my mother and brothers had moved to Jirin with me. At my father's funeral, Oh Dong Jin urged, several times, my mother to move to Jirin, where many of Father's friends lived, but Mother did not wish to move that far from Father's grave. I met Oh's secretary, Choe Il Chun; Oh always bragged about how capable Choe was and I felt I had met him already. Choe was known as the 'writer of Jungyi Command'. He and I became close comrades. That afternoon, Oh took me to Sampoong-jan, where several nationalist leaders were staying. I met Kim Sa Hyon, to whom Kim Si

Woo from Whasung Military Academy wrote a letter of introduction on my behalf me, and Chang Chul Ho, the Command Guard commander.

Sampoong-jan refers to Sampoong Hotel, 'jan' being Chinese for "hotel". In addition to Kim Sa Hyon and Chang Chul Ho, there were other nationalist leaders resident at the hotel. It was, in effect, a dormitory for Korean nationalists just as Taepoong Mill was. The hotel was a popular resting place for weary Korean expatriates coming out of Korea. The owner of the hotel came from Rev. Son Jung Do's home town, Jungsan, South Pyongahn Province. He was persuaded by Rev. Son to come to Manchuria. Sampoong was called a hotel, but it was more like a dormitory or a meeting hall.

The hotel was located less than 100 meters from the Japanese Consulate, which was the nerve center of the Japanese police looking for Korean nationalists. It did not occur to the Japanese that their preys were meeting and sleeping right under their nose. Koreans laughed at the blind Japanese police and the old Korean saying - "Every candle casts its own shadow" - applied to that situation. Strange though it may sound, no nationalist had been arrested at the hotel. I myself stayed at that hotel several times.

After reading Kim Si Woo's letter of introduction, Kim Sah Hyon told me that he knew Kim Gang, a Korean teaching at Yookmoon Middle School, and asked me if I would be interested in attending that school. It was a private school established by progressive citizens of Jirin and reputed to be the best in Jirin, Kim said. The school's good reputation was widely known, largely thanks to Kiljang Daily news, which printed articles favorable to the school. The school had money scandals and a spat of dictatorial principals in the past; in fact, Lee Kwang Han had just replaced Jang Hum Hun, a Nanking university graduate not long before my arrival. The fact that four different principals had come and gone showed how well the school was no nonsense. Its teachings were progressive, righteous and puritan. Because of this, I was attracted to it.

Next day, Kim Sa Hyon took me to meet Kim Kang at Yookmoon Middle. Kim was well versed in English. Kim took me to the principal, Lee Kwang Han, who was a leftist Chinese nationalist and a middle school classmate of Chou Enlai. Lee and Chou were close friends since childhood. I learned about this many years later. Premier Chou came to Pyongyang on a state visit and I told him about my Chinese friends who had helped me during my years in China. I mentioned Lee Kwang Han's name and Premier Chou's face lit up; he said Lee and he were close friends and were in the same class at Namgae University middle school in Chunjin.

Lee Kwan Han asked me what I planned to do after graduation and I answered that I wanted to work for Korean independence. He commended me for my lofty plan and readily granted me my wish to be enrolled in the sophomore class. Lee Kwan Han helped me many times since; on account of my youth movement activities and covert actions, I missed many classes. He knew what I was into, but he looked the other way; he protected me from reactionary teachers on the warlord's side who might have turned me in; he had helped me escape through backdoor when warlord troops and Japanese police came looking for me at the school. Being a clean conscientious principal, he attracted many progressive teachers to the school.



After completing my enrolment, I returned to Oh Dong Jin's house. Oh and his wife told me to stay with them instead of the school dormitory, until my graduation. This offer was much appreciated because my mother could send me only three won a month, which was barely enough for my tuition, books and a pair of shoes; there was nothing left for food and lodging. My mother worked as a laundress and a seamstress and three won a month was the most she could send to me. I had to rely on charity and goodwill of Father's friends. Thus, I stayed at Oh's house until he was captured by the Japanese, and then at Chang Chul Ho's house for a year, several months at Hyon Mook Kwan's house and lastly at Lee Woon's house. Lee Woon took over Oh Dong Jin's position.

*[Lee Hwa Rang note: Chang Chul Ho (1892 - 1945) commanded Company 5 of National Command, Gukmin-bu. In 1929, he took over the 2nd Battalion of Korean Revolutionary Army, Chosen hyuk-myon-gun. He died on February 2, 1945. Photo: Chang Chul Ho.]*

Most of the nationalist bigwigs had known my father and they were kind and generous to me; I got to meet many other nationalists through them. At that time, most of the Jungyi Command leaders lived in Jirin. The Command had administrative, financial, justice, military, education, foreign affairs, security and judiciary branches; in addition, it had local offices even in remote regions and collected taxes from Korean residents. It acted as if it were a sovereign state. A guard unit of 150 soldiers protected this quasi-governmental office.

Jirin was a provincial capital, one of the key political, economic and cultural hubs, along with Bongchun, Jangchun and Harbin, of Manchuria. Chiang Jaksung, a nephew of warlord Chiang Tzolin, headed the Jirin government. The younger Chiang was cool to the Japanese and kept them at a distance; he rebuffed Japanese demands for information on communists and other "bad" elements, and he had the guts to tell the Japanese to mind their own business. His attitude was driven more by his ego and ignorance than any ideological conviction, however. Revolutionaries recognized his traits and took advantage of him. Jirin Province was the chosen place for most Korean expatriates in Manchuria. For this reason, many Korean nationalists and communists congregated in Jirin and consequently, Jirin became the main stage for Korean activists. "It is the Anti-Japanese base of the three eastern provinces" was what the Japanese police said of Jirin.

Since the second half of 1920, Jirin was the home for leaders of Jungyi, Chamyi and Sinmin commands, the main nationalist groups at the time. Jirin had a Korean newspaper; activities for setting up Korean schools in Whajun, Honggyong and Yongjung. "LM", "Tuesday", Suhsang and other communist factionalists frequented Jirin trying to recruit new members. Any communist who was somebody came to Jirin, tooting his own horn. Jirin had all kinds of Korean nationalists, communists, refugees and exiles. Young Koreans looking for truth and new ideas came to Jirin as well. In one word, Jirin was a rainbow pot of mixed ideas and personalities.

Jirin was where I began my career as a communist revolutionary. Several members of "Down with

Imperialism" Association had preceded me to Jirin and found jobs at Mookkwang Middle School, government organs and the wharf. Upon learning of my arrival, they came to see me at Oh Dong Jin's house. They told me that living costs were high in Jirin and jobs were scarce, but there were a plenty of books available. I said that I could live with cold and hunger, if had enough books to read. They said my school was good, although some of the teachers were rightwing nationalists, the majority were either communists or socialists. I was relieved to hear that about my school. I learned later that both Sang Wol and Mah Joon, my teachers, were members of Chinese Communist Party.

I was determined to study true revolution to my heart's content and to do my best to achieve the goals set forth by "Down with Imperialism" Association. All Association members in Jirin agreed to do the same. Those not in Jirin were scattered to Korean villages and towns in various provinces such as Musong, Bansuk, Hongyong, Yuha, Anhdong, Janngchun and Yidong. Some of the members rejoined their army units. It was no easy task in a messy city like Jirin to spread our ideals with a handful of activists. It was tough to make our voices heard over the babbles of the city. We believed that if each Association member made ten or hundred converts and one hundred converts converted one thousands converts more; soon we will have an avalanche of converts numbering tens of thousands and we could then change the world.

I began to study Marxism-Leninism in earnest in Jirin. Before coming to Jirin, I had some limited exposure to communism during my days at Whasung Military Academy. The socialistic atmosphere of Jirin fanned my desire for communism. I spent more time reading books on Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin than my school books. There were many Chinese translations of good books published in the Soviet Union and Japan. A Beijing monthly, "Translation Monthly", published progressive literature, which was immensely popular with young students. Books that were unavailable in Musong or Whajun were found in Jirin. The problem was that I had no money to buy them. You may not believe this but I wore shoes only for school and went around without shoes when not needed.

The library at Woomahang charged 10 jun per month and I saved every penny I could for the library fee. After school, I stopped by the library and read books and newspapers for several hours. In this way, I could read publications that I could not afford otherwise. On occasions, I nudged rich kids to buy books and let them loan me their books. Some rich kids bought books to fill their library, not to read them. The school was administered democratically. The school librarian was elected semiannually by the student body. The elected librarian had the authority to order books for the library. I was elected to this position twice and bought many books on Marxism-Leninism for the school library.

Now, the problem was that there were too many books to read; I did not have enough time to read all the books I wanted. I had to learn to speed-read. Father taught me how to read when I was very young; he made me to write down abstracts of what I read and lessons I learned. This became habits with me and served me well in my later years. I was able to read and digest many books in short time periods. I read through the night in my school days; it was not because of my curiosity or interests in new ideas alone, I thought reading would help me fight the Japanese. I searched for ways to defeat the Japanese.

Taking up arms for revolution, instead of merely preaching Marxism-Leninism and pushing abstract ideas, was the path I reached after years of reading and studying books. I read book after book - "Communist Manifest", "Das Kapital", "Nation and Revolution", "Wage Labor and Capital", numerous classics on Marxism-Leninism and commentaries. In addition to books on ideology, I read literary works by Maxim Gorky and Rosin. When I was in Musong and Paldo-gu, I read "Chunhyang Story", "Simchun Chronicle", "Admiral Yi Soon Sin", "Western Dreams" and other traditional classics. In Jirin, I read "Mother", "Steel River", "Congratulations", "Aku", "By Yalu River", "A Boy Wanderer" and other revolutionary novels. In later years when I often recalled inspirational books such as "Steel River" at times of hardships; they rejuvenated my resolve to fight on and uplifted my sagging spirits. Literary works play important roles in shaping people's world outlook, and for this reason, I encourage writers, whenever I meet them, to come out with revolutionary novels. Our writers have produced a number of excellent novels.

In addition to books, political awakening came from by observing how people lived in abject poverty, misery and social injustice. Many Korean immigrants came first to Jirin for orientation before moving to their final destination. They brought news from Korea. Most immigrants crossed Yalu into Manchuria, took trains to Jangchun, from there to northern regions of Manchuria or from there to Jirin and nearby regions. Jirin station and hotels were packed with Korean immigrants during cold winter and early spring seasons. There were stories of unbelievable hardship.

One day, my friends and I went to a show called "Chiangsi". After the show, the actress who played the main part came over and asked us if we knew a Choe, her boyfriend. To our surprise, she spoke in Korean, totally unexpected because the show did not originate in Korea. Her name was Ok Boon, from Gyongsan Province. Long before she was born, her father had entered into a pact with his neighbor, whereby, if they had a daughter and a son, respectively, they would be married; if they had a son and a son or a daughter and a daughter, they would be made brothers or sisters. Some time later, one had a son and the other had a daughter. The babies were married symbolically; a silk scarf was cut into two as the marital contract. The two families were forced to leave the village due to financial difficulties and went in different directions.

The boy's family moved to Jirin and he attended Moonkwang Middle School and his parents bought a house and made a comfortable living running a rice refining business. The girl's family ran out of money in Dandong and had to sell their young daughter to a Chinese. Ok Boon was forced to learn Changsi and became an actress. When she got older, she began to wonder about her 'husband'. Everywhere she went, she had been inquiring about her Choe, but that day, she found her Choe. She wanted to quit the show and stay with her husband, but her owner demanded a huge sum of money and Ok Boon was forced to stay with the show. She promised her sad husband that she would return to him after he had paid off her pwner with her future earnings. That was a heart-breaking story; we were angry at the show owner but there was not much we could do. We called the show owner "Snake Bitch" and let her know how cold-hearted she was.

The stench of filthy class struggles among hundreds of thousands of human beings crowed into a city was everywhere. On one hot summer day, my friends and I witnessed an unpleasant scene on our way

back from a trip to Buksan; it seemed that a rickshaw man was being shorted by a father and son load. The poor man begged for a few more pennies in the spirit of democracy. The rich passenger took an offense and struck the poor man. We could not stand it anymore and rushed to the rich fellow and demanded that he must give the poor fellow more money. This made me wonder why some people had to pull rickshaws while others rode in them; who some lived in palatial mansions, while others were homeless and roamed the streets. As the first step in forming revolutionary world outlook, people must realize where they stand in the society, which social class they belong and what interests they must protect; hatreds toward the exploiters and burning desire to fight their rights and interests are prerequisite to becoming revolutionaries working to build a new society.

I read many Marxism-Leninism classics and other books on revolution, and began to develop class consciousness. I got to see the world and realized that social inequities abounded; I came to hate the exploiters and exploiting societies, and made up my mind to work for an exploitation-free society. As I studied books by Marx and Lenin, I developed the urge to share my knowledge with my fellow students. Kwon Tai Suk was the first friend I made at Yukmun Middle School. There were only four Korean students at the school, two of them, Kwon and I, were interested in politics and the other two were only for making money. Kwon and I had many things in common and hit it off good. Jang Sin Min was a Chinese friend of mine; Jang and I spent hours discussing politics; we talked about the ills of our society, evils of imperialism, Japanese invasion of China, Chiang Kaisek's reactionary deeds, and so on.

In those days, Marxism-Leninism was only a curiosity for young people and students; they adored Marx, because they believed he was a great man; they thought studying Marxism was a fashionable thing to do and few had the desire to put Marxism into practice. Based on my Whajun experience, I started a secret book club with some of my friends at Yukmun Middle School. Our purpose was to educate progressive-minded youth and students on Marxism-Leninism. The club expanded rapidly to other schools - First Middle, Fifth Middle, Girls Middle, Teacher Training School, and others in Jirin. As the membership grew, we had to rent a room at a rice mill, which was operated by Korean nationalists. Members of Yugil fraternity managed the reading room.

Today, we have libraries everywhere and we have huge palatial libraries such as the People's University Library. But in those days, setting up a tiny reading room was no easy task for us. Books had to be bought, book shelves and reading desks and chairs had to be acquired, but we had no money. Every Sunday, we did manual labor for pay; we carried railroad beds at the stations and fetched sands from the river for minimum wage; girls worked at the mill picking husks. We bought books with our sweat-money. We made a secret storage for revolutionary books; we posted a simple catalog of our books at various locations in the city. Soon the words got out and our readership expanded rapidly. We had romantic novels to the library to make it more attractive to the readers. The love stories were big hits with our young audience. They cut teeth on sweet love stories and those wanting to read more were introduced to social science and other more serious books; after which there were exposed to Marxism-Leninism and other revolutionary books from our secret stack.

Our library included "Resurrection", "Inhumanity", "Pioneer" and other epics by Lee Kwang Soo. Lee wrote "February 8" Independence Declaration in Tokyo, a few days prior to March First Movement; he

actively participated in independence movement and wrote many progressive novels. His works were popular with young Koreans. Unfortunately, Lee became reactionary in his later years and wrote "A Revolutionary's Wife" and other decadent stories. When I stopped in Musong on my way to South Manchuria with my guerrilla army, I had the chance to read it. "A Revolutionary's Wife" depicts an illicit affair between woman married to a wounded communist revolutionary and a medical student attending to his wound. This novel drew an unfavorable picture of communists and made pun of communism. It showed where Lee Kwang Soo stood on communism.

Every Saturday and Sunday, we met at Jirin Chapel or at Buksan Park and held book reviews. At first there were some love story reviews but they were not well received and soon no one talked about love stories and all reviews were serious revolutionary books. In order to attract more people to our indoctrination program, we tried our hand at "Sugar Water" approach. One day, I got sick and had to skip some classes. On my way home, I passed by Buksan and noticed a large crowd was gathered listening to a storyteller. He was reciting the epic story of "Three Nations" from memory. When he came to the heroic battle of Je Kalring, he beat a drum to dramatize his story. When he came to a dramatic section, he stopped and passed a hat for donation. This sales gimmick was called "Sugar Water" by the Chinese people. It worked well with the mass.

We adapted this technique for our movement. We had a fellow who was good at cracking jokes and talked well. We had him work with Christians. He could recite the Bible backward and forward and offered wonderful prayers; he was better than any preacher I knew. The Chinese storyteller did it for money but our storyteller did it for revolution. Our man used some juicy love stories and at critical moments, he stopped and did some communist propaganda, and then moved on to the next climactic moment. After an hour or so, his act continued to the next day, and next day; it became a continuous event.

One of the converts from our storytelling propaganda work was Park So Sim. There was a large bookstore called New Book Store, which I frequented. Park was a frequent visitor there, too. He lurked in the area that handled books on communism and socialism, looking for new arrivals and we ran into each other often. He was tall, lean and pleasant. Occasionally, I went to the store with my friends and bought an armful of books for the school library. On these occasions, Park got more excited and involved in selecting our books; he told us which books to buy and which books to ignore. In this way, Park and I became friends. Later, he stayed with me for a while when I lived in Dongtae-tan.

Park came from Seoul. His health was poor and he wrote wrote short articles for magazines and newspapers; that was about all his health would allow. He did not participate any communist movement but he was highly critical of communist factionalists. Because of his literary skills, numerous leaders attempted to entice him to their camps. Park read Das Kapital, translated from Japanese, through the night. When he ran out of money, he hocked his clothe to buy books. Unlike some other pundits, who acted as if they knew everything after reading a handful of books, Park read virtually all books on communism and recite key verses and chapters from memory. Park introduced me to Das Kapital and explained to me what it was all about. As with the case with some communist books, Das Kapital has

some rough spots for novices and Park gave lectures on those spots. He became our 'professor' of communism.

Once I asked him about proletariat dictatorship. Park recited the evolution of this notion in the context of historical developments. Various Marxist theorists gave their best explanations relevant to the existing conditions. His explanations were clear and made sense. I did stomp him on one question, though; I asked him if our independence should come before our communist revolution in Korea. At the time, this was question was hotly debated among young students. In those days, communist theorists had little to say about national liberation. Park's answer to his question was unclear.

I said: "Communists theorists talk about revolution in colonial powers and in colonies, which are organically connected, but they emphasize proletarian revolution in colonial nations. If that is the case, then Korea will not be freed until proletarian revolution is achieved in Japan. Doe this mean Korea's toiling mass must sit tight and wait for their Japanese comrades get their work cone?" Park could not answer this one. He stared at me with a puzzled look on his face. Finally, he said that was true according to the internationally accepted Marxist doctrine. Noting that I was not comfortable with his answer, he confessed that he studied Marxist doctrines for many years but had had no practical experience. I was somewhat disappointed, "What good is it to master communism doctrines, if the knowledge is not put to work?"

One of the most striking differences between communist revolution in Russia and Korea was that the October revolution could never happen in Korea, because the conditions were drastically different. Proletarian revolution in a backward feudal colony like Korea was not realistic. Korean patriots were forced out of Korea and had to work outside Korea; how could they lead the mass in Korea from outside? How can they carry out their tasks of Korean independence and revolution and also meet international obligations? It took us a long time to find the answers and the answers came at high costs to us.

Park joined Anti-Imperialism Youth League and Communist Youth Association, and devoted his life to educating our young members. He was transformed from a recluse book-warm to an ardent activist in spite of his deteriorating health. He had tuberculosis and we sent him to Kahryun hoping that the climate there might help him. Park So Sim built himself a tiny straw-thatched hut on the bank of Mugae River and lived by himself, cooking his own meals. I dropped in to see him as often as I could. He was so happy to see me and we spent hours recalling our good old days and debating Marxist doctrines.

One day, to my surprise, he showed me his wife's photo. I assumed that his wife passed away or left him. It was clear from the photo that his wife was well educated and she was pretty. He told me that he received a letter from his wife recently from Seoul. When I asked him why had had not brought her here, he replied that she was from a wealthy family. I asked: "Didn't you know that she was rich when you married her?" Park said: "Yes, I knew. My life philosophy was quite different in those days."

I found his answer somewhat strange and inquired: "Did you forget your wife?" He said: "Yes, until



now. But since receiving her letter, I cannot get her off my heart." I told him that he should bring her here if he truly loved her. I said: "How can you carry the world into a new world, if you cannot convert your own wife? Anyway, your wife can really help you here." he nodded in agreement and said: "Well, Sung Ju. If that's what you think I should do. I will ask my wife to come here. It is too late for me; my life is almost over. I am a failure." He had no child, no property to speak of, no spiritual legacy to leave behind for the next generation.

"My life wish was to write a book for the toiling mass of Korea. That is why I have spent all my life reading books. But time has run out. When I was young and healthy, I did not know enough to write down anything, but when I had finally the truth, I am too weak to write anything down." Park was a broken man. I, too, was sad; Park was a sincere hardworking scholar of Marxism and I regretted that he did not have the opportunity to practice his theory while he was able; had he done so, he would have made significant contributions to our movement. No one should forget our independence and people's happiness. Park So Sim did not live long enough see Korea freed. Park's wife came from Seoul to care for him. Park kept on writing short stories and articles until his last day. The ancients said that if you find the truth in the morning, you can die happily in the evening. I was sad to lose Park, who knew so much and could have done so much for us, and who had found the truth.

I spent three years in Jirin - three of the most memorable of my life. It was here that I learned Marxism-Leninism from scientific points of view and thanks to this learning, I found the true way to free Korea and bring happiness to the Korean people. Being a son of a stateless people, I was forced to learn the truth early in my life. The Korean people's sufferings and miseries were my sufferings and miseries. My life philosophy and work outlook were formed and gelled during my years in Jirin. My learning and experiences in Jirin became the foundation and springboard of my revolutionary actions in the years that followed. Even today, I emphasize that the very first step in becoming a revolution is education. Your revolutionary activities must be based on clear understanding of revolutionary ideals.

# My Teacher Sang Wol

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Park So Sim had introduced me to "Das Kapital" and it was my teacher Sang Wol who had introduced Maxim Gorky's "Mother" and Cho Sulgun's "Red Bungalow Dream" to me. Sang Won taught literature at Yukmun Middle School. He came to the school about February 1928. He majored in English literature at Beijing University and his appointment to teach at our school was a welcome news. On back of our mind, we feared he might be a secret agent of the Ministry of Education. In fact, quite a few of our teachers secretly worked for the warlords and spied on us.



About that time, warlord Chiang Hakryang made a pact with Chiang Kai Sek to spread Kuomintang influence to Manchuria and Chiang Kaisek's secret police had already reached Jirin. *[Lee Wha Rang Note: "Boy Marshall" Chiang took over Manchuria after his father Chiang Tzolin was killed. Chiang Hakryang engineered the Sian Incident of December 12, 1936, in which Chiang Kaisek was taken hostage. Ironically, he let Chiang Kaisek free, and was taken captive by his former hostage, for the rest of his life. Photo: Chiang Hakryang.]*

Our school was noted for its progressive teachers and student body, and so Kuomintang police and their lackeys kept a close tab on us. It was in this kind of tense atmosphere when Sang Won showed up and we were keenly interested in discovering what he really was. But his very first lecture put our fears and suspicions to rest and he became our campus idol.



"Red Bungalow Dream" has 120 sections but Sang Won covered it in one hour and we were able to digest the gist of the this monstrous epic. He made the story of an aristocracy's demise so vivid and clear to us. When he finished his first lecture, the students applauded and felt that a jewel came to our school. I thought it strange that he said little about the author of the epic, and so, on the following day, I saw him taking a walk on the school yard and asked him about the author. He told me that he did not go over the author in class because of the limited time and he told me about the author, Cho

Sulgun and his family background. *(Photo: Cho Sulgun, 1719-1763. "Red Bungalow Dream" refers to a Chinese cake popular with Chinese emperors.)*

When he finished his discourse on Cho Sulgun, I asked him about the author's social class and his novel's political contents. He fielded my question cheerfully. After stating that it was only his personal option, he said, "It is true, in general, that an author's work reflects his social upbringing, but what is more important is the author's world outlook." He cited Cho Sulgun as an example; Cho's family enjoyed imperial privileges and his early childhood was spent in pomp and luxury, but he suffered poverty and

misery after the demise of the palace; and through his eyes, one can see the inevitability of downfall of feudalism.



He said: "It is good that you, Sung Ju, came to see me. If you have any questions or need further explanations, don't hesitate to ask your teachers. That is how all students of science should be. Ask many questions no matter where or when. I like students who ask many questions." [Photo: Sang Wol].

His request for many questions turned me on. Since the elementary school, I had been known to ask many questions. Many teachers at Yukmun were weary of me because I asked too many questions. Sang Wol told me that he had the novel and a collection of articles on its author and that I would be welcome to borrow them. That was how I got to be the first visitor to his new lodging. My grandfather used to tell me that students should not encroach upon their teachers' private domains.

He was not alone in thinking that way; even those who were educated in Western civilization had the same notion about teacher-pupil relations. This notion was based on the premise that a teacher's private life would reveal to his pupils that he is just a person and therefore, he will lose his pupils' respects.

When my father attended Soonwha School, there was a school master called, Kim Ji Sung. Kim was an alcoholic and drank heavily even when in school. My father was the class leader and so, he was sent out to fetch drinks by the master. Father obeyed his master's command for months. One day, Father saw his drunken master fall into a creek on his way home and decided to do something to stop the old man's drinking. A few days later, the master handed Father an empty bottle and told him to get it filled with more wine. Father took the bottle and left the school yard. He walked some distance to a rock and smashed the bottle to pieces on it and ran back to the master. He told his teacher that a tiger came after him and he fell breaking the bottle. The old master took the hint and said: "Hmmm, a tiger came to Mangyong-dae all the way from Mount Paiktu! Well, you, Kim Hyong Jik - that was a big lie but you make me feel ashamed. I am sorry I had stooped so low as to make you fetch wine for me." The old master stopped drinking after this incident.

Although the school master stopped drinking, my father always remembered his drunken teacher in the creek and that image enforced my grandfather's belief that there should be a screen shielding teachers' private life from their pupils. I intruded into Sang Wol's private life before any screen shrouded him. His library had several hundred books; it was the largest and most varied private collection of books I had seen. Sang Wol was rich in books; he had many novels in English and *avant garde* literature. I was enthralled by his collection of books and could not take my eyes off the shelves. I wondered if I had read through these books, I would have college education equivalent; how lucky it was for me to have Sang Wol at the school.

I opened book after book and asked him: "Excuse me, sir. How long did it take you to get this many books?" He smiled a thin smile and stared at me for a while and said: "About ten years, I think."

I asked him: "How long would it take to read these books?" He said: "Well, about three years if you are

diligent and about one hundred years if you are lazy." I said: "I will do anything if you would let me borrow your books." He replied: "Well, Sung Ju, I have one condition: you must promise me to become a writer. I have been looking to train a couple of train proletarian writers. I wonder if you would be one."

I said: "Master, I am honored that you consider me in that light. In fact, I love literature and admire writers. I may become a writer after Korean independence, but you must know that I am a stateless person. My father passed away after a lifelong struggle for our independence and I wish to carry on my father's work. My primary purpose in life is our independence and that will be my profession." Master Sang Wol, leaning against the shelves, looked at me with serious expression on his face nodding his head; then he placed his hands on my shoulders and said quietly: "That is admirable, Sung Ju. Ok, then, I will let you borrow my books on the condition that you will become an independence fighter."

That night, I borrowed "Red Bungalow Dream" and returned to my room. The next books I borrowed from Sang Wol were Jang Kwang Ja's "Yalu River" and "The Boy Wanderer". I enjoyed reading these two novels. "Yalu River" was about a young Korean couple, Lee Maeng Han and Woon Goh, and was a tear-jerker. After these, I borrowed Gorky's "Mother". That was how Sang Wol and I became close. I got whatever books I wanted from Sang Wol's library. In fact, if he did not have a book I wanted in his library, he got it for me. The only thing he asked for in return was my digest. He and I exchanged critiques of Gorky's "Enemies" and Rohsin's "Congratulations".

We exchanged our ideas on the mission of literature; we had spent hours going over how literary works should reflect reality and what roles they should play for social development. Sang Wol said that literature should be like a lighthouse that guides humanity to perfection. Machinery enhances productivity and literature makes humans that run machines more perfect. Sang Wol was particularly fond of Rohsin and his works. They were literary comrades at one time and Sang Wol was a member of a literary circle led by Rohsin. His short story "Hatchet Head" received Rohsin's praise; the story was about people's struggles against social evils in Rahsang region. According to Sang Wol's daughter, Sang Hyowon, Rohsin told Sang Wol that his short story lacked sharpness. Sang Wol had learned lessons from the defects in his first novel and wrote a more mature novel "Ceremonial Hat", a socio-political epic that was received acclaims from literary circles. This lengthy novel was published by an Ungnam magazine in installments. In 1980, People's China Literary Publishing House published "Ceremonial Hat". In addition to "Ceremonial Hat" and "Hatchet Head", Sang Wol wrote epic novels "Blue Nut" and "Canine Problem". He continued to write while teaching.

I read "Jin Doksoo's Works" from Sang Wol's library. Jin Doksoo was one of the founding fathers of Chinese Communist Party and a real power broker in the Party at the time. At first, Sang Wol was hesitant to let me read the book, fearing that I might be adversely affected by Jin's leftist defeatism. Jin had headed the literary department of Beijing University before Sang Wol's time, and many teachers and students prided themselves having worked under him at the university. Sang Wol confessed: "To be honest, I, too, worshipped Jin Doksoo once. I fell in love with his ideas after reading his "New Youth" magazine and political essays in his early years. But, my opinion of Jin is quite different today." He added that Jin's popularity peaked during May 4th Movement and the founding period of Chinese Communist Party, but his popularity plummeted after he began to tout leftist opportunism.

Jin Doksoo's opportunism was most evident in his ideas and attitudes on peasant problems. In 1926, Stalin pointed out that Chinese peasants were the main bulwark in anti-imperialism in China and were the most important and reliable partners of Chinese workers. But, Jin looked down upon peasants and opposed peasants rising against landowners; Jin was against peasants becoming self-reliant; in short, Jin opposed peasants movement. Jin feared that bringing peasants into the revolutionary ranks might alienate and drive away bourgeoisie revolutionaries. The fact of the matter is that Jin's left defeatism fostered bourgeoisie betrayals, said Sang Wol. I saw that Jin's defeatism could hurt our revolution.

After reading "Jin Doksoo Works", I spent many days discussing peasants problems with Sang Wol. We talked about some of the factors that were common to Korean and Chinese peasants issues; we talked about differences between Korean and Chinese peasants problems; what lessons Lenin had for our peasants; how can peasants lead our revolution. I said that "farming is the foundation of our society and therefore, farmers are the main force of social changes." Sang Wol agreed with me and said: "Ignoring peasants is ignoring farming and land, and any revolution, no matter how lofty its ideology, is doomed to fail, if it ignores farmers." He said that this was Jin Doksoo's problem. After this conversation, it became clear to me that Sang Wol was a communist and Sang Wol found that I, too, was a communist.

Sang Wol joined Chinese Communist Party in 1926 and led peasants activities in his home village, for which he was arrested by Kuomintang reactionary warlords. He was tortured for over a year in a military prison on Jungang Province. Early in 1928, a Korean medical officer arranged for his medical release from prison, whereupon, he adopted a false name, Sahju Wumu, and escaped to Manchuria, where Cho Doh Nam got him a teaching job at Yukmun Middle School.

Sang Wol and I discussed political issues other than peasants problems as well. Many students of Yukmun were active in political debates. In those days, China was at the threshold of its great revolution and Korea was astir with mass movements. There were endless issues and topics for our debates. Among Korean youth, the issue of whether Lee Jun's method or Ahn Jung Gun's was right was hotly debated. Many favored Ahn's assassination terrorist approach. I asked Sang Wol what he thought of Ahn's approach. He said Ahn's action was, of course, patriotic, but it was adventurism from a revolutionary tactical point of view, to which I agreed. I believed that killing a handful of imperialist servants would not defeat imperialism and that the only way to win was to educate and motivate the mass into popular mass actions.

We talked about Japanese invasions of Korea and Japanese colonial policies in Korea; Japanese designs for China and Manchuria; Chinese warlords; Sino-Korean joint struggles to counter imperialism and occupation. The United Nations League's declaration on disarmament was another hot issues among Yukmun students at the time. Some students were duped by the League, and so I wrote an article exposing League's duplicity. Many students and Sang Wol agreed with my thesis.

Since his arrival at Jirin, Sang Wol lost contact with the Party, but he presented several enlightening lectures using literary works of Gorky, Rohsin and other progressive writers. He gave a series of

lectures, "Let Us Oppose Imperialism", to our secret book club at the school. His lectures were well received by the students. I relayed students' comments to Sang Wol. His profound knowledge of Oriental and Occidental literary masterpieces, history and his devotion to education had made him a darling of the students.

But not everyone liked him. Some teachers, working for the warlord, was unhappy with Sang Wol's popularity with students and tried their best to get him fired. Those students who had flocked to Sang Wol, too, became enemies of the reactionary teachers. They tried to get Lee Kwang Han, the principal, to dismiss Korean students from the school. Mah Gah, the athletics teacher, claimed that Korean students were hostile to Chinese and tried to get me expelled. Sang Wol came to my defense.

Our English teacher was hostile to progressive students. He was toadyish from head to toe. He worshipped West and despised East; he claimed that Occidentals ate their meals quietly while Orientals made all kind of noise while eating, a sure sign of backwardness. He behaved as if he were an Occidental, although he was a Chinese. We had had enough of his anti-Oriental flunkeyism and decided to teach him a lesson. One day, we prepared a lunch of steaming-hot noodles and invited our teachers. Very soon the dining hall was filled with sounds of people slurping down hot noodles. But the English teacher was the sole exception; he kept on blowing on the steaming noodles and ate them with great difficulty, which caused the students into spontaneous laughter that shook the dinning hall. At last, the English teacher saw through our planks and left the room in a huff. His anti-Oriental remarks declined sharply after this. Because of his toadyism, English was not a popular subject at the school.

By 1929, reactionary teachers had made Sang Wol's life unbearable at the school. One day, Sang Wol proposed that the school athletics program should promote general athletics instead of favoring a chosen few athletes. The basketball court of the school was being monopolized by the school's basketball team and other students were off-limit to the court. Sang Wol's proposal did not ride well with some of the basketball players and they schemed to assault Sang Wol on his way home. I learned of their scheme from Anti-Imperialism Association members and stopped reactionary players from carrying out their evil deed.

"Humm, that athletics teacher, Mah, has trained his running-dogs well. Those worthless worms!", so said Sang Wol watching the would-be attackers running away. I said: "Master, don't be surprised at this. Isn't this another stage in our class struggle? There will be more serious attacks in the future and you should better be prepared." Sang Wol said: "Yes, you are right. We are fighting the warlords now". Shortly after, Sang Wol was fired because of his efforts to reinstate students expelled from the school.

I was away in Jangchun and Karyun doing some revolutionary work when Sang Wol left Jirin. Upon my return, my friend Kwan Dae Suk handed me a letter from Sang Wol; the letter said: "I lost my battle with the warlords and I must leave Jirin now. We will defeat the warlords someday. No matter where I go, I will pray for your success in your work for Korea." That was my last contact with Sang Wol and we never met again. In 1955, Sang Wol sent me his article "My Historic Relations with Marshall Kim Il Sung in his Youth" and also, in 1980, he sent me "Chinese History Abstracts". I knew then that he was still alive. Every time I met a visiting dignitary from China, I inquired about Sang Wol, but I did not get

to see him. I failed to show my due respect by failing to pay him a visit. It was my fault. International borders do strange things to you.

Sang Wol taught at Chinese People's University in Beijing until his death in 1982. In 1989, Sang Garan, his eldest daughter, who was a researcher at Chinese Academy Mechanical Institute, came to see me; and in 1990, Sang Hyowon, his third daughter, who taught at Chinese People's University, came to see me. I saw my teacher's image from 60 year ago in his two daughters and I was immensely moved. Different races do not mean different emotions. People's emotions do not have barriers of skin color, religion or language. Had Yukmun Middle School been closer to me, I would have plucked some flowers from the schoolyard and given them to his daughters; I would have said: "This is your father's favorite flower. Your father and I met under the flower tree many times."

After leaving Jirin, Sang Wol went to Harbin, Shanghai, Beijing, Hangkaw, Chunking, Nyonhaw, Yenan and other places for Party tasks. He was engaged in education, literary and literacy activities for the Party. At one time, he was the general secretary of the Party in Manchuria. To his last day on Earth, he remembered me and he remained loyal to the friendship of China and Korea. His remains were buried at a patriots cemetery outside Beijing.

He who has had a teacher to remember for his lifetime is a lucky man. In this regard, I am a lucky man. Every time I miss Master Sang Wol, who had left indelible marks on me in my formative years, I go back to Yukmun Middle School and walk on its campus in mine mind. I miss Master Sang Wol very much.

## 3.7. Korean Youth Communist League

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Due to the tireless activities of "Down with Imperialism" Association and our secret book club members, Marxism-Leninism spread rapidly and I began to see marked changes in young people's ideological outlook. Progressive ideas induced many young people and students to view where they stood in time and to see clearly what their missions were in life. We continued ideological indoctrination and formed associations to bring them into organizational frameworks, through which Marxism-Leninism could be propagated faster and our political power could grow stronger by day.

My revolutionary life began with youth and student activities. The main reason why I began with youth movements and placed so much emphasis was, although my being a student at the time had something to do with it, my conviction that they could play key roles in motivating the working class and peasants. Marxism-Leninism tells us that youth and students are teachers and vanguards of revolution; they educate, motivate and lead the mass into revolution. I embraced this notion. As our revolution progressed, our opinion and outlook on the roles played by our youth and students changed fundamentally. We broke out of the old mold that relied on workers and farmers for revolution and came to believe that our youth and students were also essential components of our revolution.

Our youth and students were vanguards of March First Movement, June 10th Movement, Kwangju Students Incident and other patriotic activities prior Liberation. Our youth had ushered in the new communist movement and anti-Japan armed struggles were mainly done by the youth of Korea. After Liberation, the youth and students led revolution in South Korea. The April 19th uprising was engineered by the youth and so was the 1980 Kwangju Uprising. In China, students led May 4th Movement.. The old-time revolutionary models that excluded youth and students did not apply to Korea and we pioneered the new revolution method that centerpieces youth and students for the first time in human history.

In the early 1920s, youth and student movements in Korea were void of class struggles and anti-imperialism, thus lacking the support of the mass. The movements were led by intelligentsia and leaned to mass enlightenment. Early on, we recognized these shortcomings and did our best to avoid them. However, soon we learned that this was no easy task and we had run into many problems. By that time, there were already several youth and student groups organized by Korean nationalists and communist factionalists: Jirin Youth Association, Korean Jirin Students Association, Teens Association and several others.

Starting yet another group was a challenge. It would have been easy to start an association, but had it not been for the myriad of associations already in existence with active participation by youth and students. We could not ignore them. After lengthy discussions, we decided to ignore those associations that were inactive but to work with those that were new or had some activities. The latter type could be led in the right direction. Korean Jirin Teens Association was the first organization we had formed in Jirin. At the time, there was an organization for Korean teens in Jirin, which was setup by Korean nationalists but was not widely known to Korean teens of Jirin. In April 1927, we formally established Korean Jirin Teens



Association at Rev. Song Jung Do's church. This was a legal entity, properly registered with the city government.

I worked with Kim Won Wu and Park Il Pa (aka Park Wu Chun) in leading this organization. It had sections for organization, propaganda, culture and sports; it had cells in various schools and districts. Whang Gwui Hun, who graduated from Jirin Women's Teacher School, was in charge of propaganda. Teens Association had members from workers, farmers, petit bourgeoisie families in Jirin. The primary mission of the Association was to instill anti-Japanese spirit in young Korean teens and to train them into a powerful second echelon of our front. Learning new progressive ideas and propagating them among the mass was expected of all members.

In May of that year, we renamed Korean Jirin Ryuh Students Association to Korean Jirin Yu Students Association. This association had quite a few members and had some influence. It was originally created for mutual assistance for Korean students studying in Jirin and Korean nationalists supported it. Rev. Son Jung Do was on its advisory board. When we proposed to reorganize it, some people wanted to dismantle it completely because it was purely a social organization created by nationalists. They argued that it would remain in the domain of the nationalists, no matter what we did with it; these people wanted to overthrow the old-time nationalists.

In those days, there was an intense competition for people's support by communists and nationalists. Within the communist camp, there were several factions competing for people's backing. One day, Seoul faction would take control of Young Korean Communist League and next day, "Tuesday" faction would form its own youth association to counter it. One day, "Tuesday" faction would form a peasants association and next day, 'Seoul' faction would follow suite by creating its own association to counter it. The factions went to the extent of forming terrorist gangs to interrupt competing organizations. There was no way we could adopt these tactics of the old-time Korean communists. Creating a new association would have caused tension with nationalists and caused dissention among the Korean students in Jirin. We decided to work from within; we joined the association and began to reform it from a social club into a revolutionary organization. I, a communist, became its honorary chairman and we maintained friendly relations with Korean nationalists and the local authorities. We began to reshape the political landscape of Jirin..

The association changed the daily routines of Korean students in Jirin: the members in small groups held early morning meetings and on Sundays, the members marched to Mount Buk for a mass rally; they marched singing revolutionary songs and held athletic events. We applied various tactics tailored to attract Korean students to our association. There were many students from Christian families; they were influenced by their Christian parents into believing in God. Merely telling them that God did not exist would not change their faith. One day, we asked a woman teacher of a Korean school to lead a prayer meeting for our Christian members. She took our Christian friends to a church and prayed all day reciting "Oh, Almighty God, Our Father in Heaven, we are starving and please. give us bread." There was no food from God and the kids became hungrier and hungrier. Next, she led her flock to a wheat field after harvest and had them collect wheat grains dropped by the farmers, and baked loaves of bread. Our Christian kids got the message: "it is better to work for food than to beg God for free meals". This was a

simple lesson but was effective in correcting old bad habits.

Our effort to teach our young students not to attend church services and not to become addicted to religion was not meant to eliminate religion all together; instead, it was based on our belief that young Koreans with religious belief would be useless for our revolutionary activities. Some members marched singing Christian hymns. Such was the influence of Christianity on our youth in Jirin. You cannot fight the enemy passively singing hymns. What we needed more were young Koreans singing revolutionary marching songs. Thus we taught the youngsters progressive songs and soon fewer and fewer kids marched singing Christian hymns. "Teens Song of Patriotism" and Korean Students in Jirin Association song began to ring out in the streets of Jirin.

One of the most memorable events of the association was the Korean language summer school. We taught Korean language to Korean students attending Chinese schools and those Korean kids who could not speak Korean at all. Most of these kids were born in Manchuria and spoke Chinese better than Korean. We started the slogan - "Koreans must know Korea". Geh Young Chun, Kim Won Wu and Park So Sim took turns teaching Korean. In those days, we had no teachers per se and all of the key leaders became teachers as well. After 20 days of lessons, our young students were able to read children's publications in Korean. We organized picnics, site seeing trips, special lectures, debates, study groups, oratory contests, book reviews, song fests and stage plays. Kangnam Park was our favorite place for holding secret meetings; the park was on an island in Songwha River, a beautiful place; some Jirin capitalists planted trees on the island turning it into a botanical garden and collected entrance fees.

Another site for our secret meetings was Mount Buk. Unlike the Park which was open in warm months only, Mount Buk was open year-around. It was the most favored play ground for the citizens of Jirin and for this reason, there were many retail shops around the place: food stalls, tobacco shops, dime stores, teach houses, play rooms and retail shops for Western goods. Mount Buk had stunning scenery as well as old relics, including Yakman Temple, a place of worship for Sun Yaksan, whose birthday was celebrated from June 4th to June 6th, a 3-day holiday for the people of Jirin. Government dignitaries held solemn ceremonies at the temple.

During the 3-day festivities, Jirin police set up a station near the mountain and patrolled the area, making sure that incense burnings at the temples did not go out of control and started forest fires. Rickshaw and taxi drivers gouged the public by charging as much as ten times the normal fares during this period. Huge crowds flocked to the mountain to enjoy the scenery and also to attend the ceremonies. While the merchants made a fortune during the festival, progressive activists took advantage of the crowds to preach enlightenment: better personal hygiene, ethics, law and order, neighborliness, exercises and so on. There poured their hearts out trying to enlighten the mass. We, too, took advantage of the situation and did some propaganda among the celebrants. The monk in charge of the temple was on our side and allowed us to hold secret meetings in the temple basement.

During my school years in Jirin, I delivered many lectures. I gave talks at public debates organized by Korean nationalists. Oh Dong Jin, Lee Tak and other leaders of Jungyi Command organized public debates on August 29th (Foundation day), March 1st, and October 3rd (Tanggun's birthday). The Jirin

Students Association held open debates on Ahn Joon Gun's way of terrorism versus Lee Jun's way of petition to big powers. They became to realize that neither terrorism nor petition to foreign powers would bring us independence; and that we must find the right method to gain freedom. We made the first Sunday of May the Teens Day and held athletic events on this day for the youth, their parents and relatives and independence activists of Jirin. Once we had the youngsters properly indoctrinated, we mobilized them for mass enlightenment activities. When schools were out for summer breaks, we dispatched kids as young as eleven years to countryside to help with farm chores and also to enlighten them.

Indoctrinating the Korean youth of Jirin to think in one mind than in one hundred minds was an exhilarating valuable experience for me. Korean Students Association of Jirin, Jirin Korean Teens Association and Marxism-Leninism Book Club became more and more widely accepted in Jirin thanks to the key members of "Down with Imperialism" Association. Our rank of young revolutionaries grew fast. We had students leave for villages right after their Saturday classes and return home Sunday evenings. In this way, they were able to work with peasants every week.

As our organizations, some legitimate and some underground, grew and grew in Jirin and Musong regions, we saw a crying need to consolidate these into a single unified organization. Thus we formed Anti-Imperialism Youth Association and later renamed it Young Korean Communist Association. At the time, I was involved with all organizations and acted as the main liaison among them. Choe Chang Gul, Kim Won Wu and Geh Yiung Chun acted as concerned communist youth and had no official title. It was clear that we needed a more effective way.

In those days, Japanese imperialists were busily planning to invade Manchuria and waged savage war against the Korean people; they induced reactionary Chinese warlords to help oppress the Korean people. Young Koreans rose up against the Chinese warlords and Japanese imperialists at various locations in Manchuria, and they were in need of an effective leadership. Old-time Korean nationalists and Korean communist factions fought over hegemony and Korean youth had no leadership to speak of. There were several youth associations in Manchuria at the time: Korean Communist Youth of Manchuria (an underground organization), South Manchuria Korean Youth, North Manchuria Youth, East Manchuria Youth, Jirin Youth, Kilwha Youth, Three Province Youth and several other organizations vied for membership. Various factions worked feverishly to line up youth associations. Sometimes, it was not clear whose hands you were shaking.

To be frank about it, if Korean communists had their acts together in those days, it would have saved us much grief and sacrifices. Even though we had communist parties. Korean communist youth organizations derived no benefits from the communists. It was a sad situation. Korean revolution had many internal problems; every step forward was met with obstacles and difficulties. We had to deal with old-time nationalists, communist factions, our Chinese hosts and foreign communist parties and faced problems after problems. Furthermore, Korean communists in Manchuria faced suppression campaigns by Chinese warlords and Japanese militarists.

Under these circumstances, there was an urgent need for experienced and effective leadership. By this time, we had enough experience in leadership through our work with "Down with Imperialism" Association,

which had spawned a hardcore cadre of communist leaders, untainted by bad habits of old-time communists of Korea. I decided to establish Young Korean Communist League and drafted its charter and platform. I emphasized that the new organization must avoid factionalism and work for Korean revolution. On August 28, 1927, we formally established the League at the basement of Yakwang Temple. In attendance were Choe Chnag Gul, Kim Won Wu, Geh Young Chun, Kim Hyok, Cha Kwang Su, Huh Yul, Park So Sim, Park Gun Won, Han Young Ae and other members of Anti-Imperialism Youth Association and young communists.

At the meeting, I gave a speech, which was published in a booklet. On that day, we linked our arms and sang International as we did when we formed "Down with Imperialism" Association. The new organization was an underground association of young Korean communists and its primary mission was to lead and organize Koreans for revolution and independence; it was a vanguard for mass revolutionary movement. We paid special attention to keep our members pure; we were on guard against Japanese, Chinese and Korean informers and saboteurs infiltrating our organization. Our members held open discussions on imperialism, colonialism, Korean independence and other topics. Our members went through a rigorous program of thought purification and self-critique. Members were expected to follow our rules and regulations. Our members were assigned to various tasks and their performance was closely monitored and critiqued. In this way, our members grew more and more effective in revolutionary works.

Our membership grew in leaps and bounds; in a short time period, our influence reached not only Jirin and its neighboring regions, but also Donwha, Honggyong, Whajun, Musong, Ahntung, Bansuk, Jangchun, Harbin and other key towns of Manchuria and northern provinces of Korea. The League had fulfilled its mission of leading Korean revolution. Even though, Korea had communist parties, it fell on the League to lead not only the youth of Korea, but also workers and farmers of Korea. After forming the League in secrecy, we quietly joined the mass. We worked for Korean revolution and sought no fame or recognition for our achievements. Korean revolution and independence were our rewards. The young members of the League became the founding fathers of the new Korean Communist Party formed in summer of 1930.

Not long ago, we made August 28th, the day the League was formed, the Youth Day of Korea.

## 3.8. Expanding the Organization

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Following the formation of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and the Young Communist League we widened our activities over a vast area. In order to expand the organization, the hardcore elements of the YCLK and AIYL left Jirin. Although I was a student in those days, I also used to visit various places. I even frequented places several hundreds of miles away from Jirin in order to seek a new theatre of activity. I would leave Jirin by the evening train on Saturday and return by the night train the following day after visiting places such as Jiaohe, Kalun and Guyushu. Sometimes due to unavoidable circumstances I would miss classes. Most of the teachers with the exception of the headmaster, Li Guanghan and teacher Shang Yue, regarded my behavior as very strange. Some people even guessed that probably I was working to pay my school fees because I had no father and my family was poor.

Being a student, many restrictions and limitations were imposed on me. I was always short of time because I had to attend classes, study after school and supervise the work of various organizations in every spare moment. It was during my school holidays that I could conduct my activities freely without the restriction of time. At ordinary times we would make preparations and, when our holidays came, visited various places to form organizations and enlighten the masses. Going among the people was a trend in the homeland, too.

During their holidays many students in the homeland visited the farmers to educate them. In the summer of the year when I was attending Whasong Military Academy, the newspaper Choson Ilbo formed enlightenment groups of students from secondary schools and older who were returning to their home villages during their holidays and sent them to the countryside after giving them a short course. Back in their home villages those students in the enlightenment groups conducted a campaign to abolish illiteracy by using the textbook on the Korean language prepared by the newspaper.

Those Korean students who were studying in Japan also returned to their homeland during their holidays. They formed lecture tour groups and visited various parts of the country to conduct enlightenment work. The youth associations belonging to the Chondoism and Christianity also visited the farmers and promoted the work of arousing the rural communities.

But the enlightenment movement conducted by the students at home did not develop to the level of revolutionizing and organizing the masses; it was confined to a mere reformist movement aimed at overcoming the nation's backwardness. This was owing to cruel suppression by the authorities of the Japanese government-general that regarded all national movements aspiring to the development of national consciousness as against their colonial rule, and to the ideological limitations of the leaders of such movements. Even the enlightenment movement started to decline in the middle of the 1930s.

That this movement was merely a reformist movement can be seen clearly from the activities the students conducted in the rural areas. The main aspect of their activities was to abolish illiteracy and reform the

living environment in the rural communities to make it more healthy. The activities conducted by the members of the Christian youth association included all kinds of cultural enlightenment aimed at guiding and inducing the rural population to lead a modern life. Their activities embodied a campaign to improve cooking and a movement to keep wells clean, and then proceeded to explaining chicken-raising and silk making and how to understand the certificates and applications issued by the authorities.

Taking advantage of the favorable conditions in which there was no direct suppression by the Japanese imperialists, we paid great attention to gearing our activities to enlightening the rural communities to conduct a positive political struggle; we closely combined these activities with those to organize the masses and make them revolutionary. Our work with the masses was conducted in such a way as to awaken them with education in patriotism, revolutionary education, anti-imperialist education and class education as the main aspect and to unite them in various mass organizations.

We made every possible effort to make the masses revolutionary. We did so because we had broken with the old way of thinking that the masses were only ignorant and uncivilized people who needed enlightenment; we held the view that the people were our teachers and the main motive force behind the revolution, and we made this view our absolute belief. With this point of view we went among the people.

“Go among the people!”

From that time on this became my motto throughout my life. I started my revolutionary activities by going among the people and today, too, I am continuing to make the revolution by mixing with the people. I am also reviewing my life by going among the people. If I had neglected contact with the people just once and forgotten the existence of the people even for a moment, I would not have been able to maintain the pure and genuine love for the people which I formed in my teens and become a true servant of the people. Whenever I think of our society today in which the rights of the people are fully ensured and their wisdom and creativity are displayed without limitation, I feel grateful to the vehicle which first took me to the people when I was in Jirin. It was during the winter holidays of 1927 that we first went among the people in real earnest.

The winter holidays were a bed of roses for the children of rich families. They either spent the whole winter at home reading love stories or traveled by train to such large cities as Changchun, Harbin and Beijing to see the sights. On lunar New Year's Day they prepared tasty food and made merry with fireworks. The Chinese have the custom of celebrating for a month from January 1 to February 2 by the lunar calendar. They call February 2 by the lunar calendar *longtaitou* (the day when the dragon raised its head), and finish their holiday only when they have eaten all the pigs, even the heads, which they killed in January. But, we could neither go sightseeing nor enjoy the holidays as they did. Instead, we thought about how we could do more for the revolution during the holiday.

When our holiday started I went to Changchun, taking with me the members of our art troupe. No sooner had I returned from there than I left for Fusong. Park Cha Sok and Kye Yong Chun also went to Fusong

with me, having agreed to spend the winter at my home. We were very busy during that winter holiday. As soon as I reached home I was surrounded by the members of the Saenal Children's Union. They told me about the difficulties the union was encountering in its work.

From what the chairman of the union told me I realized that there were many problems to be solved. In order to settle their difficulties we devoted a great deal of time to working with the members of the Saenal Children's Union. We told the leading members of the union how they should conduct the activities of the art propaganda troupe, how they should conduct social activities, how they should work with the masses and how they should conduct the internal work of the union. At the same time, we frequently attended political symposiums and meetings to assess the conduct of the members.

Following an improvement in the work of the Children's Union we formed the Paeksan Youth League with hardcore young people from the area of Fusong. We gave it the name of the Paeksan Youth League in that it was an organization of young people living around Mt. Paekdu. However, that organization was in fact a guise for the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. We called the organization simply a youth league instead of giving it the name of the Paeksan Anti-Imperialist Youth League because we wanted to confuse the enemy and disguise the organization. The Paeksan Youth League conducted overt activities in the guise of an organization under nationalist influence. By rousing the members of the Paeksan Youth League we ensured that night schools were set up in Chongwajae and other rural villages in the area.

I judged that, in view of the growing number and expanding ranks of youth organizations, a newspaper to provide ideological nourishment for young people and broad sections of the masses was imperative. But we had to start the newspaper from scratch. We wanted to print some 100 copies of each issue. However, we had neither a mimeograph nor paper. True, there was a small printing house in Fusong which was run by a Chinese man. But, in view of the content of the newspaper, it was impossible to rely on that print shop. After pondering over the matter deeply, I was determined to produce the newspaper by copying articles by hand. I mobilized the activists of the Saenal Children's Union and the hardcore members of the Paeksan Youth League to do this. It took us more than a week to transcribe 100 copies. On January 15, 1928 we finally published the first issue of the newspaper Saenal (New Age). It is hard to believe now that in those days we had the energy to write all the articles. I frequently miss the strength and youth we displayed in those days. At that time we felt the greatest happiness in devoting ourselves wholly to the revolution.

A youth who has no dream, no courage, no ardor, no aspiration, no fighting spirit and no romance is not a youth. In one's youth one must have a noble ideal and fight stubbornly to realize it whatever the difficulties. All the fruits which young people, who possess fresh ideas and a healthy and strong body, have cultivated and plucked at the cost of their sweat and blood are valuable wealth for the country. The people never forget the heroes who have created this wealth. A man in his latter years misses his youth because his youth is the period of his life when he can do most work. A man is happiest when he can do a lot of work.

Afterwards I had the newspaper Saenal printed with the help of a mimeograph I had obtained from some

close acquaintances of my father.

The most conspicuous of our activities during the winter holiday of 1927 was the performances of the art propaganda troupe. The art propaganda troupe in Fusong comprised members of the Saenal Children's Union, the Paeksan Youth League and the Women's Association. This art troupe performed for about a month in Fusong and the neighboring rural villages. During our performance tour, we formed organizations and enlightened the masses in many places. Such dramas as Blood at an International Conference, An Jung Gun Shoots Ito Hirobumi and A Letter from a Daughter are literary works which we created and put on the stage in Fusong in the winter of that year. When the art propaganda troupe, prior to its performance tour, was performing in the city of Fusong, the warlord authorities arrested me for no reason and took me to prison. Some feudalists had informed against me to the authorities because they did not like the content of our performance.

Zhang Wei-hua, a primary school fellow of mine, went to a lot of trouble to free me. He persuaded his father to put pressure upon the police authorities to stop them from searching our house. Zhang Wei-hua's father had been an intimate friend of my father because he had formed a good understanding with my father in the course of visiting our house to receive medical treatment. Although he was very wealthy he was a conscientious man. When my father initiated the re-establishment of Paeksan School in Fusong and was anxious to get permission for it, he had to negotiate with the people concerned about the matter. Because such an influential man as Zhang Wei-hua's father put pressure on the police, the warlord authorities had no choice but to release me.

The Koreans in Fusong rushed to the warlord authorities and demanded that they release me. My mother roused the organization to action and urged the masses to work for my release. Even some influential Chinese figures condemned the conduct of the warlord authorities and demanded my freedom. A short time later the warlord authorities were compelled to set me free. After being released from the police station I left for Fusuhe village at the head of the art propaganda troupe. The art propaganda troupe put on performances in this village for three days.

People from the neighboring villages came to see our performance. So news about it spread widely around the surrounding settlements. Having seen of our performance, some people from Tunzidong came to invite us to their village. We accepted their invitation with pleasure. The performance in Tunzidong was a great success. At the request of the villagers we had to extend our stay several times. After the first performance, the chairman of the Saenal Children's Union rushed backstage and told me that the village elder had sent for me.

An elderly man with a noble presence, a pipe in his mouth, was waiting for me outside the house where we had just given our performance. He was gazing at me attentively from beneath his long, thick eyebrows. The young man from Tunzidong who had guided us to his village approached me and told me that the elderly man was "Cha Cholli." (Cha is the family name and Cholli means a thousand ri, i.e., 250 miles.) No sooner had I heard the name Cha Cholli than I bowed my head, saying:

"Sir, I am sorry that I am greeting you only now. I have not been able to greet you earlier because I heard



you had gone out to the neighboring village.”<

"I heard about your art troupe there and have rushed back. Is it correct that you are the son of Mr. Kim Hyong Jik?"

"Right, Sir."

“With a son like you, Mr. Kim can rest easy in his grave. It is the first time in my life that I have seen such a fine performance.”

I was somewhat perplexed, for the old man was treating me courteously and formally. So I told him: “Sir, don’t talk like that, please. Why do you speak like that to someone who would be your own son's age?”

That day the elderly man invited me to his house. On my way to his home I asked him quietly:

“Sir, excuse me for asking you such an indiscreet question. Is it true that you cover 250 miles a day?...”

“Ha, ha! So you, too, have heard that rumor. In the prime of my life I could cover half that distance.”

Hearing him I realized that the elderly man Cha Cholli must have been a great fighter for independence as he was painted. There was a reason that his surname was followed by a nickname Cholli instead of his real name. Because of his nickname Cholli the elderly man was considered a mysterious figure among the Koreans in Manchuria. During his lifetime my father had once expressed his admiration for the fast walking-speed of the elderly man. Then he told me that the nickname Cholli had been used for the elderly man from the time when he had conducted volunteer activities in the Kanggye area.

After coming to Manchuria Cha Cholli had belonged to Chamuibu and been a subordinate of Sim Ryong Jun. I was told that he had most resolutely opposed Chamui-bu being placed under the rule of the Shanghai Provisional Government. Some people from Chongui-bu who were against the idea of an organization of the Independence Army falling under the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government, highly praised the stand of the elderly man. Among the people in Chongui-bu, the leadership body of which mostly consisted of ex- soldiers, the tendency prevailed of being dissatisfied with the Provisional Government which was made up of an overwhelming majority of civil officials.

That day elderly Cha Cholli told me a lot which would later serve as a lesson for me. He lamented bitterly over the fact that we had been deprived of our country owing to the corrupt and incompetent feudal rulers, although the Korean nation had previously been quite able to repulse the Japanese imperialist aggressors and develop as the dignified people of an independent state. He told me that one must not merely talk if one wants to conduct the independence movement and that one must take up arms and kill more Japanese. In addition, he said that we must sharpen our vigilance against the Japanese imperialists because they were extremely crafty; then he told me the following story:

“Have you ever heard how the Kyongsong Match Factory was ruined? The matches produced at this factory had the trademark ‘Monkey’ and were very famous. Although the matches themselves were good, the trademark caught the eye of people because it was so strange. The trademark showed a monkey with a peach branch on its shoulder. It is said that the Japanese built a match factory in Korea, but they did not make much money from it because of its matches. So, after contriving various artifices they bought tens of thousands of boxes of ‘Monkey’ matches, went to a desert island and there soaked all the matchsticks in water. Then they dried them and sold them at the market. Everyone who bought these matches found that they were not fit for use because they did not light, so they bought only the Japanese matches. The Kyongsong Match Factory went bankrupt. That is what the Japanese are like.” Although it was impossible to confirm the truth of the story, it was very valuable in understanding Japanese imperialism.

The old man told that when the Japanese fired five shots with a five-chambered rifle he, in the prime of his life, could fire three shots with a matchlock. He added that now that he was confined to his home and was unable to fight any more because of his old age, he had become anxious and found it unbearable. I criticized Li Je U for his narrow point of view. This is what I told him:

“Needless to say, I don’t deny the proposition of Marx that religion is opium. However, you are mistaken if you think that this proposition can be applied in all cases. Do you think it right to brand as opium Chonbulgyo, a religion which prays for dealing out divine punishment to Japan and blessing the Korean nation? I regard Chonbulgyo as a patriotic religion and all the believers in this religion as patriots. Our only task is to rally these patriots into a single force.”

Li Je U and I exchanged opinions seriously. In the course of this we reached the conclusion that we should not destroy the religion of Chonbulgyo but actively support the anti-Japanese feelings of the believers in it. So I stayed there for about ten days and worked among the villagers. The believers in Chonbulgyo readily agreed with me when I said that one could not liberate the country merely by believing in a religion.

Indeed, that winter the people of Naidaoshan were utterly sincere in their treatment of us. The principal food of the people of Naidaoshan was potatoes. Potatoes mixed with kidney-beans was peculiarly tasty. Kye Yong Chun even joked, saying that the flat pieces of stone covering the floor of the room would crack because of people passing wind. If we had judged the situation merely on the strength of Li Je U’s report in Jirin without going to Naidaoshan, or of rumors, we would not have gained a favorable impression of the religion of Chonbulgyo. We were able to appreciate the religion of Chonbulgyo and its believers fairly because we went to Naidaoshan and saw the Tongdok Palace and the sincerity of the believers as they offered up prayers, as well as the ears of millet hanging from the main beam of every roof.

It is never possible to possess a popular personality and a popular way of thinking that conform to the interests of the people if one only sits at one’s desk. Nor can one possess them by indulging in empty

talk. They can be attained only through direct contact with the people to enable one to see and apprehend personally, with one's own eyes and ears, the feelings of the people, their glances, the countenance, their manner of speaking, their gestures and their behavior, not to mention their voice. We gave precedence to political work to educate the villagers. Then we formed a village branch of the Paeksan Youth League and Children's Expeditionary Corps.

After I returned to Jirin my uncle Hyong Gwon took charge of the work of the Paeksan Youth League. Together with Li Je U he formed branches of this youth league in many villages in the area of Changbai such as Toksu, Tokgol, Cholgol, Yaksudong, Imsugol and Zhiyangjie as well as in the different areas of the homeland such as Sinpa, Pochon, Hyesan, Kapsan and Samsu. The Paeksan Youth League entrusted the task of taking charge of its Changbai area organization to Li Je U. He discharged this heavy responsibility with credit. My uncle Hyong Gwon and Li Je U underwent many trials in working to make the area around Mt. Paekdu revolutionary. Thanks to this we got a lot of support from the masses when we were conducting our revolutionary struggle later in this area.

One's holidays are periods when one stops studying and takes a rest for a while. However, during the winter holiday of that year I learned a lot which I would not have been able to learn from books. After returning to Jirin from our winter holiday we reviewed the work conducted by the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League over the previous six months and set the task of forming more mass organizations for various social strata involving young people and other people from all walks of life.

In order to implement this task, hardcore members of the Young Communist League such as Kim Hyok, Cha Gwang Su, Choe Chang Gol, Kye Yong Chun and Kim Won U left for Xingjing, Liuhe, Changchun, Yitong and Huaide Counties and for Korea. There they rapidly increased the numbers of various kinds of mass organizations such as the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League.

I stayed in Jirin and conducted the work of organizing the Peasants Union in Xinantun. Uniting the peasants in an organization is the work of preparing them as the motive force of the revolution. In particular, under the circumstances in our country where the peasants made up the vast majority of the population, winning them over was a matter of key importance on which depended the victory of the revolution.

We went to Jiangdong village and organized there the Peasants Union, a branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and the Women's Association. Following this we formed branches of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League in Kalun and Dahuanggou.

In the area of Jiaohe, too, we formed a branch of the AntiImperialist Youth League. It was after I met Kang Myong Gun, head of the organizational department of the Ryosin Youth Association, that I established relations with the young people in Jiaohe. This man seemed to have heard a great deal about me from Chang Chol Ho. Jiaohe was like an intermediary stop for Chang Chol Ho. Whenever he travelled between Jirin and Fusong he dropped in at Kang Myong Gun's house in Jiaohe and informed

him of the movement of the young people and students in Jirin. Then, when he returned to Jirin, he told me the news from Jiaohe. This is how Kang Myong Gun came to know me and I became interested in the youth movement in the Jiaohe area. It was at this time that Kang Myong Gun came to Jirin to see me. In those days I was staying at Chang Chol Ho's house in Dongdatan to attend school.

Kang Myong Gun was more than 10 years older than me. However, he addressed me as "Sir" all the time and confided to me all the sufferings he was undergoing in his work and impatiently appealed to me for help. I could not help feeling sympathetic towards him, and could not but admire his revolutionary ardor, for he had come to visit me who was no more than an ordinary secondary school pupil, from Jiaohe which was 45 miles from Jirin. In Jiaohe County in those days the Ryosin Youth Association was operating in the northwest and the Lafa Youth Association was active in the southeast with the Lafa Mountains as the boundary.

The young Korean people in the Jiaohe area were mainly involved in these two youth organizations. Initially the young people joined an organization with a noble aim. However, they gradually became disillusioned at the conduct of the leaders of the nationalist movement who only struggled for power and collected funds. At the same time they were stunned by the empty talk of the pseudo-Marxists who clamored only for the "proletarian revolution" and "hegemony

This was more than enough for me to understand the feelings of Kang Myong Gun when he said that they were in confusion and unable to find a path to follow. I told Kang Myong Gun about the state of the movement of the young people and students in the Jirin area and about the experience we had gained in our work. I also told him to make good preparations, when he was back in Jiaohe, for forming a branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. And, when he was leaving, I gave him many Marxist-Leninist publications.

Although I had tried hard to awaken him in all sincerity, I could not feel easy about the work in Jiaohe after Kang Myong Gun had returned there. After being determined for some time to visit Jiaohe, I went there at last through Laoilling. It must have been the spring of 1928. Kang Myong Gun was delighted to see me, saying that he had been thinking of visiting Jirin again. He said that, although nothing had seemed to be a problem when he was in Jirin, he had found many problems upon his return.

The rural youth in Jiaohe disagreed firstly on the matter of how to form the organization. Some claimed that, because the Ryosin Youth Association was an organization of nationalists, they should break with it immediately and form the Anti-Imperialist Youth League comprising those who shared the same idea. Others insisted that they should break up the Ryosin Youth Association.

On the problem of whom they should admit into the organization, too, they did not have a correct view. They excluded acceptable young people from those wishing to be admitted into the organization claiming, for instance, that it was difficult for some people to become members of the organization because they were "hostile elements" or "waverers."

I spent the day with the villagers in a room they used for enjoyment. Lying there with my head on a wooden pillow, I told them that in order to form an organization it was necessary to win over as many people as possible and that, to this end, it was important to educate and persuade people persistently instead of dividing them into one side or another.

I also told them about the need to prevent young people from being affected by the nationalists and factionalists and to increase the role of the progressive hardcore young people in the Ryosin Youth Association and Lafa Youth Association. I also discussed their tasks with them one by one. Then I selected five hardcore young people from the Ryosin Youth Association and formed the Jiaohe branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League with them. After that I visited the Jiaohe area frequently and worked with the members of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League there.

I also started to unite in our organization the young people in the General Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria. In those days most of the young Korean people who were studying in Longjing were involved in the General Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria. They were under the influence of the Tuesday group.

But, Kim Jun, a pupil from Tonghung Middle School who was working as the head of the organizational department of this organization, came to see me after reading the magazines and pamphlets we had issued in Jirin. Through him I learned about the situation of the youth movement in the area of Longjing.

After his return from Jirin, Kim Jun maintained contact with me and started to spread my ideas among the pupils of various schools in Longjing such as Taesong Middle School, Tonghung Middle School and Unjin Middle School. Through them we taught our progressive idea to the young people of Jiandao and in the area within the jurisdiction of six towns in the homeland, including Hoeryong and Chongsong.

In those days I also paid attention to dealing with workers. In Jirin there were many factories, large and small, such as a thermal power station, a locomotive depot, a match factory, a textile mill and a rice mill. However, there was no organization to speak of, no organization to embrace the working class. The only organization that existed in those days was the Hansong Association which was formed in the spring of 1927 with the aim of finding employment for Korean workers and helping them in their everyday life.

We educated a young man who had come to the rural area after working at the Jirin Thermal Power Station and admitted him to the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. Then we had him take a job at the power station again. Thus we established a foothold at the Jirin Thermal Power Station and started to rally progressive workers.

By rousing the members of the Ryugil Association of Korean Students, we organized a night school for the workers at the pier on the River Songhuajiang and, on such days as the anniversary of the March First Popular Uprising, May Day and national humiliation day, we visited them to make speeches and give art performances. On the basis of such preparatory work we formed the Anti-Japanese Trade Union in August 1928. The man in charge of this organization was a core member of the Anti-Japanese Youth

League.

This was the first time for us to extend the domain of our activities to the working class and unite them in an organization. Until that time we had been expediting the awakening and organization of the young people and students, regarding them as the main object of our work.

We had this Anti-Japanese Trade Union, with Korean workers as its core, revitalize the Hansong Association, an overt organization. The Hansong Association gradually acquired a distinct political trend. Afterwards the Hansong Association collected subscriptions and sent them to the Wonsan Labour Federation in order to help the workers of Wonsan with their general strike. When Korea suffered from a flood disaster in the summer of 1930, this organization formed a relief association in cooperation with various Korean organizations and collected a contribution for the flood victims. This organization also played a major role in the struggle against the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project.

We accumulated extremely useful experiences in the course of reforming into revolutionary organizations, with Jirin and Jiaohe as the center, the youth organizations which were under the influence of the nationalists and factionalists.

It can be said that the life of a revolutionary begins by going among the masses and that it is over when he parts from them.

I think that if my days at Whasung Military Academy when I organized the DIU (Down with Imperialists Union) were the start of my work among the young people and students, my days at Jirin Yuwen Middle School when I formed and expanded the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League were the heyday of my work among the young people when I, going beyond the bounds of the students, went deep into the midst of all sections of the masses including the workers and peasants and sowed the seed of the revolution everywhere I went.

At that time people referred to the activities of the young communists from among the new generation and their influence, the "Jirin wind."

## 3.9. Showing Force of United Front

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Having formed and built up our organizations we launched our practical struggle. The struggle began with a student strike at Yuwen Middle School in the summer of 1928. Until that time various matters concerning the running of Yuwen Middle School ranging from the management of the dining-hall, to the financial administration and to the operation of the library had been handled without problem in accordance with the democratic opinions of the progressive teachers and students. Our activities at the school were relatively free from restraint. This was a result of our struggle in cooperation with the school affairs committee.

However, the reactionary teachers manipulated by the warlords were never happy about this democratic system established through the joint efforts of the teaching staff and students. They tried to disrupt this system and deal with all matters at the school as they pleased. Among the teachers at Yuwen Middle School appointed by the Office of Education there were warlords' agents who were always on the alert. Reactionary teachers, such as those in charge of school affairs, moral education and physical training were all paid agents of the enemy's intelligence service. They manipulated the conservative students and young delinquents from the families of the landlords and bureaucrats who followed the warlords' administration in order to probe constantly into the students' ideological trends and the activities of the revolutionary organizations.

In the summer of 1928 we held mass rallies at the school almost every day to protest against the piratical second expedition of the Japanese imperialist troops to Shandong and the atrocities they committed in Jinan.

This expedition was an important event by which the policy of the Tanaka government towards China could be judged. Japan's first expedition to the Shandong area had been made immediately after the formation of the cabinet of Prime Minister Tanaka Kiichi in May 1927. At that time the National Revolutionary Army of Chiang Kaisek was advancing towards the Shandong peninsula in pursuit of Zhang Zuo-lin's army stationed in Fengtian. In order to protect the warlord Zhang Zuo-lin whom the Japanese imperialists had trained from Jiang's army that was advancing northward, the Tanaka government, on the pretext of protecting the lives and property of the Japanese, dispatched 2,000 troops from Lushun (Port Arthur) to Qingdao and later sent a reinforcement of 2,000 troops from Japan proper to the Shandong area.



*Photo: Han Yong Ae, a female propagandist.*

Because Japan's first expedition frustrated the northward advance of Chiang's army and because Chiang guaranteed the safety of the lives and property of the Japanese resident in the Shandong area, the Japanese troops withdrew from the area that autumn.

But Chiang's army resumed its revolutionary advance northward in the spring of 1928, so the fascist Tanaka government decided to send a second expedition and moved its troops in Tianjin and 5,000 troops from the Kumamoto division in Japan proper to occupy the railway in the Shandong area and seize Qingdao and

Jinan. Jiang's National Revolutionary Army also entered Jinan, and there was a clash between the soldiers of the two countries. The Japanese occupation army massacred many Chinese people in Jinan. A diplomat of the Kuomintang government was also killed by the Japanese soldiers.

The three shameless expeditions of the Japanese imperialist army to Shandong triggered off an outburst of resentment at the Japanese among the Korean and Chinese peoples. It provoked a strong protest and denunciation within Japan against the diplomatic policies of the Tanaka government.

Japan's ultimate aim in dispatching her troops to Shandong was to separate Manchuria and the Huabei area from continental China and make them her colony. She needed a lever for that aim, and this was to be Zhang Zuo-lin. Japan calculated that she could occupy Manchuria without great difficulty if she were to tame and support him properly. The shots that echoed in Jinan were a warning of a possible massacre of tens of thousands of people in China in later years. When the Japanese imperialists were freely killing even their compatriots in China in order to create a pretext for sending in their troops, the Chinese people had a premonition of the imminent misfortune that would befall them.

We organized public lectures, speeches and protest meetings to denounce the Japanese imperialist policy of aggression and the treacherous acts of the Kuomintang, and thus stirred up our fellow students.

The reactionary teachers labeled our activities as communist propaganda and thus created a pretext for repression. They suddenly raided the school library and seized the progressive books there. They put pressure on the headmaster, Li Guang-han, to expel all the Korean students from the school, pretending to have found some important evidence against them. They alleged that the Korean students were either communist masterminds or the "spies of Japan" and were hostile to the Chinese teachers, so they could not conduct the noisy classes they attended. By the same token, the Right-wing students wantonly violated the democratic system at the school, insulted the progressive students and slandered the headmaster and the progressive teachers. Shang Yue was the prime target of their attack.

If the reactionary teachers and the students they manipulated had been left to their own devices, it would have been impossible for us to continue our academic pursuits and the youth movement freely. With the aim of driving out the reactionary teachers and defending the democratic system by drawing on an



organized force, we began a student strike centered on the members of the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. Our demands were, first, that the treatment of the students be improved; second, that subjects be taught as required by the students; and third, that no more pressure be put on the progressive teachers and the headmaster.

The progressive teachers also threatened the provincial government, saying that they would enlist the help of the public if the students' demands were not met. Leaflets and written appeals demanding the expulsion of the reactionary teachers were posted everywhere in the city. They were also thrown into the boarding houses of the reactionary teachers and the provincial government building.

As the student strike at Yuwen Middle School reached its height. The other middle schools in the city threatened the provincial government that they would join the strike. The provincial government sensed that the student strike was spreading across the city; they reluctantly dismissed the reactionary teachers, including the teachers in charge of moral education, and accepted our demands.

That was our first victory in the mass struggle. In the course of this we became confident that we could emerge victorious in the struggle if we defined a proper target and organized the masses well. Through our successful student strike, we gained experience and training. The strike encouraged the young people and students to follow us with greater confidence. We reviewed the success we had achieved in the strike and made preparations for mobilizing the enthusiastic young people and students in an active anti-Japanese struggle on a grander scale.

The schemes of the Japanese imperialists who had long been speeding up their preparations for the invasion of Manchuria became more blatant around this time. In May 1928 Muraoka, the commander of the Japanese Kwangtung Army, planned to send the 40th composite brigade to Fengtian (the present Shenyang) on the excuse of dealing with developments in China proper, and to move the army's headquarters to Fengtian. Subsequently they blew up a train on a railway bridge at the entrance of Fengtian, the bridge where the south Manchuria railway and the Beijing-Fengtian railway met, killing Zhang Zuo-lin who was on his way back from Beijing to Fengtian. This was a deliberate prelude to the invasion of Manchuria.

If they occupied Manchuria, it would mean great difficulties for us who were active in northeast China. Until that time the Japanese imperialists could not deal with the Korean communists and independence fighters as they pleased because Manchuria was under the jurisdiction of China, but their occupation of Manchuria would alter the situation.

While making careful military preparations for the invasion of Manchuria, the Japanese imperialists, who had contained Chiang Jieshi during three expeditions and stretched their tentacles deep into continental China, speeded up the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project they had had been pushing ahead with for a long time as a part of their preparations, the project to connect Jirin, a provincial seat of Manchuria, with Hoeryong, a northern border town of Korea.

It was from the time of Emperor Meiji that Japan had harbored the ambition of laying such a railway, even if it meant resorting to force. The Japanese imperialists attached great strategic importance to this railway. After the so-called "Oriental meeting", the Tanaka government submitted a letter to the Emperor in which, referring to the importance of the railways between Manchuria and Mongolia including the Jirin-Hoeryong line, they called the project the key to Japan's policy towards the Continent.

As is well-known, the main state policy proposed in this notorious letter which underlined their ambition and delusion of world domination, just as Hitler's *Mein Kampf* had advocated the theory of world supremacy in Europe, was to invade Manchuria and Mongolia, and the essential lever for this invasion was the 5 railway lines between Manchuria and Mongolia, including the Jirin-Hoeryong railway.

In this letter Tanaka hinted that with the finishing of these 5 railways Japan would have a grand rail network connecting the whole of Manchuria with Korea and a direct line to north Manchuria, rendering it possible to move troops and the necessary military supplies to any part of the area and suppress the Korean national liberation movement. The shrewd brains in Japan estimated that if the Jirin-Hoeryong line was completed and the soldiers and goods were transported from Tsuruga in Japan to Jirin in Manchuria via Chongjin and Hoeryong in Korea, the distance and time of their transportation could be shortened considerably. This was why the Japanese imperialists proclaimed the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project to be their state policy and completed it in 26 years, in spite of all the difficulties.

The Chinese people at large, the young people and students in particular, regarded it as an encroachment upon the rights of the Chinese people for the Japanese imperialists to construct railways as they pleased in Manchuria by wringing concessions on the plea of the unfair treaty they had entered into with the corrupt and inefficient bureaucrats in the last days of the Qing dynasty. In opposition to the agreement on laying railways through the introduction of foreign capital, the masses of people rose up to have the agreement revoked.

Instead of heeding the reasonable demands of the people, the reactionary warlords tried to win them over through a grand inauguration ceremony of the Jirin-Dunhua line which had been planned for November 1, 1928, while scheming to undertake the Dunhua-Tumen railway project by force. A daring act was needed to frustrate the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project, an act to warn the enemy that the Korean and Chinese peoples would not tolerate his invasion of Manchuria. It would also give the popular masses a signal to resist the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

In order to organize a mass struggle against the Japanese to frustrate the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project, we called a meeting of heads of the YCLK and AJYL organizations in the cellar of the Yaowang Shrine in Beishan Park early in October 1928. The meeting discussed slogans, methods of struggle and a course of action and gave each of us detailed assignments. It also discussed the placards, written appeals and leaflets to be used during the demonstration. In accordance with our policy that the struggle against the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project must be a joint undertaking by the Korean and Chinese peoples, we decided to write all the propaganda such as leaflets, appeals and placards in Chinese and Korean and to Conduct street agitation in the two languages.

The meeting decided that such organizations as the students' committees formed in the schools in Jirin, the Ryugil Association of Korean Students and the Korean Children's Association should be activated and that such underground organizations as the YCLK and the AIYL should refrain as far as possible from overt action. After the meeting at Beishan we worked all night to prepare for the demonstration. Han Yong Ae who belonged to the propaganda squad worked very hard. She, as a member of the Ryugil Association of Korean Students, had fallen under our influence during art performances and at the gatherings where impressions on books were swapped. Later she became a member of the Young Communist League.

A pupil of Jirin Girls' Middle School, she was good-natured but reticent and usually passed unnoticed. However, she carried out every task given her, be it difficult or irksome, for the sake of the revolution. During art performances she volunteered to play characters which others would not play, and when teaching materials for the reading circle were in short supply, she mimeographed hundreds of pages of her own accord and distributed them to the circle members.

She stayed up almost every night preparing for the demonstration. She took a mimeograph to a barn of a house and, with a few Children's Association members, duplicated tens of thousands of appeals and leaflets. She was known as a girl orator for the fiery speeches she made in Korean and Chinese to hundreds of people in the street.

I came to work as the head of the Young Communist League of Korea even among the Chinese young people and students because I upheld the banner of the communist movement from my early days in Jirin. When we launched the communist movement, the Manchuria provincial committee of the Communist Party of China had not yet been formed and there were not many young communist league members in Jirin.

While engaged in the work of the YCLK I also worked among Chinese young people. As we were at the helm of the YCLK, a great number of Chinese young people followed us. Cao Ya-fan who was the head of the Young Communist League organization at Jirin Normal School, and Chen Han-zhang who was in charge of the Young Communist League organization in the Dunhua area, were Chinese who maintained relations with us.

In the course of making preparations for the demonstration, we were informed that the railway authorities were intending to hold the inauguration ceremony of the Jirin-Dunhua railway on November 1, 1928.

We launched the demonstration a few days earlier than we had planned, with the aim of lighting the torch of opposition to the building of the Jirin-Hoeryong line at the same time as disrupting the inauguration ceremony of the Jirin-Dunhua line. At dawn on October 26, 1928, the propaganda squad scattered leaflets and put up written appeals in the streets of Jirin. Observation squads, each of which consisted of two or three members of the Children's Association, took their designated places at daybreak.

At the appointed time the students at all the schools in Jirin held simultaneous meetings and marched into

the streets after issuing appeals against the building of the Jirin-Hoeryong railway. The streets were quickly filled with thousands of students. With placards reading, "Down with Japanese imperialist aggressors!" and "Oppose the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project by Japan!" written in Korean and "Down with Japanese imperialism!" "Down with the traitors!" and "Stop the Jirin-Hoeryong line project!" written in Chinese, they marched the streets and gathered in the square in front of the provincial assembly building situated outside the Xinkai-men Gate.\

Hundreds of soldiers and policemen checked their advance. The students, confronted by them, shouted slogans, awaiting our instructions. They had to advance at any cost. So we sent into action pickets made up of the workers and peasants living in and around the city, as well as the students, in order to protect them. The students, with the pickets leading them, marched forward shoulder to shoulder in the face of the bayonets. In the square a mass rally took place. I appealed to the thousands of people gathered in the square for the young people and students of Korea and China to unite and fight staunchly against the Japanese imperialists' building of the Jirin-Hoeryong line.

After the meeting the demonstrators' column marched in high spirits to New Street where the Japanese consulate was situated. The street was seldom frequented by the people because of the outrageous behavior of the consular police. The demonstrators shouted anti-Japanese slogans in front of the Japanese consulate, getting worked up, and continued their demonstration through Tama, Beijing, Chongqing and Shangyijie Streets as well as other streets in the city.

Hard hit by the demonstration in Jirin, the Japanese railway company indefinitely postponed the inauguration ceremony of the Jirin-Dunhua line. Japanese shopkeepers deserted their shops and fled to their consulate. The windows of the Oriental Hospital run by the South Manchuria Railway Company were smashed.

The demonstration mounted higher as the days passed. We formed several student groups and saw to it that they installed platforms in dozens of places in the city and delivered speeches against the railway construction from dawn until late at night.

The anti-Japanese struggle that had started in Jirin spread all over Manchuria. The students and citizens of Changchun, in response to our struggle, waged a fierce struggle against imperialism and the building of the six railway lines. They also raided the house of the head of the Jirin-Changchun railway bureau. In Harbin and Tianjin they conducted a brave solidarity struggle, with many people sacrificing themselves. Our Korean compatriots living in the Yanji area also joined the struggle. Newspapers in the homeland reported our struggle every day.

As the demonstration expanded, we pushed ahead with the campaign to boycott Japanese goods. The masses ransacked Japanese shops and burned the goods with Japanese trademarks in the streets. Some of them were dumped into the River Songhuajiang. Alarmed by the possibility of the struggle against the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project combined with the boycotting of Japanese goods developing into a full-scale anti-Japanese struggle, the barbarous Japanese imperialists instigated the reactionary warlords to

open fire on the demonstrators. We had tried to keep the reactionary warlords in check.

But as they were suppressing us, hand in glove with the Japanese imperialists, we could no longer confine ourselves to this. The demonstration developed onto a wider scale coinciding with a funeral ceremony for the victims under the slogan, "Down with the reactionary warlords aligned with the Japanese imperialists!" That day the demonstration reached its height with the participation of many more citizens. The struggle continued for about 40 days.

In order to improve the situation, the Japanese imperialists sent for Zhang Zuo-xiang who was in Fengtian; but the appeasement measures the Jirin military control station adopted failed to check the surging spirit of the masses. This struggle was a heavy blow to the Japanese imperialists. They were particularly surprised at the united resistance of the Korean and Chinese peoples to Japan's aggression in Manchuria.

The nationalists and those who, frightened by imperialist Japan's invasion, had been thinking of turning tail, received a shock from our struggle. Up until then the nationalists had slighted the young people and students. Seeing that we, in our teens and twenties, had carried out something they had not dared to attempt, they changed their attitude towards us. From that time on they recognized that a fresh force from the new generation that was totally different from their own generation had appeared in the arena of the national liberation movement, and they ceased to slight us.

Through our struggle to oppose the Jirin-Hoeryong railway project we once again became keenly aware that the strength of the masses was inexhaustible, and we formed a firmer conviction that the masses, if properly organized, could display formidable strength that no force of arms could ever crush.

My faith in the strength of the masses became more unshakable and our method of leadership of the masses became more seasoned. In the practical struggle not only was I trained but also the organizations developed.

## 3.10. In Prison

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As the "wind of Jirin" blew across many areas of Manchuria, the Japanese imperialists and the reactionary Chinese warlords soon heard of our existence. The youth and student movement in Jirin, the Zhongdong railway incident and the incident of the conference of the General Federation of Korean Youth in South Manchuria, caused rumors of us to spread far and wide, and this made the enemy aware that the young people and students were at the bottom of the disturbances in Jirin and set him on our trail.

The Japanese imperialists planted their spies everywhere to keep a sharp watch on every movement of the Koreans prior to their invasion of Manchuria and, at the same time, egged the reactionary Chinese warlords on to arrest and imprison the communists and anti-Japanese independence fighters.

The situation in Jirin became extremely grave and ordeals were lying ahead of us. As the situation became more threatening, the factionalists who had been lying low in Jirin fled to Longjing, Panshi, Dunhua and other places and the independence fighters either disappeared into China proper with Chinese citizenship or escaped to places like Wangqingmen. Jirin in the autumn of 1929 was no longer the center of the political movement of Koreans abroad, the center which had once been crowded with anti-Japanese champions.

Then the students of Jirin Middle School No. 5 made a senseless fuss at a meeting of a reading circle, which caused our comrades to be arrested. As soon as I had returned from Wangqingmen and was busy trying to save the situation, I was caught in the web of the reactionary warlord authorities. The students of Middle School No. 5 had revealed the secret of the Young Communist League at Yuwen Middle School.

The police claimed that they had rounded up the leaders of the student movement and tortured us brutally every day. They were trying to discover details of the activities we had conducted and of our organizational network in the city, and to find the men behind the scenes. We decided not to say anything except that we had read some Leftist books. We held out to the interrogators, arguing, "What is wrong for a student to read books? We read books that are on sale in the bookshops. If you are going to incriminate anyone, you should lay the guilt first on the authorities who have permitted the publication and sale of the books, shouldn't you?"



*Photo: Kim Il Sung, standing, on the eve of his guerrilla career. His father left him a pair of pistols.*

One day when I was being put to finger-breaking torture, I saw Mr. Choe Dong O, the former head of Whasung Military Academy, looking at me for a second from behind a screen set up to one side of the interrogation room and then disappearing. It was such a surprise to me that I doubted my own eyes at first, wondering if it was merely an illusion. But it was Mr. Choe Dong O, there was no mistake. As they had gone so far as to summon my old teacher from Whasung Military Academy to the interrogation room, I thought, they were really digging deep into my activities.

The appearance of my old teacher set me thinking. He spoke good Chinese and was an able diplomat, so he was the chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Kukmin-bu setup. He stayed mostly in Jirin to coordinate relations with the reactionary

warlord authorities of the Kuomintang and maintained some ties with the young people and students. If he should disclose my past activities to the warlord authorities, my efforts to settle my case as quietly as possible might come to naught. Moreover, should any of the facts about my activities in support of the Soviet Union at the time of the Zhongdong railway incident come to light, I would not get away with my life.

Instigated and manipulated by the British, American, French and Japanese imperialists, the Kuomintang government and the Fengtian warlord of China had been guilty of treacherous anti-Soviet moves towards the end of the 1920s. Following the unsuccessful Guangzhou popular uprising, the Chiang Kaisek government shot to death the Soviet consul in Guangzhou and broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. This anti-Soviet move was the boldest move of Chiang Kaisek, who was flattering the imperialist powers in order to secure their protection and support. The slogan "We are against red imperialism" passed the lips of the warlords frequently. Craftily playing on the Chinese people's national sentiments, they covered up the truth about the imperialists' aggression and persistently stirred up anti-Soviet feelings.

Taken in by the propaganda conducted by the warlords, university students and young intellectuals said such bellicose and provocative things as "Let's take the Ural Mountains and seize Lake Baikal!" and "Let's water our horses in Lake Baikal!" as they turned their eyes to Soviet territory. Taking advantage of this atmosphere, the warlords attacked the Zhongdong railway as the first step in their anti-Soviet provocation. According to an agreement, China and the Soviet Union had been managing the railways jointly through a council, sharing its property and equipment with each other. The warlords seized the wireless station and management bureau by force of arms and captured the railways, unilaterally revoking the Soviet side's right of control. Following the seizure of the railways, they invaded Soviet territory in three directions across the border. In consequence, there was an armed clash between the

Soviet army and the troops of the reactionary Chinese warlords. At that time some right-wing students at Fengyong and Dongbei Universities, abetted by the reactionaries, took up arms against the Soviet Union.

In order to check the anti-Soviet acts of the Kuomintang government and reactionary warlords, we roused the members of the Young Communist League and Anti-Imperialist Youth League in defense of the socialist country. Some politically ignorant young Chinese gave us a wide berth, vilifying us as evil people who were helping the "trespassers" on the national interests of China. This was very annoying. In many places in the city we distributed handbills exposing the true nature of the warlords' anti-Soviet moves and went among the Chinese people, telling them that the seizure of the Zhongdong railway and the invasion of Soviet territory by the warlords' troops was an inexcusable act of perfidy against the Soviet Union that had repealed all its unequal treaties with China and given material and moral aid to China after the October Revolution, and that this was motivated by a desire to obtain loans from the imperialists.

After hearing our explanation the people who had been deceived by the propaganda of the reactionary Kuomintang Party and warlords and taken a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union came to recognize the danger and true character of the invasion of the Soviet Union, changed their attitude and position and denounced the moves of the reactionaries. In conjunction with the young progressives of China we dealt a severe blow to the students of Fengyong University who took up arms to attack the Soviet Union. Our activities in connection with the Zhongdong railway incident represented an internationalist struggle to defend the Soviet Union politically.

At that time we regarded the first socialist system established on Earth as a beacon of hope and considered it our solemn internationalist obligation as communists to fight in its defense. Our struggle in relation to the Zhongdong railway incident helped the Chinese people to see clearly the true nature of the warlords and to realize what the imperialists' motives were in manipulating the warlords to turn against the Soviet Union. The incident opened the eyes of the Korean and Chinese peoples.

In those days the Kuomintang warlords would not tolerate the pro-Soviets. Even after I had seen Mr. Choe Dong O in the interrogation room, the interrogators treated me only as the leading spirit of the reading circle. It appeared that the warlord authorities had asked Mr. Choe about my past activities and if I had had anything to do with the Soviet Union, as well as what sort of movement I had been involved in. But it seems that he said nothing against me.

After a while we were sent to Jirin prison. The prison was a cross-shaped building with the passages stretching in four directions? north, south, east and west. The passages were lined with cells on both sides, so that the warder might have a full view of them while sitting in the center. My cell was the second on the right of the northern passage. Being in the north, the room never got any sun all the year round. So it was unbearably musty and, in winter, its walls were white with frost. It was autumn when we were transferred to the prison, but it was as cold in the cell as in winter.

The warlord authorities employed national discrimination in their treatment of the prisoners. The warders



would use insulting language like "Korean pigs" and "homeless Korean devils" and fetter the Korean students with heavy leg irons. The authorities drew a distinction between Korean and Chinese political prisoners in their diet and in the use of medical facilities.

I made up my mind not to give up my struggle in prison. It can be said that for revolutionaries the prison is a theatre of struggle. If one regards prison merely as a lockup for prisoners, one will lose the initiative and be unable to do anything. But if one thinks of it as a part of the world, one will be able to do something beneficial for the revolution even in a narrow walled-in space. I calmly began to cast about in my mind for a way to struggle. First of all, I decided to contact the comrades outside and restore and put into action the dislocated organizations within the shortest possible time. Also I decided to wage a struggle against the warlord authorities and hasten the day of my release.

In order to wage a struggle in prison, the problem was to establish contact with the outside world. The solution of this problem required bringing warders round and making them sympathetic towards us. My plan to win over the warders came off more easily than I had expected. The prison authorities had begun to repair the cells, so they kept us together with some infamous offenders for a while. This offered us a favorable opportunity.

One day a Chinese criminal, a fellow inmate, suddenly went down with influenza and took to his bed. He had been arrested on the charge of robbing a rich house, and he was very rough in his manner. When I was transferred to the ordinary criminals' cell, this man, who was known as "Kangtul," and considered himself to be important, demanded peremptorily that I should treat him to something, either money or food. A newcomer to the cell, whoever he was, was in duty bound to keep this rule. And he growled that I, too, should obey the rule. He was an extremely fierce and wild creature.

I fired back point-blank: I have spent days in the interrogation room undergoing severe ordeals, so where do you think I can get hold of money or food? As for a treat, would it not be more reasonable for you who have been in this cell a long time to give me one? At this "Kangtul" was tongue-tied and merely sat glaring fiercely at me, turning alternately pale and red.

He had always been so despotic that none of the other inmates would nurse him, but just looked at him with indifference, although he was suffering from a high fever and unable to eat or sleep. I covered him with the quilt that had been sent to me by the family of the Rev. Son Jung Doh when I was being taken to the prison and called the warder and asked him to fetch some medicine for the sick man from the prison hospital. The warder, whose name was Li and who disliked the gruff and unsociable criminal, was mystified to see a Korean looking after a Chinese with brotherly care. Because I nursed him devotedly, the sick prisoner soon got well.

After that his attitude towards me was different. Seeing that an infamous offender who was so perverse and fierce that even the jailers had found it hard to deal with had suddenly turned obedient to me, a secondary school student, the warder Li was struck with wonder and began to show respect for me. Of all the warders at Jirin prison he was a good-natured person with national consciousness. The members of

our organization outside informed me that he was a man of low birth and that he had become a prison guard simply to earn a living. After finding out what kind of a man he was, I decided to win him over, so I seized various opportunities to speak to him.

Soon I came to know that his younger brother was having problems because he could not obtain the articles he needed for his marriage despite the fact that the ceremony was near at hand. When my comrades came to the prison to see me, I told them of the embarrassment of the warder and asked them to rouse the organization to help him. A few days later warder Li came and thanked me for the kind turn of buying the necessary marriage articles. Then he asked me if it was true that I was a communist, as the prison authorities were calling me.

When I answered that it was, he said that he could not understand it and went on to remark with great heat, "They say the communists are all bandits, but can it be true that such good people as you rob others? If it's true that you are a communist, it's absurd to label the communists as bandits." So I told him kindly, "The communists are people who struggle to build a society free from exploitation and oppression where all the people are equally well-off. We, the Korean communists, are fighting to expel the Japanese imperialists from the land of Korea and win back our lost country.

The rascals who are rich and powerful vilify the communists as bandits because the communists want to overthrow the rotten society where the landlords, capitalists, local squires and traitors to the nation rule the roost." At this, the prison guard said, nodding his head, that he had been taken in by the false propaganda of the authorities because he was ignorant, but that from then on he would never take them at their word.

After that Li made it a point to come to see me before going off duty, and he readily complied with my request to pass messages to the other cells. Before long I was able to communicate with the outside with his help. From then on I enjoyed considerable freedom in my prison life. But not all the warders treated me kindly as Li did. There was one unpleasant senior warder who would look into the cells through the peepholes and maltreat the prisoners. There were three senior warders in all at the Jirin prison, and of these he was the worst. When he was on duty, the prisoners were so cowed that they could not even yawn freely. So I decided to teach him a lesson. One day we held a discussion in the cell to select the right person to carry out the task.

A Chinese student from the third year of Middle School No. 5 in Jirin whose name was Huang Xiu-dian volunteered for the job. Of the students imprisoned because of their involvement in the reading circle only two were Koreans and all the rest Chinese. I asked him if he would not mind the pain of at least five months' solitary confinement should he be punished. He answered that he would consider himself a martyr for the sake of his comrades and would do whatever he could to teach the warder a lesson. He told us just to watch while he was correcting the senior warder by an ingenious method. He sharpened one of a pair of bamboo chopsticks, and when the man was peering into the cell through the peephole, he thrust the bamboo stick into his eye.

In addition to blood, a black liquid flowed out of the eye of the man. This was something nobody had expected. All the students in the cell applauded Huang as a hero. But Huang himself suffered terribly for this for several days in an unheated solitary cell in the cold winter. The students pressed the prison officials to release him from isolation, threatening to stab their eyes, too, if they did not release Huang. Finally the prison authorities yielded to the demand of the students. After that we did whatever we liked in the cells. We held a meeting when we wanted to, and visited other cells when the need arose. When I said I wanted to go to a certain cell, the prison guards agreed readily and unlocked the door for me.

While in prison, I received a lot of help from the Rev. Son Jung Doh. Through the whole period of my revolutionary activities in Jirin, the Rev. Son Jung Doh gave me active support just as he would his own relative. From his days in the homeland he had been on terms of close intimacy with my father. That might well have been because they had been fellow students at Sungsil Middle School, but I think rather that the community of their thinking and ideal drew them into a warm friendship. My father in his life time told me a great deal about the Rev. Son Jung Doh.

Immediately after the March First Popular Uprising Son Jung Doh fled to China as an exile and for some time held the post of chairman of the Political Council of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai. Then, in collaboration with Kim Gu, Cho Sang Sop, Li Yu Pil, and Yun Gi Sop, he formed the Veterans' Association with the object of training military personnel to conduct armed resistance and headed the Labor and Industry Department of that organization. But when the association was dissolved and a factional struggle developed in the provisional government, he felt disillusioned and moved to Jirin. In Jirin he set up a chapel and conducted the independence movement.

That was the very chapel which we used extensively as a place for educating the masses. Originally the Rev. Son Jung Doh was a very devout Christian. He was a man of consequence among the Christians and independence fighters in Jirin. Many Korean Christians were respectable patriots like Son Jung Doh who devoted their whole lives to the independence movement. They prayed for Korea and appealed to God to relieve the unhappy Korean people of their stateless plight. Their immaculate religious faith was always associated with patriotism, and their desire to build a peaceful, harmonious and free paradise found expression invariably in their patriotic struggle for national liberation. The greater part of the Chondoists and Buddhists were also patriots.

Since Son Jung Doh was an adviser to the Ryugil Students Association, I met him frequently. Whenever he saw me, he would say he felt chagrined and regret at my father's death at so young an age and encouraged me to take on my father's aspirations and work with devotion for the nation at the head of the independence movement. I owed my three-year-long education at Yuwen Middle School in Jirin to the generous help of my father's old friends like Son Jung Doh. The Rev. Son Jung Doh was worried about the hard life of our family and about my mother who did washing and needlework for other people, and gave me money for my school fees on many occasions. His wife, too, cared a great deal for me. On holidays she would invite me to eat Korean delicacies. The bean-curd and rabbit-meat stew and rice cakes mixed with a herb called jiondugi which I ate at their home was delicious. With leaves covered with soft down, the herb had neither scent nor toxin.

They said they had used the herb in making rice cakes since when they were living in Pyongyang. The rice cakes I ate at the minister's house that day had been prepared with the Jjondugi herb that had been picked in Beishan Park. Son Jung Doh had two sons and three daughters. The second son Son Won Tae and the youngest daughter Son In Sil took part in our movement in Jirin. Son In Sil, together with Hwang Gwi Hon, Yun Son Ho, Kim Byong Suk, Yun Ok Chae and other children, worked as a member of the Association of Korean Children in Jirin. She frequently went on errands for me when I was engaged in the youth and student movement and when I was suffering in prison.

One day the warden threw a new prisoner into our cell. The victim had been tortured so badly that it was almost impossible to recognize him. It was Kang Myong Gun, head of the organizational department of the Ryosin Youth Association. After his sudden arrest by the warlord authorities in the spring of 1929 no one knew whether he was dead or alive. So I was surprised and delighted to meet him again. He had been arrested on a false charge laid by factionalists who had informed against him to take their revenge on him for the incident of the General Federation of Korean Youth in China (GFKYC). The representatives of the Ryosin Youth Association to the meeting of the GFKYC held in Jichangji had withdrawn from the meeting and issued a letter of protest exposing the reckless acts of the factionalists. Out of malice against the protest, the factionalists had been plotting against them and, when a young man died of illness in Jiaohe, they informed the warlord authorities that he had poisoned the young man.

Kang Myong Gun complained with tears in his eyes that he was being punished for no reason. I encouraged him to fight against the warlord authorities and prove his innocence, advising him that a man who had taken up a great cause should not be dispirited because of such things and that there would be nothing impossible for a man who fought with determination, even until he died.

After that, he fought resolutely at the law court as I had told him to do. He lived honorably until the country was liberated. After returning to the liberated homeland, he received an appointment from the Party and worked faithfully with the allied parties. It was only after many years that I learned that he had been living not far from us. I sent a man to him to arrange an appointment for us to meet. The news must have been a great shock to him. To my regret, he had a cerebral hemorrhage before our reunion. If he had not died, we could have talked with warm feeling over our days in Jirin.

While in prison I analyzed the experiences and lessons of the national liberation struggle and the communist movement in our country and went over those of the revolutionary movements in other countries. Our nation had staged demonstrations against the colonial rule by the Japanese imperialists, conducted strikes, waged a Righteous Volunteers struggle and conducted the Independence Army movement against them. But all these struggles had failed. Why did all this bloodshed and all these struggles end in failure?

Factions had appeared in the anti-Japanese struggle and had done tremendous harm to the national liberation struggle. The Righteous Volunteers, which was the first to raise the torchlight of resistance to the Japanese and fought all across the country, had lacked unity of command. The commanders, who came from Confucian aristocratic backgrounds, had wished to restore the royal government, whereas the

men, who came from among the populace, had demanded the reform of the outmoded system. The conflict and contradiction between them had seriously affected their fighting efficiency.

Some of the die-hard Volunteers commanders who advocated the restoration of the old system had even organized battles simply to win fame in the hope of receiving official appointments from the government. Such practices had broken the unity of the army. The Volunteers commanders who came from among the ordinary people had refused to cooperate with those of aristocratic origin. This tendency had weakened the army.

The situation with the Independence Army had been much the same. Its organization itself lacked unity and order. Even after the various independence movement organizations operating in Manchuria had merged to form the three major organizations, factional strife among them had continued. Although the merger of the three organizations resulted in the establishment of Kukmin-bu, the top level of the Independence Army had been divided into the pro-Kukmin-bu faction and the anti-Kukmin-bu faction, and their tug of war had never ceased. These nationalist factions were given to useless argument, each looking up to a major power.

Some of the leaders of the independence movement had wished to win Korea's independence with the backing of China, some of them had tried to defeat Japan with the help of the Soviet Union, and others had hoped that the United States would bring them Korea's independence on a plate.

The nationalists worshipped the major powers because they did not believe in the strength of the popular masses. Their movement had remained an aristocratic movement which was divorced from the popular masses. Therefore, it had neither a strong foundation nor support from the people.

The practice of some high level people of wasting time on empty talk and scramble for power instead of rousing the masses to the revolutionary struggle had also been in evidence among some self-styled communists. This was a serious weakness. The communists at the incipient stage of the struggle had given no thought to mixing with the popular masses, educating them, organizing them and mobilizing them in the struggle. They had been divorced from the masses, engaged in empty talk and a scramble for hegemony.

The factions that appeared in the early years of the communist movement had not been eliminated. The factionalists in our country were intellectuals who came from the nationalist line of the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie or from the feudal aristocracy. Swimming with the tide in the years after the October Socialist Revolution when the labor movement was mounting rapidly and Marxism-Leninism was winning enthusiastic support from the masses, these intellectuals had plunged into the revolution in the name of Marxism. But, forming factions from the start, they had been engrossed in a tug of war to gain hegemony. They had employed every manner of fraud and trickery, and had even resorted to a free fight by forming terrorist squads.

Due to their factional strife, the Communist Party of Korea had been unable to ensure its unity and

withstand the repression by the Japanese imperialists. Steeped in flunkeyism towards the major powers, the communists in the early years of the struggle had given no thought to organizing a party and fighting for the revolution by their own efforts; each faction claimed that it was the orthodox party and traveled about in order to gain recognition from the Communist International, carrying even seals engraved in potatoes with it.

I analyzed the situations of the nationalist and communist movements in our country and decided that the revolution should not be conducted in that way. I believed that the revolution in my country would emerge victorious only when it was undertaken on our own responsibility and by the efforts of our own people, and that all the problems arising in the revolution must be solved independently and creatively. This was the starting-point of the Juche idea, as it is known nowadays.

While in prison I pondered over the way to lead the Korean revolution. I racked my brains about the forms and methods I should employ in the struggle to defeat Japanese imperialism and liberate the country, how the anti-Japanese forces should be united, and how the party as the leadership body of the revolution should be founded. I also considered what tasks I should undertake preferentially after my release.

At that time, in view of the specific situation and the socio-class relations in our country, I defined the Korean revolution as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, and formulated the fighting policy that an armed struggle should be waged in order to defeat the armed enemy, imperialist Japan, and to liberate the country, that the working class, the peasantry, national capitalists, religious believers and all other patriotic forces that were against the Japanese should be rallied under the anti-Japanese banner and roused to action and that a new revolutionary party, free from factional strife, should be formed.

Because I had acquired a clear viewpoint and attitude towards the Korean revolution and because I was able to visualize the line and policy, I felt an irresistible impulse to get out of prison as soon as possible. I resolved to fight for my early release. Together with the comrades who had been imprisoned on the charge of involvement in a "student incident" I made preparations to battle for our release.

A hunger strike was the method we adopted. We started the struggle with a grim resolve to battle until our just demands were met. Before we began the struggle I thought that it would be difficult to ensure unity of action in a struggle that was to enlist even criminals.

But when we went on hunger strike, I discovered that the meals were being removed from every cell without being touched. Even the criminals who used to fight among themselves over a bowl of food ate nothing. That was the result of the silent education given them by our comrades who had been arrested at the time of the "student incident."

Our comrades outside the prison gave us active support in our struggle. In response to our struggle in prison, these comrades exposed the inhuman treatment in the Jirin prison and won public support. The warlord authorities yielded to our united struggle. I was released early in May 1930. As I walked out

through the arched gate of the prison, my heart was full of confidence and enthusiasm.

While in prison I made a summary of the early communist movement and the nationalist movement and, on the basis of the lessons I learnt from this, I planned the future of the Korean revolution.

As I remember, my father sought the way to switch over from the nationalist movement to the communist movement while he was in Pyongyang jail; I planned the Korean revolution while I was in Jirin prison. Being sons of an unfortunate, ruined nation, both my father and I had to think about the future of the nation while we were in prison.

## 4.1. The Rev. Son Jung Doh

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I was released from prison at a time when the situation in Manchuria was dangerous. In the streets of Jirin the atmosphere was tense, as if martial law had been declared, as at the time of the incident of the anti-Japanese reading circle in the autumn of 1929. At every road junction and around the government buildings, gendarmes from the military control station were stopping and searching passing people. Armed soldiers and policemen could be seen searching houses in the back streets. Things were unimaginably dreadful with the whole of Manchuria suffering due to Li Li-san's Leftist line. At that time the May 30 Uprising was at its height in Manchuria.

The struggle which is called the May 30 Uprising by Korean historians was referred to as the "Red May struggle" by the Chinese people. We call it the May 30 Uprising because it began on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the massacre that had taken place in Shanghai on the 30th of May and also because it was at its high point on the 30th of May. Li Li-san, who was at the helm of the Chinese Communist Party at the time, ordered the whole party to ensure that the working class, students and citizens throughout China should go on strike and, at the same time, develop the struggle in the form of an uprising and raise Soviet guerrilla forces in order to mark the anniversary of the heroic struggle of the Shanghai citizens in May 1925.



*Photo: Rev. Son Jung Doh and his daughter. His church was the main meeting place of Jirin Korean expatriates; young Kim Il Sung attended Rev. Son's Sunday services while studying at a Jirin middle school. For further information on Rev. Son, see [Rev. Son Jung Doh](#).*

On receiving these orders from him, the revolutionary organizations under the Manchurian provincial committee convened meetings of shock forces throughout Manchuria by mobilizing the masses and encouraged them to rise in revolt under his slogan, "Victory first in one or a few provinces!" Leaflets and manifestoes calling on the people to revolt appeared in the streets of the towns and farm villages of east Manchuria. With the outbreak of the revolt, the enemy stepped up their attack on the communists to a degree never witnessed before. The waves of the attack had



already reached Jirin.

After my release, I first visited the Rev. Son Jung Doh's house, which was in Niumaxiang. I thought it proper for me to express my gratitude, before I left the town, to his family for their unceasing concern for me over the seven months I was in prison. The minister received me in delight, as if it were his own son he was welcoming home from prison. "We were afraid that the warlords would hand you over to the Japanese. It is very fortunate for you to have been set free without being given any sentence," he said.

"Minister, my time in prison was much easier than I had expected because you gave me such strong support. I have been told that you gave the warders a lot on my behalf. I feel I must return your kindness. I shall never forget your kindness all my life, Minister."

The minister was preparing for a journey to China proper. I asked him why he was leaving Jirin so suddenly.

"Even Zhang Zuo-xiang has become powerless, so there is no influential person whom we can expect to protect and support us in Jirin," he said, heaving a deep sigh and with a sad smile on his face. "If he cannot help us Koreans, we have nothing to fall back on when the Japanese army comes to attack. I thought that once the three organizations were merged, the independence movement would advance without a problem. But when I see the unceasing tug of war among us I don't feel like staying here any longer."

In China proper he had friends from his days as the vice-chairman and chairman of the political council of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, as well as his former fellow members of Hungsadan. I imagined he had made up his mind to go there in order to get in touch with them again and work harder for independence.

He asked me what I was going to do at a time when the Japanese imperialists might invade Manchuria at any moment.

"I am going to raise a large army and fight a decisive battle with the Japanese imperialists, and that's all," I said. "To fight the Japanese with guns!" he exclaimed, looking at me in surprise. "Yes. There is no other way, is there?" "Remember that Japan is one of the five world powers. The Righteous Volunteers and the Independence Army were nothing when confronted with Japan's modern weapons. But if you are determined, you must be bold."

I was very sad to experience the cold and depressed atmosphere at the minister's house, something I had not noticed when visiting there in my early days in Jirin. Previously I had heard the sounds of a gramophone and the animated voices of the independence fighters discussing the political situation. I used to be able to see pious figures from his congregation and hear the plaintive melody of Don't Blow, You Wind! sung by the members of the Children's Association. But all these things had vanished.

The minister's close associates who frequented his house had all gone into hiding in Liuhe, Xingjing, Shanghai or Beijing. The gramophone which had emitted the doleful songs, The Site of the Old Palace and A Vagabond, was now silent. The minister himself went to Beijing later and stayed there for some time. Beijing was where Sin Chae Ho (alias Tanjae), a renowned historian and writer and his companion from the early days of his term of office in the Shanghai Provisional Government had been active. In that city the minister had many other comrades.

When the minister arrived in Beijing, he found that Sin Chae Ho had been arrested while landing on Taiwan for the purpose of working with the Oriental Union and had been sent to Lushun (Port Arthur) prison. Beijing without Sin Chae Ho seemed very lonely and dreary to the minister, for they were such close friends.

With a view to making our nation's long patriotic tradition and brilliant culture known to the younger generation and inspiring them with patriotism, Sin Chae Ho had devoted enormous time and effort to describing the history of Korea. He had once applied himself to the work of publishing to enlighten the nation. While in exile in Vladivostok he had published the newspaper Haejo Sinmun which had become popular. Park So Sim occasionally contributed articles to this newspaper because the editor Sin Chae Ho was renowned among the Koreans abroad and held in high esteem by them for his remarkable personality and literary style.

Sin Chae Ho was an advocate of the policy of armed resistance. He considered Syngman Rhee's diplomatic doctrine and An Chang Ho's "preparation doctrine" unrealizable and dangerous. He asserted that in the life-and-death struggle between the Korean people and the Japanese marauders, the 20 million Koreans must unite and destroy the enemy by violent means.

When some important figures nominated Syngman Rhee as head of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, Sin Chae Ho resented it and opposed it absolutely because he was against Syngman Rhee's mandate doctrine and autonomy doctrine. He said, "Syngman Rhee is a worse traitor than Li Wan Yong. Li Wan Yong sold out a country that existed, but Syngman Rhee has sold it out even before we have got it back."

That was a famous and stunning declaration made by Sin Chae Ho at a meeting where the provisional government was being formed.

In his "Declaration on the Korean Revolution" which he made after his withdrawal from the provisional government, he criticized Syngman Rhee severely.

Once, in an occasional recollection of those days, the Rev. Son Jung Doh said, "Sin Chae Ho was a man with an incisive mind and of unrelenting logic. I was secretly delighted when he condemned Syngman Rhee as a worse traitor than Li Wan Yong. His criticism represented public opinion. We shared his opinion. That was why he and I broke with the provisional government."

I think that from what he said one can judge the minister's political view to a certain extent. He had declared both the autonomy doctrine and the mandate doctrine to be delusions. He had questioned An Chang Ho's theory of the development of strength, but gave unqualified support to our doctrine that the independence of the country should be achieved by the resistance of the whole nation. This revolutionary inclination of his had led him to believe that it was no longer necessary to remain in the cabinet of the provisional government headed by Syngman Rhee, the flunkeys and political impostor. So he had taken a resolute step to break with the provisional government and move to Jirin.

In Jirin the Rev. Son Jung Doh got in touch with the reformists whom the Japanese police had defined as the "third force," and took an active part in the independence movement. He mixed well with younger people and gave them wholehearted support in their struggle. The chapel which was outside the Dadong-men Gate and in which he was working as the minister was practically a meeting hall for us. I frequented the chapel, to play the organ there and guide the activities of the art propaganda troupe. Because he complied with all our requests and gave us selfless support in our revolutionary activities, I respected the minister and followed him as I would have done my own father. The minister on his part loved me as if I were his own son. It was he who had masterminded the scheme for my release by bribing Zhang Zuo-xiang. He treated me not only as his friend's son but also as a revolutionary with my own independent political view. He did not even hesitate to bring a family problem to me for my advice, a problem which had been discussed in vain by his fellow independence fighters.

The minister's problem concerned his eldest daughter Son Jin Sil's marriage to Yun Chi Chang. The independence fighters in Jirin all objected to it. The minister himself was displeased, believing that his daughter had chosen an unsuitable husband. He thought that her marriage to the man would disgrace the family name. Yun Chi Chang was a

younger brother of Yun Chi Ho, a pro-Japanese comprador capitalist. While the minister was annoyed with his daughter because he was unable to dissuade her from marrying the man, a conservative group from the Independence Army detained the man for a week in order to extract funds from him.

"So, what is to be done?" the minister asked me. I hesitated for a while because I was afraid of poking my nose into the matter of a marriage between my elders, before saying cautiously, "They have fallen in love with each other, so there is no way of separating them, is there? I think the best thing to do is to leave them to their own devices." Then, I persuaded the conservative group from the Independence Army to release Yun Chi Chang.

The minister returned to Jirin in the year following his visit to Beijing. Some people said that he had returned at the request of the radicals such as O In Hwa and Ko Won Am, but I am not sure whether this was true or not. Judging from the fact that he then remained in Jirin until the last moment of his life, the independence movement in Beijing had not been promising. It also appeared that he was not in good health. When I met him after my release from prison, he had said that I looked haggard, but I had found signs of illness in his face and worried about him. Because of his recurrent chronic disease, he had not been eating properly.

"On top of the country's ruin I am ill, so I sigh day and night," the minister said. "Even the Omniscient and Omnipotent is not kind to me. My exile seems to be taking a heavy toll of me."

While propagating his religion in Manchuria in 1912 he was arrested, suspected of being involved in the assassination of Katsura Taro, and exiled to Chin Island, where he wasted two years. Probably he had contracted the illness while in exile. I do not believe in superstition, but people who are loved and spared by the public seem to be vulnerable to attack by illness.

At Mingyuegou in the spring of the following year I heard the shocking news that the minister had died of his illness. The man who told me of his death said that he had died before his time at the Oriental Hospital in Jirin.

At first I took the news as a rumor. I could not believe that the minister had died so soon. It seemed to me impossible that the life of the minister who had been walking and talking about the future of the independence movement when I met him only six months before had been snuffed out like a candle in the wind because of a gastric ulcer. But the news, though unhappy, was true. According to information I received from an underground source he had died after vomiting blood on his first day in hospital.

Many people in the Korean community in Manchuria considered his death to have been murder. The first reason for such a conjecture was that the minister, just prior to going into hospital, had not been in such a critical condition. Another convincing reason was that the Oriental Hospital where he died belonged to a Japanese. The common view of the Koreans in Manchuria was that, since the Japanese were capable of using Koreans without hesitation as guinea-pigs in experiments on biological weapons, they could commit acts even worse than murder. The most convincing argument was that the Rev. Son Jung Doh was a renowned patriot. He had been under constant and strict surveillance by the Japanese police.

Apart from being suspected of involvement in the assassination of Katsura Taro, he was a thorn in the side of the Japanese police because of his life-long record in the anti-Japanese struggle as the chairman of the political council of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, its Director-General for Transport, a member of the Association for the Promotion of Political Strategy, and of Hungsadan and a councilor of the Worker-Soldier Association. How close an eye the Japanese had kept on the minister is illustrated by the fact that immediately after his sudden death the Japanese consul-general in Jirin compiled a special paper "On the Death of the Rebellious Korean Son Jung Doh" and sent it to his foreign minister.

As some people said that his nickname Haesok (a sea stone) reflected his personality clearly, so the Rev. Son Jung Doh was an honorable and honest fighter who, under the guise of religious work, dedicated his whole life to the noble struggle against the Japanese. In Jirin, in cooperation with the radical group of Chonguibu, he made tireless efforts to change the direction of the independence movement which had merely been swimming with the tide, and to unite the patriotic forces. At the time when we were forming the Korean Children's Association in Jirin and the Ryugil Association of Korean Students, he had proposed the formation of the peasants' mutual assistance society in Manchuria and had been working hard for its success.

The Rev. Son Jung Doh had bought 50 hectares of land by Lake Jingbohu in Emu County in the name of his younger brother (Son Gyong Do) and had run an agricultural company. This could be termed a part of the "ideal society" advocated by An Chang Ho. The area around Lake Jingbohu had been considered by An Chang Ho to be a particularly suitable place for the building of an "ideal society." The minister had intended to use the income from his company for the independence movement.

The minister's funeral was held solemnly, according to Christian custom, at the Fengtian Public Hall. Apparently, because of obstructions by the Japanese police, only a little over 40 people attended the funeral to mourn the death of a man who had dedicated decades of his life to national independence from the days before the annexation. Considering the fact that in his lifetime the minister had been surrounded by so many people and had inspired the spirit of patriotism in them, his farewell was too quiet and lonely. Since open mooring had not been allowed even at the funeral of the father of the nation in those days, could the mourners weep at a funeral under police watch?

At Jiandao I looked up to the sky above Jirin and wept without cease, praying for the soul of the deceased minister. I grieved over the death of the Rev. Son Jung Doh and of my own father. I made a firm pledge to liberate the country, come what may, in order to safeguard their souls and take vengeance on the enemy. I believed that liberating the country would repay my benefactors' kindness, relieve them of their suffering and break the people's shackles.

Since then, the minister's family and I have traveled different paths. The tragedy of division that still continues now at the turn of the century has been cruel enough to keep the barrier of a wire fence and concrete wall, as well as wide oceans, between us. We did not hear from one another for over half a century, I living in Pyongyang, Son In Ill in Seoul and Son Won Tae in Omaha (in the United States) without hearing from one another. But I have never forgotten the Rev. Son Jung Doh and his family. My memory of them has never been dimmed or stained by the passage of time and distance. The worse the national tragedy became and the higher the barrier of division grew, the greater our yearning for our benefactors and forerunners who shed their tears and blood for the sake of this land has grown in our hearts.

History has not closed its eyes to our yearning. In May 1991 Son Won Tae, the minister's youngest son, a pathologist, who lives in the city of Omaha, Nebraska, paid a visit to our country with his wife (Li Yu Sin) at the invitation of the Ministry of Reception for Overseas Compatriots. A weak primary schoolboy in his teens who used to beg to be on my side whenever the members of the Children's Association and the Ryugil Association of Korean Students divided into the "land" and the "sea" teams to play at soldiers on the sandy beach of the River Songhua Jiang appeared before me as a gray-haired old man nearing his eighties. The persistent work of 60 years of wind and frost had not erased the distinct features clear below his white hair of his days in Jirin.

"President!" he called me, hugging me, tears streaming down his cheeks, tears that meant more than could be implied in tens of thousands of words. What had kept us apart, when our hearts had been burning with a yearning for each other for so many years until our hair had turned gray? What was it that had delayed our reunion for more than half a century? Sixty years is a man's lifetime. We had parted in our teens to meet again only when we were nearly in our eighties in a

modern civilization where airplanes fly at supersonic speeds! Isn't the passage of time too cruel and void, the time that had continued to push us to our old age?

"Mr. Son, how is it that you are so white-haired?" I asked him in an official tone of voice, treating him as an old scientist and as a citizen of the United States, not as a former member of the Children's Association. He looked at me with something of the air of playing on my affection as he used to do in the old days in Jirin.

"My yearning for you, President, has turned my hair white," he replied and then begged that I should call him by his first name, reminding me that in his days in Jirin he had followed me as if I were his elder brother and that I had loved him as if he were my younger brother.

"Then I'll call you Won Tae just as I used to do in the old days," I said with smile. Our awkwardness vanished, and we returned to our boyhood. It seemed as if I were talking to him in my lodgings in Jirin, not in my drawing-room in Pyongyang. In those days I had often visited the Rev. Son Jung Doh's house, and Son Won Tae had frequented my lodgings.

It was surprising that the reticent boy who was slight in build and used to go about with his head tilted slightly to one side just like Cha Gwang Su, the schoolboy of Provincial Primary School No. 4 who, once provoked to speak, never failed to excite the laughter of his listeners with his volley of witty jokes and humorous remarks, should appear before me as a pathologist, and it was also surprising that the boy should have become a white-haired old man in the twilight of his life. I was struck by the unbelievable change that had turned the boy into an old man who was taking me back to our remote boyhood when it seemed only yesterday that we had parted with each other in Jirin!

We talked at length about our boyhood, not only about the activities of the Children's Association but also about the happenings in the street where toffee peddlers used to collect the pocket-money of sniveling children. Those peddlers were really cunning. If they wanted to eat some toffee themselves, those peddlers would pick some from their booths, put it into their mouths and lick it until they were tired of it and then put it back in their booths. The children who bought the toffee did not even suspect such a thing. As we talked about these things, we laughed loudly, forgetting all our worldly cares.

Having said that I looked hale and hearty, contrary to the rumor in the West, he took me by the hand, drew it to him and looked into my palm for a good while. I was perplexed.

"You have a very long lifeline, so you will enjoy a long life," he commented with a smile. "You are held in high esteem as the leader of the country because you have a distinct leadership line."

He was the first man ever to read my palm, and it was the first time in my life that I had heard that there was a leadership line on a man's palm. When he said that I had a long lifeline, he must have wished me a long life; when he said that I had a distinct leadership line on my palm, he must have meant that he supported our cause.

Without the slightest sense that he was having an official interview with a head of state, he asked me, "President, when will you buy *mejiangziguoji*? I also want to eat the *bingtanghulu* which I used to eat with you, President, in Jirin."

I felt my heart leap at his request, for this was a request one made only to one's own brother. He was talking to me as if he were talking to his own brother. It occurred to me that he had no brother. His elder brother Son Won Il who was once the defense minister of south Korea had died some years before. No matter how I feasted him, it would have been impossible for me to give him the love with which his own brother had taken care of him.

Why can't I meet his wish to eat jiangzi guoji or bingtanghulu? Jiangzi guoji is a Chinese food resembling a doughnut which is sweetened and cooked in bean soup and oil. In Jirin I used to take him and his little sister to buy them jiangzi guoji now and then. They used to love eating it. When I thought of my indebtedness to the Rev. Son Jung Doh, I had wished in those days to buy them all that my purse could buy. But I could hardly afford to pay even my school fees.

I don't think that Son Won Tae asked me to buy him jiangziguoji because he really wanted to eat some. He must have wanted to express his yearning for the friendship we had shared like real brothers and sisters in our days in Jirin.

"If you want to eat some, I will have some cooked next time," I replied, prompted by my desire to serve some to him, although he had asked as a joke. I felt an urge to serve him with some right away, instead of waiting for the next meal. I was deeply moved by his casual request. Two days later my cooks prepared jiangzi guoji for Son Won Tae and his wife. Having eaten it before breakfast, he apparently said with tears in his eyes that, thanks to President Kim, he was eating the favorite food of his boyhood again.

Friendship is much stronger than the passage of time. The passage of time can make everything fade away, but not friendship. True friendship and true love neither grow weaker with age or stale. Our friendship that had been broken off temporarily because of the divergent courses of our life's journeys was linked again by bridging over a gulf of 60 years.

Having met after such a long interval, we sang together *Nostalgia* which we had used to sing in Jirin. To my surprise, I had not forgotten the words of the song and he, too, remembered it perfectly. Son Won Tae said that he was ashamed to see me because he had done nothing in particular for the good of the nation, but this was self-effacing of him. When he was a university student in Beijing he, as the head of the inspection department of a students association, took part in the student movement and in the boycott of Japanese goods. He was a young patriot. Because of his patriotic activities he had later been arrested and thrown into Nagasaki prison.

I could perceive in this man who had remained outside politics the untainted innocence of the boy in Jirin. It is by no means easy to preserve a clear conscience in the social climate of a battle for survival, in a world which is governed by the law of the jungle.

Son Won Tae expressed his heartfelt sympathy with all the work we had done as well as his great admiration for our country as a "beautiful and noble country, a land of construction for the well-being of the generations to come."

I was happy to have a reunion with Son Won Tae, though belatedly, and to have an opportunity to look back upon our days in Jirin. His image overflowing with love for his country, love for the nation and love for humanity was that of the Rev. Son Jung Doh and of Son In Sil. Whenever he saw me, Son Won Tae said, "President, please live for many years without growing older!" The look with which he wished me good health reminded me of the Rev. Son Jung Doh whom I had seen for the last time 60 years before.

That day, bidding farewell to me, the minister said, "Don't stay any longer in Jirin where the situation is dangerous. Things here are very frightening. Take care of yourself; the situation requires it. Even in Jiandao, you had better regain your health in an out-of-the-way spot for the time being."

I was deeply grateful to him for his kind consideration for my safety. The timeliness of his advice was proved eloquently by the developments in Manchuria after the September 18 incident. The Japanese army and police that occupied Jirin searched for me first. Checking the list of prisoners in Jirin prison, they demanded that the warlords hand me over to them. Had it not been for the support given me by the Rev. Son Jung Doh, Ko Won Am, O In Hwa, Hwang Baek Ha and other independence fighters, I would not have been released before it was too late and would have suffered some ten more years in prison in the hands of the Japanese imperialists. So many more years of imprisonment would have made it impossible for me to wage the armed struggle. It is in this sense that I call the minister the savior of my

life.

There would be no end if I were to name all the people who helped me and gave me wholehearted support in my revolutionary activities in Jirin, among them such independence fighters of the previous generation as Choe Man Yong, O Sang Hyon, Kim Gi Pung, Li Gi Pal and Choe Il, such forerunners of my contemporaries as Choe Jung Yon, Sin Yong Gun, An Sin Yong, Hyon Suk Ja, Li Dong Hwa, Choe Bong, Han Ju Bin, Ryu Jin Dong, Choe Jin Un, Kim Hak Sok, U Sok Yun, Kim On Sun, Li Dok Yong, Kim Chang Sul, Choe Gwan Sil and Ryu Su Gyong, and such patriotic children as Li Dong Son, Li Gyong Un, Yun Son Ho, Hwang Gwi Hon, Kim Byong Suk, Kwak Yon Bong, Chon Un Sim, An Byong Ok, Yun Ok Chae, Park Jong Won, Kwak Gi Se and Chong Haeng Jong.

This suggested to me that the situation did not permit me to stay in Jirin any longer. I had more or less expected this while in prison. The minister was very sorry that he could not take care of me in his house and had to send me away. Grateful to him for his advice, I had lunch at his house and then departed immediately for Xinantun.

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## 4.2. A Spring of Trials

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On my way to Xinantun I met Cha Gwang Su. The boisterous man's eyes were sparkling with joy behind his powerful glasses. I was so pleased to see him that I hailed him from afar.

Saying that he was on his way to Rev. Son Jung Doh's house to ask after me, he held me in his arms and turned me round and round. He said that as his comrades in the revolution had all been arrested, he was feeling terribly lonely. He talked about the happenings in Jirin for a while and then, looking at me out of blood-shot eyes, said, "Song Ju, the labor movement in Korea is developing by leaps and bounds in all its aspects. The slogans, methods and character of the struggle - they are all fresh. I think the national liberation movement in the 30s will achieve a great change, particularly in the character of the struggle. What do you think of that? Our revolution should advance under a new banner to meet the rapidly-changing situation, shouldn't it?"

I was greatly impressed by the constancy of the man who, undaunted by and unafraid of the enemy's offensive in the alarming situation when it was difficult to save one's own skin let alone one's revolutionary ideals, was traveling in disguise, looking for his comrades and thinking of the future as a communist should.

"I agree with you, Gwang Su, that our revolution should advance under a new banner," I said and then explained what I had decided in the prison. "What, then, should that new banner be? While in prison I gave much thought to this and came to the conclusion that we young communists must now found a party of a new type and switch to an armed struggle. Only an armed struggle will save the country and liberate the nation. The struggle of the Korean people must develop into all-out national resistance, centering on the armed struggle and under the unified leadership of the party."

He expressed unqualified support for my opinion. We went to Xinantun and discussed the matter with Kim Hyok and Park So Sim. They agreed with me. It was the unanimous view of the young communists that it would be impossible to save Korea without taking up arms, or to develop the revolution without being guided by a new line.

An armed struggle was a mature requirement of the specific situation in Korea. The Japanese imperialists' fascist rule was at its height in those days. The Korean people, deprived of all their rights, were living in abject poverty. The waves of the economic crisis which had begun to sweep the world in 1929 hit Japan, too. In an effort to escape the panic through aggression on the Asian Continent, the Japanese imperialists intensified their colonial oppression and plunder of Korea and speeded up their war preparations.

When the Japanese imperialists discovered the way to enrich themselves and strengthen their army in the plunder and oppression of the Korean nation, our nation discovered the way to national revival in the battle against the Japanese imperialists. It was not by chance that the mass movements, including the labor and peasant movements, which had stressed the economic struggle began to move gradually towards a violent struggle.

At that time I observed the strike at the Sinhung Coal-mine with interest, the strike which developed eventually into revolt. Hundreds of coal-miners, under the guidance of the strike committee, raided and



demolished the coal-inspection office and other offices, the machine shop and the power generator of the coal-mine, as well as the house of the director of the mine. They cut all the power lines in the area of the mine and destroyed all the winches, pumps and other items of production equipment they could lay their hands on. The strikers inflicted such a great loss upon the company that the Japanese management complained that it would take two months to reconstruct the mine.

The revolt resulted in the arrest of more than 100 people, something which was so terrible that it shook the whole country. This revolt made such an impression on me that in later years, when waging the armed struggle, I visited the Sinhung area, in spite of the danger, and met the leaders of the labor movement. A qualitative change was taking place in the struggle of the working class of Korea in its organization, unity, persistence and solidarity.

More than 2,000 workers affiliated to the Wonsan Labor Federation under the leadership of the federation went, with their families of 10,000, on a several month-long strike. At the news of the general strike in Wonsan, the workers and peasants across the country sent them telegrams and letters of encouragement, as well as solidarity funds, and dispatched delegates to express their support for and solidarity with them.

Apart from the trade union organizations in Hongwon and Hoeryong in the homeland, the members of the Hansong Association under the Anti-Japanese Labor Union we had formed sent them funds from Jirin, thousands of miles away from Wonsan. This shows how high the ideological awareness of the working class of our country was at that time. The general strike in Wonsan was an event that marked the high tide of the labor movement in our country in the 1920s and demonstrated the militant power and revolutionary spirit of the Korean working class in the history of the world labor movement.

While in prison I followed the general strike with keen interest, believing that it was a momentous event in the history of the labor movement of our country and that the fighting experience of the strikers was valuable and should be drawn on and learnt from by all the social campaigners of Korea.

If the new leadership of the federation had not instructed the workers to return to work but pushed the strike on to the bitter end, or if the workers, peasants and intellectuals across the country had gone on a full-scale strike in response to them, the struggle of the working class of Wonsan could have succeeded.

The failure of the general strike in Wonsan again convinced me of the pressing need to found in Korea a Marxist-Leninist party capable of organizing the struggle of the working class and leading it to victory. It also gave me the strong belief that a full-scale armed struggle as the mainstream of the national liberation movement would promote the mass struggle of the workers, peasants and all other sections of the population.

It was inevitable that the Korean people's struggle should assume a violent character when the enemy was clamping down upon the national liberation movement in such a brutal way. Revolutionary violence was the most effective way of defeating the counterrevolutionary violence of the enemy who was armed to the teeth. The saber-rattling enemy compelled the Korean nation to take up arms. Arms had to be countered with arms.

It was impossible to achieve the independence of the country merely by cultivating our strength through the development of education, culture and the economy, or by labor and tenant disputes or by diplomatic activity. The general strike in Wonsan and the revolt by the Sinhung Coal-miners gave us unbounded confidence in the Korean working class as well as warm affection for and a high sense of pride in our excellent working

class and our militant nation.

But the question had arisen of the policy of struggle and the leadership. I had the firm conviction that we could defeat any enemy, however powerful, if we had a correct policy that suited the trend of the times, and led the struggle properly. I was impatient with my desire to rehabilitate and consolidate the wrecked organizations and to bring the masses to consciousness and organize and prepare them as soon as possible for the decisive battle with Japanese imperialism.

Meanwhile, my comrades who had heard of my release came to see me. I met the core members of the YCLK, the AJYL, the Anti-Japanese Labor Union and the Peasants Union in the Jirin area and discussed ways to rehabilitate the organizations quickly and rally the masses against the enemy's increasing white terrorism. The word "arms" which had so excited Cha Gwang Su also won the support of these young people. Their support was a great encouragement to me.

We discussed ways to intensify the work of the YCLK in Jiandao and the northern border area of Korea and to make those areas revolutionary quickly, methods to make substantial preparations for the founding of the party and some other tasks to be tackled immediately, and we sent political workers to various places to implement them.

I slept overnight at Xinantun and left for Dunhua. I decided to work in Dunhua because it was a vantage-point allowing me access to all the counties of east Manchuria and because I had many friends and acquaintances there who would help me. I intended to stay there for a while, showing the organizations the direction for their activities to cope with the situation in east Manchuria where the uprising was raging, while drawing up detailed plans for effecting the idea I had conceived in prison.

When leaving Jirin, I felt very sorry that I hadn't carried out the will of my late father who had wished that I should at least finish middle school.

Park Il Pa said he would get his father to negotiate with the authorities at Yuwen Middle School for my reinstatement, and advised me to finish my education there. Park Il Pa was the son of the nationalist, Park Gi Back, who published the magazine Tongu in Jirin. Park U Chon was a pen name. When I was attending Yuwen Middle School Park Il Pa, as a student at Jirin Law College, helped me in my work with the Ryugil Association of Korean Students. He was set on becoming a lawyer. At that time he was seeing a lot of a white Russian officer, learning Russian from him. My comrades, who regarded his behavior as a sort of betrayal of the new Russia, advised me to break with him. I said to them, "Learning a foreign language is very useful for the revolution. I think it would be shortsighted of me to ostracize him simply because he is friendly with a white Russian officer." After liberation Park was able to translate many literary masterpieces such as Tolstoy's *The Ordeal* because he had learned Russian in his school days.

Kim Hyok and Park So Sim, like Park Il Pa, advised me to finish my middle school education at any cost by studying for another year if my reinstatement was possible. They said that as the headmaster, Li Guang-han, was a communist sympathizer, he would not refuse my request, if I wanted to return.

"I can teach myself," I said. "The people and the disrupted organizations are waiting for us. So I can't return to school, because it would mean turning away from the revolution when it is in difficulty."

As I left Jirin without having finished school, I was tormented with various thoughts: the thought of my late father who had sent me alone all the way to my hometown in the winter cold, telling me to study in the

motherland, who had taught me Korean history and geography when I returned home from school, and who, in the last moments of his life, had told my mother that he had wanted me to get middle school education, so she should follow his intention even if it meant her living on grass; the thought of my mother who would be disappointed at the news of my having left school one year before my graduation after the three years of unceasing effort she had made to earn my school fees by sewing and laundering until her fingers were sore; the thought of my brothers who would be no less disappointed; and the thought of the sorrow of my father's friends who loved me as their own son and gave me financial aid, as well as the sorrow of my school friends.

But I thought at least mother would understand me. When my father had left Sungsil Middle School and become a career revolutionary, she gave him her tacit agreement. So I believed that even though her son had left middle school, or even a university, she would not disagree if it was for the revolution and for the motherland. I think it was a turning point in my life when I left school and went among the popular masses. It was at this time that my underground activities and my new life as a career revolutionary started. Because I was leaving for Dunhua without so much as dropping a line to my family after my release, my heart was indescribably heavy. I rebuked myself for my neglect, telling myself that I had no excuse for it no matter what sacrifice the revolution required of me, but I could not write to them.

Even when I was in prison I had not written anything to my mother lest she should worry. My comrades who went to spend the winter holidays at my house in 1929 told her that I had been arrested. Nevertheless, she had not come to Jirin to see me. Mothers would not mind traveling thousands of miles to see their children, if they were in prison, carrying bundles of things for them and imploring the warders to allow them to see their children, but my mother had not done so. She had shown great patience. When my father was in prison in Pyongyang, she had been to see him on several occasions, even taking me with her. But ten years later, she never visited her son in prison. People may wonder why. She did not explain her reason when later she saw me in Antu.

But I thought that it showed her true love for her son. She might have thought: Sung Ju who is behind bars would find it painful to see me; even if I go to see him, what comfort or help can my visit give him? Will he be able to keep on the right path if he is swayed by pity at the first step when he has so many rugged passes to climb? Let him feel lonely in prison rather than seeing me, and that will be a benefit for him.

I judged this from my discovery of a revolutionary in my mother who had been a simple woman. Being out of prison and free from my duties as a student, it occurred to me that it might be my filial duty to go home and stay with my mother for a few days. Nevertheless, I walked resolutely towards Dunhua. Approximately 15 miles southwest of Dunhua there was the mountain village called Sidaohuanggou. I was to work there.

After my imprisonment, several families in Fusong which were affiliated with the organizations of the YCLK, the Paeksan Youth League and the Women's Association had moved to the Antu and Dunhua areas in order to avoid the danger of the sweeping arrests in Jirin reaching Fusong. My mother, uncle Hyong Gwon and brothers had also moved to Antu one bitterly cold winter day. Six families out of the dozens which had moved to east Manchuria at that time had settled in Sidaohuanggou. Ko Jae Bong's family was one of the six.

Ko Jae Bong, who attended Fusong Normal School as a scholarship student of Chongui-bu, had taught at Paeksan School before joining the Independence Army and serving as a leader of the Fusong area flying column. 1-fe was a core member of the anti-Japanese mass organization. Ko Jae Ryong, his younger brother, was one of my classmates at Whasung Uisuk School. Later he joined Yang Jing-yu's unit and was killed in action somewhere in Mengjiang or Linjiang. Ko Jae Lim, his youngest brother, went to Jirin Yuwen

Middle School after leaving Paeksan School and worked as a member of the YCLK with me. From the spring of 1930 he studied at a medical college run by the Japanese Manchuria Railway Company. While in Jirin he had helped me a lot. The Kos had been on special terms with our family from our days in Fusong. They spared nothing if it was for my parents. They helped my father and mother a lot while running their inn.

In those days a great number of patriots and independence fighters visited my house in Xiaonanmen Street at all hours. Some of them would stay at my house for a few days. My mother used to be on her feet in the kitchen all the time preparing food for them. This attracted the attention of the warlords. Knowing that the police were watching my father, Ko Jae Bong's mother (Song Gye Sim) came one day and said:

"Mr. Kim, please don't receive any more guests in your house. If your house is crowded with visitors as it is now, something evil might happen to you. We will look after the visitors from the Independence Army, so please send them to my house."

So, she was held in high trust by my father, and I became friendly with Ko Jae Bong. When my mother was running about to find a school building after the closure of Paeksan School, the Kos offered one of their rooms without hesitation. In less than six months after moving to Sidaohuanggou Ko Jae Bong had established Tonghung Uisuk School and was teaching children. Taking advantage of being the deputy head of 100 household units, he formed YCLK organizations and the Paeksan Youth League in Sidaohuanggou and the surrounding area and made preparations for forming the Anti-Japanese Women's Association and the Peasants Union.

Ko Jae Bong's mother was delighted to see me and recollected our days in Fusong with tears in her eyes. When I said that I had been behind bars from the previous autumn and that I had come to Sidaohuanggou directly on my release a few days before she said, looking closely into my face, that, although she recognized me, I looked so pale and puffy that my mother would be pained if she saw me.

I stayed at their house for more than one month, enjoying their kind care. Ko Jae Bong's mother went to a lot of trouble to nurse me back to health. She prepared meals of barley, millet and seasoned green herbs and served them to me at a separate table, always saying that she was very sorry that the meals were so frugal. But I could not eat with an easy mind at the thought of the family which, unable to run an inn in that strange mountain village, had begun farming only that year and also had to support the daughter's children who were staying there.

The mistress, knowing what was my favorite food from our days in Fusong, borrowed a noodle-press, the only one in the village, and made some noodles for me. Ko Jae Bong went to the walled city of Dunhua and bought some salted trout for me. His sister's husband would go to the spring at dawn every day to catch sanggol to reduce my swelling. Under their warm care I quickly recovered my health. Ko Jae Bong went to visit my mother in Antu and returned. It was about 50 miles from Sidaohuanggou to Antu and he could cover this distance in a day. He told me he had walked 75 miles in a day like Hwang Chonwangdong in the novel Lim Ggok Jong.

On hearing that I was staying in the Dunhua area after being released from prison, my brother, Chol Ju, came with Ko Jae Bong to Sidaohuanggou, bringing a letter and my underwear from mother. The letter said that my family, after leaving Fusong, had lived in a rented room at the house of Ma Chun Uk outside the west gate of Jiuantu and then moved to Xinglongcun. While in Jiuantu my mother had rented a sewing machine from Ma Chun Uk and had worked hard to earn a living as a seamstress. In Xinglongcun, too, she had worked day and night to eke out a living.

Chol Ju did not feel comfortable in the new place. Until then he had lived in such towns on large rivers as Chunggang, Linjiang, Badaogou and Fusong. For him Antu which was far from the railway and the lowland was too quiet and too strange a place to feel settled.

"Brother, did you go to Fusong after your release?" he asked me all of a sudden. "I wanted to, but I didn't. How could I visit Fusong when I came straight to Dunhua without even dropping in at my own house?" I answered. "The people in Fusong miss you very much," my brother said.

"Zhang Wei-hua used to come to our house every day to ask after you. The people were very kind." What he said revealed that he was yearning for the people in Fusong. "Yes, they were. I often think of my friends in Fusong. Please remember me to them if you happen to go there."

"Of course I will. By the way, have you made any new friends in Antu?"

"Not many. There aren't many boys of my age in Antu."

I realized that my brother was longing for the old days in Fusong and that because of that, he had not settled in the new place. His sad eyes and melancholy look told me all this. His unsettled mental state, a sort of resistance to the reality that was common among boys of that age, disturbed me.

"Chol Ju, just as a good farmer does not complain of bad land, so a revolutionary should not be particular about where he finds himself. Why shouldn't there be good friends for you in Antu? You will find them if you look. As you know, father used to say that comrades do not fall from the sky of their own accord and that we should look for them, just as jewel hunters look for jewels. Find many good friends and make Antu an ideal place to work in. You are old enough to join the YCLK, aren't you?"

I stressed that he should prepare himself well for membership of the Young Communist League. "I understand. I am sorry to have troubled you," he said, bracing up, a serious look on his face. Not long after that he joined the YCLK. During my stay in Sidaohuanggou I helped Ko Jae Bong and his brother form branches of the Children's Expeditionary Corps, the Peasants Union and the Anti-Japanese Women's Association and tried to contact the members of the revolutionary organizations scattered around the east and south of Manchuria. On receiving the letters I had sent through Ko Jae Bong to the liaison offices in Longjing, Helong and Jirin, ten of my comrades including Kim Hyok, Cha Gwang Su, Kye Yong Chun, Kim Jun, Chae Su Hang and Kim Jung Gwon came to Sidaohuanggou. They were all leaders of the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League.

I learned from them that the uprising sweeping the east of Manchuria had reached greater heights than I had expected.

The Korean people living in Manchuria were the main force behind the uprising; they had been instigated to revolt by Han Bin and Park Yun Se, who claimed that in order to be admitted to the Chinese Communist Party they should be recognized by the party as having distinguished themselves in the practical struggle.

At that time the Korean communists in the northeastern region of China had abandoned the campaign to rebuild the party in accordance with the Comintern principle of one party for one nation and were conducting brisk activities to become members of the Chinese party. The Chinese party had proclaimed that it would admit the Korean communists on an individual basis after testing them individually through a practical struggle. Worse still, officials from the Comintern went round encouraging people to start an uprising, so the

Korean communists under the Manchuria general bureau, who were trying to join the Chinese party, drove the people into a reckless uprising out of their own political ambition and lust for higher positions.

They expropriated those who should not have been expropriated and even set fire to schools and power stations. The May 30 Uprising gave the Japanese imperialists and the Chinese reactionary warlords a good excuse for suppressing the communist movement and the anti-Japanese patriotic struggle in Manchuria. The Korean communists and revolutionaries in Manchuria became the target of their ruthless white terrorism. Having incurred tremendous losses, the masses had to retreat to rural and mountainous areas. Atrocities similar to those committed during the great cleaning-up in the year of Kyongsin (1920) were perpetrated throughout east Manchuria. The police cells and prisons were overflowing with captured rebels. A lot of them were dragged to Seoul and condemned to severe punishment, even death.

The Fengtian warlords, tricked by the Japanese imperialists, suppressed the uprising in a brutal way. In order to drive a wedge between the Korean people and the Chinese people the Japanese started rumors that the Koreans had risen in revolt in east Manchuria in order to conquer Manchuria imperialists. The leading warlords believed these rumors and clamored that all Koreans were communists and that the communists should be killed for they were the puppets of the Japanese imperialists. They killed the rebels right and left. The foolish warlords identified the communists with the puppets of the Japanese imperialists.

Thousands of people were arrested and killed during the uprising; most of them were Koreans. Many of those arrested were executed. The uprising caused tremendous harm to our revolutionary organizations. It aggravated the relations between the Koreans and the Chinese.

Li Li-san's line was later denounced as "a reckless line" and "petty bourgeois lunacy" by the Chinese party. Yet his line of the Soviet Red Army was an adventurous line that did not suit the situation in northeast China. The Third Plenary Meeting of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held in September that year sharply criticized the Left adventurism line of Li Li-san. The Comintern, too, criticized his error in a letter dated November 16. The provincial party committee of Manchuria convened an enlarged meeting of the committee and a joint meeting to expose his error to criticism. We also criticized his line at a meeting held in Mingyuegou in May 1931 and adopted measures to overcome the Left adventurism errors. However, the aftereffects of his line were not eradicated and it badly affected our revolutionary struggle in northeast China for several years.

The young people who had gathered in Sidaohuanggou bitterly lamented the fact that Korean blood had been wasted and wondered how long our revolution would have to drift in confusion. In order to encourage them, I said: "It is true that the loss in the uprising is great. However, what is the use of crying over that loss? We must stop crying and go where we are needed to rehabilitate the organizations and straighten out the situation. It is important to expose the factionalists' wild ambitions and remove the masses from their influence. To this end, we must show them the path the Korean revolution should take. The uprising ended in bloodshed, but the masses must have been trained and awakened to consciousness through that uprising. During the uprising the Korean nation displayed its militant and revolutionary spirit to the full. I was greatly encouraged by this great, self-sacrificing fighting spirit of our nation. I am sure that when we teach them scientific fighting methods and tactics and show them the path our nation should follow, a fresh upsurge will take place in our revolution."

My comrades were not greatly impressed by my call. They said, "You are right, Comrade Han Byol. But where is the new line that is acceptable to the masses?" They looked at me with impatience. I said, "It will not fall from the sky, nor will it be brought to us on a plate. We must map it out for ourselves. I gave some

thought to this while I was in prison. I'd like to hear your opinions". So we held a discussion on the line of the Korean revolution which I had already discussed with Cha Gwang Su, Kim Hyok, Park So Sim and others. This was the Sidaohuanggou Meeting. The meeting approved my proposal.

The appalling bloodbath that had taken place throughout the east of Manchuria caused me to feel resentment and awakened me to my sense of duty to the nation. As I pictured the people falling down with bleeding hearts in the midst of the turmoil, I racked my brains over how I should rescue the revolutionary masses of Korea from the sea of blood and how I should save the national liberation struggle of Korea from adversity and lead it to victory.

The revolution needed arms. It was awaiting a well-organized and trained revolutionary army and people, a program that would guide the 20 million people to victory and a political general staff capable of putting the program into effect. The situation at home and abroad required that the Korean communists effect a turn in the noble struggle to liberate the country and nation. Without a change our nation might suffer further bloodshed and tragedy. With a determination to make a breakthrough in effecting the change and to bring about this turn, in the summer of 1930 I jotted down in my pocket-book the essence of the ideas that were floating in my mind.

I promised with the organization members and political workers as they left Sidaohuanggou to meet them again in Kalun in the second half of June after they had carried out their assignments. Afterwards a meeting of the party committee of the eastern region of Jirin Province was held in Dunhua. The issue of the uprising was discussed at the meeting. The factionalists were planning to organize another uprising like the May 30 Uprising. I pointed out that the May 30 Uprising had been reckless, and I opposed their plan.

I had gained a lot of experience from my life behind bars and from the May 30 Uprising. Indeed, the spring of 1930 was a spring of growth and of trial, an unforgettable spring in my life. In that spring our revolution was preparing for a fresh upsurge

## 4.3. The Kalun Meeting

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In late June our comrades began to gather in Kalun as prearranged. We already had revolutionary organizations in Kalun. In 1927 we had realized the need to make a base at a traffic junction which afforded easy access to the different parts of Manchuria and began to send hardcore elements of the Young Communist League to the area to explore it.

We decided to hold a meeting in Kalun, in view of the fact that the place was easy of access and that it was a secluded base that ensured secrecy and the safety of those attending the meeting.

Kalun was frequented by the champions of the anti-Japanese movement, but it was not exposed to the enemy. The place was ideal for holding a meeting because the people there had volunteered to aid us. On arriving at Kalun I found that Chong Haeng Jong, head of the Children's Expeditionary Corps, was waiting for me at the station. When I went to Kalun, he always came to meet me at the station and accompany me.

On my arrival I found that the atmosphere in Kalun was somewhat calmer than in Dunhua and Jirin. The May 30 Uprising having just finished, the atmosphere in Jiandao was very serious. The situation became more tense with the imminent dispatch of the Japanese troops to east Manchuria. The Japanese imperialists were intending to send their troops to Jiandao to suppress the rapidly-spreading revolutionary movement there, occupy Manchuria and Mongolia and secure a bridgehead for their invasion of the Soviet Union. With this aim, Lieutenant General Kawashima, commander of the 19th Division of the Japanese Army stationed in Ranam, was on a tour of inspection of the Longjing, Yanji, Baicaogou and Toudaogou areas.

At the same time the chief of staff of the Kuomintang troops in Jirin and the civil administrator were on a tour of inspection in east Manchuria. It was during this period that the revolutionary organizations in the Jiandao area appealed to the people to drive out the lieutenant general of the Japanese army, the chief of staff of the Kuomintang troops and the civil administrator from east Manchuria.

On that visit to Kalun I stayed at the houses of Ryu Yong Son and Chang So Bong, teachers at Chinmyong School. Chang So Bong taught the children at Chinmyong School and at the same time worked as the branch manager of the newspaper Dong-A Ilbo. Like Cha Gwang Su he was a well-informed, good writer and carried out his duties with credit. So he was loved by his comrades.

A blot on his character was that he often quarreled with his wife. When his comrades offered him advice, he complained that she was too feudalistic. Time and again I tried to persuade him and I criticized him so that he took an interest in his family life, but it was of little avail.

Chang So Bong was arrested by the police when he went to Changchun to buy weapons after the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army and became a turncoat. He is said to have undertaken "submission work" against me. Kim Hyok and Chang So Bong had rendered particularly distinguished service in making Kalun revolutionary. Pooling their efforts with the public-spirited men of the locality, they had set up schools and evening schools, launched an enlightenment movement centered on these schools, reformed the enlightenment organizations such as the peasants association, youth league, children's association and women's society into revolutionary organizations such as the Peasants Union, the Anti-Japanese Youth



League, the Children's Expeditionary Corps and the Women's Association respectively. They also trained people from all walks of life to work for the anti-Japanese revolution.

It was in Kalun that magazine Bolshevik had been founded under Kim Hyok's auspices. In Kalun I continued to speculate on the path for the Korean revolution as I had done in Sidaohuanggou. Sorting out and reviewing what I had been thinking for the past month, I wrote it down, and this became a long article. I wrote the article with the keen realization of the urgent need of the national liberation struggle in our country for a new guiding theory. Without a new guiding theory the revolution could not advance even a single step forward.

The revolutionary advance of the oppressed people demanding independence made further strides in the 1930s on a worldwide scale. Asia was the continent in which the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples against the imperialists was fiercest. Asia became the central arena of the national liberation struggle in the colonies because in those years the imperialists more openly intensified their aggression to wrest concessions from the developing countries of Asia and because the people of many Asian countries fought bravely in the struggle to safeguard their national independence. No force could check the Eastern people's just struggle to drive out the foreign forces and live in a new society which was free and democratic.

The revolutionary tide raged furiously in China, India, Vietnam, Burma, Indonesia and other Asian countries as the revolution advanced in the Soviet Union and Mongolia. Around this time weavers in India, which had attracted the attention of the world for her non-violent resistance movement, held demonstrations in the streets under a red banner. The Chinese people greeted the 1930s in the flames of a second civil war. The revolutionary struggle in China and many other Asian countries and the active struggle of the people in the homeland greatly excited and inspired us.

We became convinced that if a party was founded and the right guiding theory was advanced it would be fully possible to rouse the people and emerge victorious in the struggle against the Japanese imperialists. In this period, too, in the arena of the national liberation struggle of Korea there appeared different isms and doctrines representing the stands and interests of different parties and groups that would lead the masses this way or that. None of these theories was free from time and class limitations.

We deemed the armed struggle of the Independence Army to have been the highest form of the national liberation struggle up to that time. This struggle was participated in by the most active anti-Japanese independence champions from the Left wing of the nationalist movement and patriots. They had formed the Independence Army and launched an armed struggle because they believed that only by fighting a war of independence was it possible to win back the country.

Some people thought that it was possible to win independence only through the military action of large troops and other people maintained that the best way to drive out the Japanese imperialists was to employ terrorist tactics, while some others said that the strategy suited to the actual situation in Korea was to preserve some well-trained troops and achieve independence in cooperation with the Soviet Union, China, the United States and the like once they were at war with Japan. All these arguments presupposed a bloody fight against the Japanese imperialists.

But in its struggle the Independence Army had neither the scientific tactics and strategy for pursuing its initial aims to the end nor a strong and seasoned leadership capable of fighting the war to the end nor a firm mass foundation capable of supporting the army with manpower, materials and finance. Among the reformist

arguments Ahn Chang Ho's "theory on preparation" called "the theory on the cultivation of strength" was much talked about by the independence champions. We respected Ahn Chang Ho as an honest and conscientious patriot who devoted his life to the independence movement but we did not sympathize with his theory.

The Shanghai Provisional Government's line of a non-violent independence movement did not receive the support and sympathy of the masses. Some time after its formation the Shanghai Provisional Government disappointed people because it wasted time, constantly resorting to the diplomatic policy of non-violence which provided no hope. So, the Independence Army which held the military line to be supreme gave it the cold shoulder.

Syngman Rhee's petition asking the League of Nations to place Korea under its mandatory administration did not deserve to be called a line of any sort. The "self-government" idea advanced by the right wing of the nationalists was a wild dream which went against the national spirit of independence. The Communist Party of Korea, founded in 1925, ended its existence without working out the scientific tactics and strategy suited to the actual situation in Korea.

Generally speaking, the common weak point of the strategies and lines of the preceding generation was that they did not believe in the strength of the masses and turned away from them. The movement champions from the preceding generation all ignored the fact that the people are the masters of the revolution and the motive force of the revolution. Only by drawing on the organized strength of millions of people was it possible to overthrow Japanese imperialism, but the champions of our anti-Japanese movement thought that the revolution and the war of independence were conducted by a few special people alone.

Proceeding from this viewpoint, those who were allegedly engaged in the communist movement founded a party by proclaiming the party center to be composed of a few people from the higher levels of society without laying any foundation to speak of. They were divided into groups in such a way as to form parties of three and groups of five and became involved in a scramble for hegemony over several years. The line and strategy of the preceding generation had the serious drawback that they were not firmly rooted in the Korean reality. I decided that in order to work out a correct guiding theory suited to the Korean reality it was necessary to take an independent view of all problems and settle them in an original way that was suited to our own specific situation, instead of holding classic works or the experiences of other countries supreme. It would not do to copy the experience of the October Revolution on the plea of providing a guiding theory or to sit back with folded arms, expecting that the Comintern would provide a recipe for success.

"We believe in the strength of the masses alone. Let us believe in the strength of our 20 million people and, uniting them, let us wage a bloody war against the Japanese imperialists!" This cry came often from the bottom of my heart. Urged by this impulse, I tried to enunciate the idea we now call Juche in a draft report. What I intended to write in that draft report concerned the serious problems facing our revolution. I gave a particularly great deal of thought to the question of the armed struggle. In my draft report I put it forward as the basic line of the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle, as the foremost task for the Korean communists, to wage a comprehensive anti-Japanese war.

It took a long time to decide upon the armed struggle and to fix it as our line. Before it was adopted as a line at Kalun, we were virtually empty-handed. I proposed that if an armed struggle was to be launched, the young communists should found a new type of army. At that time some people were of a different opinion, and said, "Since the Independence Army is already in existence, it will suffice to join it and fight. Is there any

necessity to found a separate army? We fear that the anti-Japanese military forces will be divided."

Since the Independence Army had become Rightist and reactionary, it was irrational and impossible to renovate it from within and take military action. In 1930 the strength of the Independence Army was insufficient. The strength of the Independence Army under Kukmin-bu was only nine companies. Even they were divided into the Kukmin-bu group and the anti-Kukmin-bu group due to a split at the higher levels.

The Kukmin-bu group was the conservative force which stuck fast to the line the Independence Army had adhered to for over ten years. The anti-Kukmin-bu group was a new force which opposed the old line and pursued a new line. People from the anti-Kukmin-bu group even attempted to join hands with the communists, claiming to sympathize with communism. The Japanese imperialists named them the "third force" in the sense that they were not nationalists or communists but a new middle-of-the-road force. The appearance of this "third force" of the anti-Kukmin-bu group within the nationalist movement proved that the trend to switch the nationalist movement to a communist movement had entered the stage of implementation. The strength of the Independence Army was reduced due to the antagonism between the Kukmin-bu group and the anti-Kukmin-bu group, and the nationalist movement was thrown into confusion.

The companies of the Independence Army were generally stationed in villages on the plain, but this did not favour guerrilla warfare. It did not have enough equipment, its discipline was loose and its training was at a low level. On top of this, its relations with the inhabitants were not very good. The Independence Army was on a gradual decline since its golden days in the early 1920s when it had mowed down large troops of Japanese at the Battle of Qingshanli<sup>4</sup> and the Battle of Fengwugou.

When I went to Wangqingmen to attend the conference of the General Federation of Korean Youth in South Manchuria, I talked with Hyon Muk Gwan about Kukmin-bu and asked him, "Are you sure that you can defeat Japan with the strength of Kukmin-bu?" I raised this question to goad him because he boasted a lot about Kukmin-bu. "If we fight on like this and if the great powers help us, we will win our independence."

I was disappointed at his reply. I wondered how an army which was fighting blindly without confidence in victory, turning to the great powers for help, could prove its worth. So I said to him by way of a joke, "Will the people of Kukmin-bu hand all their weapons over to us? If they do we will drive out the Japanese in three or four years." This was before the terrorist outrages were committed against the members of the preparatory committee for the meeting, so I could afford to joke. Hyon Muk Gwan had always taken my jokes well since my Jirin days. He made a wry smile but didn't reply. He must have thought that I was indulging in idle dreams. It was difficult to maintain the status quo in the army of Kukminbu. So, we came to the conclusion that it was necessary to form a new type of army.

I was convinced that an armed struggle led by communists alone could wage a thorough anti-Japanese war of resistance and be revolutionary. This was because communists alone could rally in their armed ranks workers, peasants and other broad sections of the anti-Japanese patriotic forces and lead the Korean revolution as a whole to victory, taking charge of and waging the noble war by employing scientific tactics and strategies which would accurately reflect the interests of the masses. The Japanese imperialists we would have to overthrow were a newly-emerging military power that had, in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, easily defeated great powers with territories tens of times larger than that of Japan. It would be no easy matter to defeat this power and win back the country.

To overthrow Japanese imperialism meant to defeat the military power of Japan, which had received

universal recognition. It meant to overpower the fanatical Japanese spirit and to emerge victorious in a war of attrition against Japan, a country which had been accumulating manpower, materials and financial power for nearly 70 years since the Meiji Restoration. But we thought that if we waged an armed struggle for three or four years we could defeat Japan. It was an idea which no one except hot-blooded young people could conceive. If the Japanese warlords had heard of this, they would surely have thrown their heads back and burst out laughing. If we are asked what guarantee we had for our judgment, we have nothing to say. What guarantee could we, with empty hands, have?

We had only patriotism and young blood. We said three or four years not because we made light of the strength of Japan but because we thought that our patriotism was stronger and we were righteous. Our guarantee was the strength of our twenty million people. We were convinced that if we trained the twenty million people well and induced them to rise in a struggle everywhere and beat the Japanese troops and police we could win our independence. So, we thought that if an armed struggle was to be waged on a grand scale a firm mass foundation should be laid. That is how the idea of the anti-Japanese national united front came into being.

I first felt the necessity for an organization in my Whasung Military Academy, whereas it was at the time of the March First Popular Uprising that I first felt the strength of the nation and engraved it in my heart. It was in my Jirin days that I decided to go deep among the people, rally them and make the revolution by depending on their strength. Without nationwide resistance through the enlistment of the twenty million people it would be impossible to shake off the yoke of colonial slavery. We maintained that in the pure class struggle the workers and the peasant masses alone could be the motive force of the revolution, but since by its nature the Korean revolution was a revolution against feudalism and imperialism not only the workers and peasants but also the young people and students, intellectuals, patriotic-minded men of religion, and non-comprador capitalists could be the motive force of the revolution. Ours was the principle of rallying and enlisting all the anti-Japanese patriotic forces interested in national liberation.

When we advanced this line, some people shook their heads dubiously, saying that no such definition could be found in the classics. They said it was a wild dream that communists should be allied with the social classes other than the workers and peasants and that they could not join hands with religious men or the entrepreneur class. Proceeding from this point of view the Tuesday group<sup>6</sup> removed Kim Chan from the post of head of the Manchuria general bureau of the Communist Party of Korea simply because he had been associated with some people from Kukmin-bu.

Many nationalists gave communists the cold shoulder. Nationalism was a taboo within the communist movement, while communism was a taboo within the nationalist movement. This tendency resulted in the division of the nation's forces into the two camps of communists and nationalists. Sensible people were all pained at this state of affairs. Through their efforts, however, a movement for collaboration between the two camps of the communists and nationalists was launched in the mid20s, and this resulted in the founding of the Singan Association in 1927. All the people warmly welcomed it as an indication that the communists and nationalists could unite for the cause of the nation, although they had different ideas.

But the association had to proclaim its dissolution in 1931 due to the ceaseless destructive maneuvers of the Japanese imperialists and the subversive activities of the reformists who were corrupted and used by them. If the two forces had united firmly in the great cause of patriotism, the association would not have been so easily destroyed even if there had been subversion within and without. We greatly regretted the end of the collaboration between the communists and nationalists with the dissolution of the Singan Association. If ideas alone were held supreme without priority being given to the nation, genuine collaboration could not be

attained. It was my view in those days that if top priority was given to national liberation it was possible to join hands with any social class.

Proceeding from this standpoint we collaborated, after liberation, with Kim Gu who had opposed communism all his life and now are appealing for grand national unity. If grand national unity is attained, there will remain only the foreign forces and traitors to the nation as obstacles. When Choe Hong Hui and Choe Dok Sin visited Pyongyang, although they had passed their lives at the anti-communist front with their guns turned on us, we welcomed them out of compatriotic love without caring about their past because grand national unity was our supreme task as well as our policy.

I said to Choe Dok Sin, "Whether one lives in the north or in the south, one must consider the question of reunification with top priority given to the nation. Only when the nation exists are there social classes and isms, don't you think? What is the use of communism, nationalism or a belief in 'God' without the nation?" When we elaborated the line of the anti-Japanese national united front in Kalun over 60 years ago, we made the same appeal.

Politics must be comprehensive and statesmen, broad-minded. If politics is not comprehensive, it cannot embrace all the people. If statesmen are not broad-minded, the people turn away from them. In my draft report I dwelt on the founding of the party, the character and tasks of the Korean revolution, and the basic standpoint for Korean communists to adhere to in struggle. When I had prepared the draft report, I immediately submitted it for discussion to the leading cadres of the Young Communist League and the AJYL who had come from different places to attend the Kalun Meeting. In those days we held discussions at the edge of the field or in the willow grove by the River Wukaijiang in the daytime while we worked in the field, and in the evening reviewed the opinions raised in the daytime in the night duty room of Chinmyong School. During the mass discussions many opinions concerning interesting practical problems were offered.

At first a dispute arose as to how to define the character of the Korean revolution. The definition of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution given in the draft report provoked a heated debate. The focus of the debate was whether a new definition of the character of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution which was not found in the classics and which had not been advanced in any other country conflicted with universal principles and the law of the revolution or not. According to the understanding of the young people of those days, bourgeois and socialist revolutions were the only revolutions which brought about a radical change in modern history. So, they were fully justified in questioning a new concept of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution which was neither a socialist nor a bourgeois revolution.

We characterized the Korean revolution as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution on the basis of the conclusion we had formed concerning the class relations prevailing in our country and the tasks facing our revolution. The most urgent revolutionary task for the Korean nation was to overthrow Japanese imperialism, eliminate the feudal relations shackling our people and effect democracy in our country. Hence we defined the Korean revolution as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution.

If one squeezes the definition of the revolution into another pattern, one will be guilty of dogmatism. It is not the pattern that is most important but the actual situation. Communists should accept without hesitation a scientific definition suited to the actual situation in the country even if it is not found in the classics or elsewhere. This represents a creative attitude towards Marxism-Leninism. When I thus explained why I had defined the Korean revolution as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, the delegates said that they understood and warmly supported it.

The question of the anti-Japanese national united front was most hotly debated. In those days it was publicly recognized as a difficult problem in both theory and practice, a problem of which an open discussion was troublesome. People around us approached the question cautiously because some people from the Comintern indiscriminately qualified those who supported the united front policy as reformists, citing the failure of the collaboration between Kuomintang and the Communist Party in China. So those without courage could not propose the national united front policy as a line, for to do so might have been taken as a challenge to the standpoint of the Comintern. Then the comrades raised many questions.

Should the son of a landlord support the revolution, how should he be treated?

Should a capitalist have donated a lot of money and provided a great deal of material aid to the Independence Army but wants nothing to do with communists, how should he be approached?

Should a sub-county head mix well with both the people and the Japanese, can he be enlisted in the revolution?

In reply to these questions I said, in short, that people should be judged mainly by their ideological tendency. Our views of those days later took shape in the ten-point program of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and was specified as state policy in the 20-point program after liberation. The validity of the anti-Japanese national united front policy we advanced in Kalun was later proved in practice. Our comrades' opinions were a great help in perfecting the draft report.

The Kalun Meeting was formally opened in the evening of June 30, 1930. Our comrades in Kalun prepared a meeting place in a classroom of Chinmyong School. They spread straw mats on the floor of the classroom for the delegates and hung lamps from the ceiling. On the first day of the meeting the delegates listened to my report. The next day they began to discuss measures to carry out the tasks set in the report. The discussions took place in groups or all together on the riverside or in the willow grove, while we helped the peasants in their work. Thus the meeting was held in an original way. We held the meeting with easy minds because the members of the revolutionary organizations in Kalun were keeping guard in the village. Members of the Children's Expeditionary Corps also did a lot to protect us during the meeting.

The Japanese imperialists, having smelled out that a large number of young communists had gathered in central Manchuria, dispatched many secret agents to the counties of Changchun, Huaide and Yitong which were the arena of our activity. Some secret agents carried a photograph of me with them and asked where I was. Informed by the secret agents from the Japanese consulate in Manchuria and from the police affairs department of the government-general in Korea that some young communists belonging to a group different from those of the old-time communists who differed from them in the way they conducted their activities had appeared around Jirin in Manchuria and were expanding their forces, the Japanese imperialists chased us persistently in an effort to capture the leading core elements, straining their nerves from the beginning.

Because we had established a wide foothold and went deep among the people without making much fuss, they seemed to take us seriously. At that time Kim Won U was in charge of the guard at the village and commanded the members of the Children's Expeditionary Corps and the ALYL. Even when he was attending a meeting, he would leave stealthily and patrol the village to check the guard. When I sat up at night because of the pressure of work in the classroom of Chinmyong School, he kept watch outside to ensure my personal safety. Sometimes at night he roasted potatoes in the fire-place in the kitchen of the night-duty room of the school, and offered me some.

Kim Won U rendered great service in exploring Kalun, Guyushu, Wujiazi and other areas. He did a lot of work in leading the youth and student movement in Jirin. In the spring of 1928 we dispatched him to the rural communities in the Changchun area to make them revolutionary. At the time he was teaching at Chinmyong School and educating the young people by touring the Kalun and Guyushu areas. Beginning in the spring of 1930 he took part in the preparations for the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army, helping Cha Gwang Su. As he had a handsome face we once disguised him as a woman and sent him to do underground work, "pairing" him with Hyon Gyun as man and wife.

When he went about to buy weapons after the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army, he was arrested by the enemy and imprisoned for several years. Even behind bars he fought staunchly. When the internal and external situation was complicated after the war, Kim Won U fell at the hands of the factionalists while fighting in defense of the Party's line in the provinces. At that time factionalists plotted in various ways to harm those who were faithful to the Party. His original name was Pyon Muk Song.

Kalun became a reliable base for our activities and a revolutionary village for realizing our ideas due to the persistent efforts Kim Won U, Kim Lee Gap, Cha Gwang Su, Kim Hyok and other young communists made earlier to explore the village. Before we arrived the people there were divided into the southern provinces group and the northern provinces group and lived with their backs turned on each other. Once the two groups had a gang fight over water from the River Wukaijiang. When people from the southern provinces group blocked the irrigation ditch to reclaim their field, the people from the northern provinces group came rushing out with their shovels and reopened the ditch, shouting that their paddy fields were drying up. Even their children were divided into two groups and would not play together, which was very sad.

Kim Hyok, Kim Won U, Kim Lee Gap, Chang So Bong and others made a great deal of effort to straighten out the situation. They put an end to the gang fight through persuasion and formed various mass organizations, set up a school in Kalun and provided free education. In the evening on the second of July the delegates again gathered in the classroom of the school and resumed the meeting. That evening the meeting was concluded with the announcement of an assignment plan. Towards the close of the meeting Cha Gwang Su who was presiding over the meeting rose abruptly from his seat and made a fervent speech. Nicknamed "boisterous," he often acted rashly and easily got excited, but he never lost his reason. He stirred up the hearts of people, addressing them in an impassioned and fluent speech. He shook his fist as he spoke:

"While the Korean communist movement is going through ordeal and the people are lamenting its setbacks, we here in Kalun have made a historic statement marking a fresh start of the Korean revolution. With this statement heralding a new dawn we Korean communists will advance along a new path. Comrades, let us take up arms and come out in a life-and-death struggle against Japanese imperialism."

Having heard his speech, we raised shouts of joy and sang the Revolutionary Song. We could proclaim the new path for the Korean revolution in Kalun because already in the course of the youth and student movement launched in our days in Jirin we had established the Juche stand on and attitude towards the Korean revolution and cleared a new path for the communist movement. I made public in The Path of the Korean Revolution the idea and standpoint I had perceived in my days of struggle and elaborated in prison. This has become the line of our revolution and its guiding idea.

We can say that the content of the treatise was based entirely on the Juche idea. Since then the idea has been steadily developed and enriched through the various stages of the revolution, including the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, and through a difficult and complicated practical struggle and it has become

a philosophical idea in which ideas, theories and methods have been brought together as an integral whole as we now see it. It was when we were building the foundation of socialism after the war that we particularly stressed the need to establish Juche after liberation.

I delivered a speech on eliminating dogmatism and the worship of the great powers and establishing Juche to party propaganda and agitation workers in 1955. It was made public in the document On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work. Later I stressed the need to establish Juche whenever the occasion offered itself. Time and again I explained the essence of the Juche idea, how it was created and has been implemented in my talks with foreigners. But I never thought of systematizing it and publishing it in book form. If our people accepted the idea as just and implemented it in their revolutionary practice, I was satisfied.

Later Secretary Kim Jong Il systematized the idea in a comprehensive manner and published his treatise On the Juche Idea. We became convinced, while waging the anti-Japanese armed struggle after the Kalun Meeting, that the line we advanced at the meeting was just. The enemy likened us to "a drop in the ocean," but we had an ocean of people with inexhaustible strength behind us. Whatever line we put forward, the people easily understood it and made it their own, and they aided us materially and spiritually, sending tens of thousands of their sons, daughters, brothers and sisters to join our ranks.

We could defeat the strong enemy who was armed to the teeth, fighting against him in the severe cold of up to 40 degrees below zero in Manchuria for over 15 years, because we had a mighty fortress called the people and the boundless ocean called the people.



## 4.4. The First Party Organization: the Society for Rallying Comrades

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The fact that we formed a new type of party organization on July 3, 1930, the day following the Kalun Meeting, was made public many years ago and the speech I made at the meeting has been published.

It is known to everyone that the party plays the role of the general staff in the revolution and that victory in the revolution depends on the role of the party. If the revolution is the locomotive of history, the party can be called the locomotive of the revolution. This is the reason why revolutionaries attach importance to the party and work heart and soul to build up the party.

The fact that Marx founded the League of Communists and issued the Communist Manifesto at the start of his practical struggle following his creation of a scientific theory on communism is praised even now as the greatest of his exploits. This is because the mission and role fulfilled by the party in the struggle of the communists to transform the world are very important. It can be said that the various opportunist and reformist tendencies that appeared in the international communist movement and working-class movement resulted, in the final analysis, from a wrong view and attitude towards the party.

Among all the epoch-making changes that have been made up to the present day by communists throughout the world since the appearance of communism in the arena of the working-class movements as the new thought of the time, there is nothing that is not linked with the noble name of the party.

In order to implement the tasks put forward at the Kalun Meeting, The fact that we formed a new type of party organization on July 3, 1930, the day following the Kalun Meeting, was made public many years ago and the speech I made at the meeting has been published. It is known to everyone that the party plays the role of the general staff in the revolution and that victory in the revolution depends on the role of the party. If the revolution is the locomotive of history, the party can be called the locomotive of the revolution. This is the reason why revolutionaries attach importance to the party and work heart and soul to build up the party.

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In order to implement the tasks put forward at the Kalun Meeting, we first of all started to form a party organization. It was after hearing that the Korean Communist Party had been expelled from the Comintern that we resolved to found a new type of party and started to make all-out efforts to find the way.

It was in April 1925 that the Communist Party was formed in our country. In those days in various countries political parties representing the interests of the working class had appeared and were leading the masses. The fact that, in keeping with this worldwide trend, a communist party was founded in our country, a land where no freedom of political activity and no rights were allowed proves how quick and rich was the political sensibility of the Koreans towards the new thought and the trend of the times.

The founding of the Korean Communist Party was the inevitable result and law-governed product of the development of the working-class movement and the national liberation movement in Korea.

After its foundation the Korean Communist Party disseminated the socialist idea among broad sections of the masses, such as the workers and peasants, and led the working-class movement, thus turning a new page on which the national liberation struggle in our country was guided by communists. While the Korean Communist Party existed the Korean communists displayed the mettle of our nation by leading such a large-scale struggle as the June 10th Independence Movement. They also contributed to the work of rallying the anti-Japanese patriotic forces by forming such a mass organization as the Singan Association with the cooperation of the nationalists.

The fact that the Korean Communist Party was founded and the mass movement of various social sections such as the working-class movement and the peasant movement was conducted under its leadership was a historic event that promoted the development of the national liberation movement to some extent and marked the beginning of the communist movement in our country. However, the Korean Communist Party ended its existence as an organized force in 1928 owing to the cruel suppression on the part of the Japanese imperialists and the factional strife in its highest circles.

At its Sixth Congress held in the summer of 1928 the Comintern pronounced the withdrawal of its recognition of the Communist Party of Korea. This was tantamount to the expulsion of the Korean Communist Party from the ranks of the Communist International.

It goes without saying that while the Korean Communist Party existed we were not satisfied with its highest circles who were engrossed in factional strife. However, we could not repress our indignation and shame at the news that the party had even been expelled from the ranks of the Comintern. We regretted the action of the Communist International. It was at that time that I began to think that, although we were young and had little experience in the communist movement, we ourselves must become masters and work hard to found a new type of party.

If we were to found a party of a new type which would be pure and original, we had to overcome many obstacles and difficulties. The greatest difficulty was that there was still factionalism in the communist

ranks. Because factionalism had not been eliminated the communists of the early years could not conduct the movement to rebuild the party in a unified manner but did it divided into various factions.

After the Korean Communist Party was expelled from the Comintern the communists of our country conducted an intensive movement at home and abroad to rebuild the party. But no faction succeeded owing to the indiscriminate suppression and obstructive moves of the Japanese imperialists. The Tuesday group and the M-L group<sup>8</sup> abandoned their efforts to rebuild the party and declared that they would dissolve the general bureau that had been formed in Manchuria. Following this the Seoul-Shanghai group made an effort to rebuild the party at home, but even this became known and ended in many party members being dragged off to prison.

So we came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to found a revolutionary party by rebuilding the party that had been dissolved or by relying on the existing generation that was infected with the vicious habit of factional strife.

Another difficulty in founding the party was that it was impossible for the Korean communists to found their own party in Manchuria because of the principle of one party for one country laid down by the Comintern.

In the general provisions of its Rules adopted at its Sixth Congress the Comintern laid down this principle, to the effect that each party belonging to the Comintern should carry the name of the communist party of the country concerned (the branch of the Comintern) and that in each country only one communist party could exist within the Comintern.

The eastern propaganda department of the Communist International convened the Conference of the Korean and Chinese Communist Parties in Khabarovsk in May 1930 and informed the delegates of the decision of the Comintern of the organizational question regarding the Korean Communist Party. In that decision the Comintern set the Korean communists in Manchuria the task of joining the Chinese party and working as members of that party. Such being the case, those communists who had been working hard to rebuild the party changed their attitude and issued a statement on dissolving the party. Then they started to convert to the Chinese party and, with this, the flames of the May 30 Uprising swept east Manchuria.

The matter of the Korean party members having to work in the Chinese party could not but seriously excite the young Korean communists who had a stronger national pride than others. Our comrades had a heated argument on the matter. Some young people denounced the order of the Comintern as irresponsible and as an incomprehensible decision, some regarded the measure as fair and yet others gave vent to their pent-up anger and indignation, saying that the demand of the Comintern that the Korean communists should join the Chinese party meant rejecting for ever the possibility of rebuilding the party.

My comrades brought this matter up as a topic of conversation and asked me my view. I told them clearly that the demand of the Comintern that the Korean communists should join the Chinese party in

accordance with the principle of one party for one country should not be censured and that the demand did not imply depriving the Korean communists of the possibility of rebuilding their party.

"In the present circumstances the demand of the Comintern was somewhat inevitable. If the Korean communists had their own party, why would it demand that they live in a rented room? Therefore, we must respect the decision of the Comintern. That is an internationalist standpoint. If one becomes a member of the Chinese party, it will be all right if one does not forget Korea and fights for the Korean revolution. However, on the plea of following the instructions of the Comintern, one cannot abandon the building of one's own party and live in rented room for ever. Koreans must have a party for Koreans."

This was my view and standpoint with regard to the problem of converting to another party. However, I could not be sure that this view accorded with the principle of the Comintern of one party for one country.

In order to deepen my understanding of the principle of one party for one country and decide upon a policy for party building as soon as possible, I met Kim Gwang Ryol (Kim Ryol), a liaison officer of the Comintern, in Jiajiatun in the latter part of June 1930. Kim Gwang Ryol was an intellectual who had graduated from Waseda University in Japan and had been in the Soviet Union before going to Jiajiatun. He stayed for a long time in Guyushu, Wujiazi and Kalun, which were the areas of our activity.

In his capacity of a liaison officer, he strove to link us with the Communist International. Chang So Bong and Li Jong Rak were unsparing in their praise of him, saying that he had been greatly influenced by socialism in the Soviet Union. So I met him with hope. I found him to be a well-read man, as was his reputation. He had a good command of Russian and Japanese, danced Russian dances just as well as Russians and was a good public speaker. Kim Gwang Ryol advised me to go to the Comintern instead of listening only to his opinion. He said that he would introduce me to the Harbin liaison office of the Comintern and asked me to go there and argue about the principle of one party for one country.

After meeting Kim Gwang Ryol I repeated the argument about the principle of one party for one country with my comrades.

We construed the principle of one party for one country as meaning that two or more communist parties in a country could not join the Comintern, that only one communist party could become a member of it, and that no more than one center of the communist party could exist in one country.

The essence of this principle was that there should not be more than one party center with the same interests and aim in a country. The fact that the Comintern advanced the principle of one party for one country and demanded its strict observance was mainly aimed at eliminating the different forms of opportunism, including factionalism, in the international communist movement and ensuring the unity and cohesion of its ranks. The historic lesson of the international communist movement made the Comintern put forward the principle of one party for one country and strictly guard against the infiltration of alien elements into the communist movement.

That the Comintern laid down the principle of one party for one country was connected with the fact that the enemy was making vicious attempts to split and break up the communist ranks from within.

However, the Rules of the Communist International merely laid down the principle of one party for one country. They did not clarify how those conducting the communist movement in a foreign country should be converted to the party of the country of their residence and how revolutionary tasks should be set for them after their conversion. It was precisely because of this that the matter of the Korean communists active in Manchuria converting to the Chinese party gave rise to extremely complex arguments. So some people even regarded the formation of their own party organization by the Korean communists in China as contradictory to the principle of one party for one country.

At a time when, owing to the various interpretations of the Comintern principle of one party for one country, terrible confusion and vacillation were created in the activities of the Korean communists for the liberation of their country, and even the right of the Korean revolutionaries to fight for their country was regarded as doubtful, I was seeking tirelessly the way to found a party.

Was there no way which would conform with the instructions of the Comintern and also powerfully promote the Korean revolution?

The way out which I discovered at the end of my search was steadily to lay the organizational and ideological foundation for the formation of a party and, on the basis of this, found a party that was capable of playing both nominally and in fact the role of the general staff of our revolution, proceeding from the lesson of the preceding communist movement, instead of hastily proclaiming a party center. It was impossible to found a party proceeding only from one's subjective desire without training an organizational backbone of people who were awakened to class consciousness and qualified, without the unity of the ranks in ideology and purpose and without laying down a mass foundation on which the party could rely.

I considered that forming the party by setting up basic party organizations first, with communists of the new generation, who had nothing to do with factions, as the backbone and then steadily expanding them, was the most suitable and realistic method for us of founding a party. I was convinced that the Comintern would welcome it if we founded a party in this way.

I believed that if we formed party organizations first with the communists of the younger generation whom we had been training and steadily increased their role, at the same time as expanding and strengthening the basic party organizations everywhere our steps reached, we would be quite able to lead the communist movement and the national liberation struggle and also fulfill our internationalist duties satisfactorily.

If we refrained from forming a separate party center in China lest it should coexist with the Chinese party, we would not be contradicting the Comintern principle of one party for one country.

By establishing this idea we advanced the policy of founding a party at the Kalun Meeting and formed the first party organization. Forming a revolutionary party organization was also an inevitable requirement of the development of our revolution.

Because there was no party in Korea, the leaders of the Tanchon Peasant Uprising visited the Comintern to get its opinion on the tactical problems of the uprising. If there had been a revolutionary party in Korea representing the interests of the workers and peasants, as well as a seasoned leadership force, they would not have had to spend money on going to the Comintern.

The national liberation movement in our country at the beginning of the 1930s developed much further, to an extent which was incomparable with the anti-Japanese struggle of the past in its width and depth.

Our struggle also became much more advanced compared to its first stage. The sphere of our activities passed beyond the bounds of Jirin and spread to far-off east Manchuria and areas of northern Korea. Our revolutionary struggle, which had been confined to a youth and student movement, stretched to the broad sections of the workers and peasants and became underground activities. When we had accumulated experience and the military and political preparations had been made, we would have to form a standing revolutionary army and wage a full-scale guerrilla war with large units.

The Young Communist League, however, was not equal to leading all this. The leadership given by the Young Communist League to various mass organizations in the past was a transitional phenomenon, not a perpetual one.

Now it was necessary to form a party which would have to control and guide the Young Communist League and various other mass organizations, give leadership to the national liberation movement as a whole, establish relations with the Chinese party and work with the Communist International. In the name of the Young Communist League it would be impossible for us to deal satisfactorily with the Comintern.

The communists of the early years visited the Comintern to obtain its recognition, each group posing as the "legitimate party." Therefore, the Comintern was quite at a loss. The Comintern began gradually to realize that it would be impossible for a genuine vanguard of the working class to appear in Korea unless factions were eliminated and that, in order to eliminate the factions and found a new party, there should appear a new generation who had nothing to do with the factional strife and had no ambition for power. So they became interested in our struggle and tried various ways to join hands with us. Over many years of revolutionary activity we laid down the foundation for forming a new type of revolutionary party organization.

The formation of the DIU was the starting point for the founding of a new type of revolutionary party which differed from the previous party in the Korean communist movement. Everything started from the DIU. The DIU developed into the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and then the Young Communist League.

The hardcore detachment of our revolution trained by the Young Communist League and the mass foundation of our revolution laid by the Anti-Imperialist Youth League immediately became the basis for founding the party. In those days when the Young Communist League had been formed and was leading the revolutionary movement as a powerful vanguard organization, the communists from among the new generation overcame the mistakes made by the communists of the preceding generation and pioneered a new way of winning over the masses and employing the art of leadership. The heroic fighting spirit and the revolutionary fighting traits displayed by the communists of the new generation became the motive force enabling us to defeat the Japanese imperialist aggressors. Later they became the spirit and moral strength of our Party.

A peak in the activities of the communists of the new generation was that the guiding idea of the Korean revolution was established with the Kalun Meeting as the impetus. The decision of the Kalun Meeting clarified the strategic points which the communists had to observe as their principles in the struggle to effect the programme of the DIU and the Young Communist League. They constituted the ideological basis for the foundation of a new type of party and a guide in the activities of the communists who had long been groping blindly in the dark, suffering failures and setbacks, to find the way ahead.

The guiding idea, leadership core and mass foundation, these can be said to be the essential elements for the formation of a party organization. We had all these elements.

On July 3, 1930 we formed the first party organization in a classroom at Chinmyong School in Kalun with comrades Cha Gwang Su, Kim Hyok, Choe Chang Gol, Kye Yong Chun, Kim Won U and Choe Hyo Il. Although they were not present at the meeting, comrades Kim Lee Gap, Kim Hyong Gwon, Park Gun Won and Li Je U also became members of the first party organization as did Park Cha Sok and Li Jong Rak whom I was intending to appoint as the commander of the Korean Revolutionary Army.

Chinmyong School stood in the fields in front of Jiajiatun, some 500 meters away from the village. Pussy willow fields covering some five or six hectares stretched to the east and south of the school, and in the middle of the willow fields a wide river, the River Wukaijiang, flowed around the southeast side of the school. There were ponds and marshes from the east side of the school to the village. There was a path to Chinmyong School only from the west. If the corner was properly guarded there was no knowing if anything was happening at the school. Even if there was some danger one could easily escape into the willow fields.

That night we held a meeting by posting double and treble sentries on the west gateway where spies might appear. I still remember how the frogs croaked noisily in the rice fields. This noise stirred up mysterious feelings in me.

My most unforgettable impression of when the first party organization was formed is how Kim Won U took such trouble to put up a red flag beside the speaker's table when preparing the meeting place. The red color of that flag clearly reflected our determination to fight for the revolution till the last drop of our blood.

Even now I think of Chinmyong School whenever the first party organization is mentioned, and when I think of Chinmyong School I picture in my mind the unforgettable flag that stood slantwise by the speaker's table.

That day I did not make a long speech. We had talked a great deal about forming the first party organization during the Kalun Meeting. Therefore, there was no need to explain our aim in forming it at length.

I simply set the tasks for the members of the party organization of expanding the basic party organizations and establishing a system of unified guidance over them, of achieving firm organizational and ideological unity within the ranks and comradely solidarity, and of laying a solid mass foundation for the revolution. As the means for realizing this I emphasized the need for the party organization to hold fast to the independent stand in all its activities and closely combine the work of building up the party organization with the anti-Japanese struggle.

We did not adopt a new Programme and Rules for the party. The Programme and Rules of the DIU clarified the ultimate goal and immediate fighting tasks for us communists, and the revolutionary line and strategic policies adopted at the Kalun Meeting provided details on the path we should follow and the rules for our conduct.

We gave the first party organization the simple name of the Society for Rallying Comrades. That name embodied the high aims and will of us who were taking the first step in the revolution by winning over comrades, and who were determined to develop the revolution in depth and achieve its final victory by continually discovering and rallying those comrades who would share their fate with us.

All the comrades who joined the Society for Rallying Comrades stood up and made fiery speeches full of strong emotions. Kim Hyok recited an impromptu poem the content of which was: "Now we are sailing. Our ship has left the port. We're rowing towards the ocean on a heavy sea."

Following Kim Hyok's recitation Choe Hyo Il stood up and delivered a speech. On finishing his speech he said:

"Sung Ju, if we were not in a classroom but on a mountain, I would like to fire a salute in memory of this occasion!"

I told him he should fire a gun to his heart's content on the day we confronted the Japanese, and that the day was not far off. We felt the urge to fire big guns, not just pistols, in commemoration of the formation of the first party organization. Indescribable indeed were our joy and pride as we solemnly pledged to the times and history that, being party members of Korea with their own party organization, we would devote our lives to the revolution.



When, 15 years later, I was lying on a straw mat in the floor-heated room of my home which smelled of my childhood, following the founding of the Party in the liberated country, I set aside all my cares and recollected with deep emotion how we had formed the first party organization in Kalun.

The first party organization, the Society for Rallying Comrades was the embryo and seed of our Party; it was an organization with the importance of a parent body in forming and expanding the basic organizations of the party. Since acquiring its first party organization our revolution has been winning victory after victory under the leadership of the communists from the new generation who have not been influenced by factions and are as pure and fresh as driven snow. From that time the struggle of the Korean communists to build an independent party made dynamic headway on the strong current of the great anti-Japanese war.

Afterwards we sent the members of the Society for Rallying Comrades to various areas and formed party organizations in the northernmost part of Korea along the River Tuman and in many regions of Manchuria.

I took charge of the work of forming party organizations in the homeland. In the autumn of 1930 I went to Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province, where we had a reasonably great influence, and there formed a party organization in the homeland.

Sharing life and death, good times and bad with the popular masses, our young party organizations marched through the anti-Japanese war, always in the vanguard. In the course of this they became tempered as an iron-strong vanguard detachment and grew into an indestructible force which enjoyed the absolute love and trust of the masses.

We had our own organization, but in conducting our work we maintained close relations with the Chinese party. Although we were Korean communists we consistently supported the Chinese revolution and fought in the interests of the Chinese party and people, proceeding from the time-honored neighborly relationship between the Korean and Chinese peoples, the similarity of the circumstances in which the two countries found themselves and the commonness of the mission which the revolutionaries of the two countries assumed before the times. Whenever the Chinese party and people won a victory in their struggle to liberate their nation, we rejoiced over it as over our own, and when they experienced a temporary setback or went through twists and turns, we shared their sorrow.

Since the Korean communists were conducting their activities in China, they could not receive help from the Chinese people nor could they firmly maintain the anti-imperialist united front unless they had contact with the Chinese party.

We attached importance to our relations with the Chinese party also because there were many Koreans in the party organizations under the Manchurian provincial party committee. There were also many Koreans in the east Manchuria Ad hoc committee; the leadership bodies of the county party committees and district party committees in east Manchuria were made up mainly of Koreans, and more than 90 per cent

of party members in east Manchuria were Koreans. They played a central, leading role in the party organizations in east Manchuria.

The large number of Korean party members in Manchuria was attributable to the fact that Koreans comprised the greater party of those pioneers who launched the communist movement in Jiandao.

It was after the Japanese imperialists occupied Manchuria that I began to have relations with the Chinese Communist Party. When I was forming the DIU at Whasung Uisuk School and when I was working in Jirin and Wujiazi I had no contact with the Chinese Communist Party. A revolution is naturally an undertaking that is launched independently in accordance with one's own conviction and aim, not at the dictation of somebody else. Therefore, we ourselves evolved the guiding ideology for our revolution and formed the DIU, the genesis of our Party, independently.

Imperialist Japan's occupation of Manchuria after the September 18 incident created a new situation in which Japanese imperialism became the common enemy of the Korean and Chinese peoples. This new situation required that we establish relations with the Chinese Communist Party.

Around the time of the meeting at Mingyuegou in the winter of 1931, while staying at Cao Ya-fan's house, began to have relations with the Chinese Communist Party for the first time. When he was studying in Jirin, Cao Ya-fan did Young Communist League work with me, and later at Hailong he taught at a school, and was in contact with the Chinese Communist Party. Later, when I was conducting activities in Wangqing and other areas after forming the guerrilla army, I established contact with Wang Run-cheng who, in a high position on the Ningnan county party committee, was also in charge of east Manchuria. When Dong Chang-rong was transferred from Dalian to the east Manchuria Ad hoc committee, I established contact with him.

I established relations with the Chinese Communist Party in this manner, and in the course of this I became a cadre of an organization of the Chinese party. After the death of Dong Chang-rong I came into contact with Wei Zheng-min, as well as with Comrade Pan, an inspector from the Comintern.

I maintained my relations with the Chinese Communist Party throughout the whole period of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, and these relations contributed to extending the common front against the Japanese imperialists and to developing the joint struggle.

We developed the joint struggle by maintaining close relations with the Chinese Communist Party. This was a flexible measure we adopted to cope with the complex situation in those days when the Korean communists had to wage the revolutionary struggle in a foreign land. The measure also accorded with the Comintern line of recognizing one party for one country. While developing the joint struggle with the Chinese Communist Party in every possible way, we always held high the banner of Korean liberation, the independent line of the Korean revolution which we carried out honorably. Our Chinese comrades-in-arms spoke highly of our principled stand and sincere efforts, calling them a shining example of properly combining national revolutionary duty with international duty.

Upholding the banner of proletarian internationalism, tens of thousands of the fine sons and daughters of the Korean people took part, together with the Chinese communists, in the protracted anti-Japanese struggle, experiencing trials and hardships.

When Comrade Choi Yong Kun visited China in 1963, Premier Zhou En-lai arranged a banquet in Shenyang in honor of his birthday at which he made a congratulatory speech. In his speech he said: "The Koreans played a leading role in paving the way for the revolution in northeast China. Therefore, the friendship between China and Korea is unbreakable and lasting. The Anti-Japanese Allied Army was a united armed force of the best sons and daughters of the Chinese and Korean peoples."

Comrades Yang Jing-yu, Zhou Bao-zhong and Wei Zheng-min also said on numerous occasions that the Koreans had performed great exploits in clearing the way for the revolution in northeast China.

Because we had freely given our aid in the Chinese revolution, the Chinese helped us in our cause, even at the risk of their lives.

After the reorganization of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, we formed the party committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army within the guerrilla units. That was a fruit of the expansion and development of the first party organization formed in Kalun. Later our independent party organization spread its roots to the Korean National Liberation League, an organization at home of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, as well as to the peasants' associations and trade unions.

We were able to found a party within a month of our triumphal return home. This was because we had gained success and experience in the course of the struggle to realize the cause of party building during the protracted anti-Japanese revolution.

## 4.5. The Korean Revolutionary Army

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The building of a party organization put forward as an important task at the Kalun Meeting was started with the formation of the Society for Rallying Comrades, the first party organization. But we could not rest content with this. Ahead of us lay the difficult task of making rapid preparations for an armed struggle.

As the first step by way of preparation for an armed struggle we formed the Korean Revolutionary Army at Guyushu. In founding a temporary political and paramilitary organization such as the Korean Revolutionary Army while planning to form standing revolutionary armed forces within a year or two, our intention was to prepare ourselves for the building of a large guerrilla force through the army's operations.



*Photo: Kim Il Sung (center, 2nd row) with a KPR unit.*

We intended to lay a mass foundation for an armed struggle and gain the necessary experience for it in the course of the political and military activities of the Korean Revolutionary Army. The fact was, we had little of the knowledge we would need for the armed struggle. Our armed struggle would have to be conducted not in our own land but on the territory of a foreign country, and we needed appropriate experience. But there was no military manual or experience for us to learn from. All we had as resources was some people from the

Independence Army, a small number of former cadets of Whasung Military Academy and a few pistols. Beyond this we had nothing. We had to secure our own arms and accumulate military experience for ourselves.

We formed the Korean Revolutionary Army as a temporary setup in order to attain this goal. At Guyushu, Kim Won U and Li Jong Rak made preparations for founding the Revolutionary Army initially and then, later, Cha Gwang Su was sent to complete the preparations. Such preparations were promoted extensively in many places. The main aspect of the preparations was to select young people as recruits and obtain arms. As a guideline for gaining people and arms we set good work with the soldiers of the Independence Army and the winning over of sensible people who fell in with progressive ideas.

If many ex-soldiers joined the Revolutionary Army, they could form its first teaching staff so that it would be quite possible to train those young people who were novices in military affairs. That was why our comrades did a great deal of work among the Independence Army men under the influence of the

Kukmin-bu organization. It was our policy to persuade and win over to our camp the progressive-minded men of the Independence Army and enlist them in the Revolutionary Army when they were fully prepared ideologically.

In this period the Kukmin-bu organization was still divided into two groups: the pro-Kukmin-bu and anti-Kukmin-bu factions and the struggle for power continued. The pro-Kukmin-bu faction had control over the Korean residents in Manchuria and the anti-Kukminbu faction held sway over the Independence Army. This led in the end to an estrangement between the people and the army.

In the summer of 1930 the antagonism between the two factions developed into terrorist activity to assassinate the cadres of the other side, and this resulted in a complete rupture between the two forces. This being the situation, not only the rank and file but also the platoon leaders and company commanders looked upon the people of the highest levels with distrust and would not readily obey their orders. They were more willing to listen to our operatives.

Cha Gwang Su conducted his work with the soldiers of the Independence Army in the Tonghua, Human and Guanxi areas, and Li Jong Rak educated his men at Guyushu in preparation for their enlistment in the Revolutionary Army. Li Jong Rak had originally belonged to the first company of the Independence Army under the control of Chongui-bu at Guyushu before coming to Whasung, where he joined the Down-with-Imperialism Union.

The cadets at the school who came from the first company with Li Jong Rak included Park Cha Sok, Park Gun Won, Park Byong Hwa, Li Sun Ho and many other young men. After the school had closed, Li Jong Rak returned to his old company at Guyushu and was appointed its deputy commander and then commander. In those days, unlike now, the strength of the army was quite small, so the company counted for a great deal as an armed force.

Even the Kukmin-bu machinery, which was regarded as the most powerful of all Korean organizations in Manchuria, had only nine companies under it. Naturally, therefore, a company commander was highly respected among the Independence Army soldiers. At Guyushu Li Jong Rak enjoyed great prestige.

As Kim Hyok, Cha Gwang Su and Park So Sim conducted revolutionary activities vigorously under the protection of the Independence Army force controlled by Choe Chang Gol in the Liuhe area in the years 1928-29, so our comrades dispatched to Guyushu worked under the protection of the Independence Army unit commanded by Li Jong Rak. Li Jong Rak still had a very strong will and was extremely enthusiastic about the revolution.

After Whasung Military Academy was closed down, he returned to his old company and acquitted himself well in the assignment I had given him in Huadian to work efficiently with the Independence Army men. He was daring, resolute, quick of judgment and had great ability to command. On the other hand he lacked cool reason and thinking power. He was rash, hot-tempered and self-opinionated. These I think were his chief faults which in later days led him to betray the revolution.

Certain people said that since the Independence Army's line of command was in disorder and there was great confusion within it, the companies scattered in different areas should be disarmed and the reactionaries of Kukmin-bu purged. They insisted that the mantle of the Independence Army be thrown off and operations conducted openly, arms procured and a showdown be had with the Kukmin-bu organization. We strictly guarded against such a tendency, so as to avoid a Left error being committed in work with the Independence Army.

My uncle Hyong Gwon formed two operational groups and went to the Changbai area. He set up his base of operations on the mountain behind Zhiyangjie and formed branch organizations of the Paeksan Youth League, Peasants Union, Anti-Japanese Women's Association and Children's Expeditionary Corps throughout Changbai in order to obtain weapons and awaken the people politically. Young people in the area were drawn into these organizations and given military training. Through the efforts of uncle Hyong Gwon the Independence Army forces in the Changbai region came under our influence.

In parallel with the work of selecting new recruits and creating military reserves, activities to obtain weapons continued at full pace. In the procurement of arms, the greatest feat was performed by Choe Hyo Il. Choe was a salesman in a Japanese guns shop in Tieling. At the time many Japanese dealt in firearms in Manchuria. They sold guns both to bandits and to Chinese landlords. Choe Hyo Il was a young man with only a primary school education, but he was proficient in Japanese. When he spoke it, he was so fluent that nobody could tell if he was a Korean or a Japanese. Because he was too bright for a shop-assistant and because he spoke Japanese so well, the owner of the shop put great trust in him.

The man who won him over to our cause was Chang So Bong. When we were working to establish a base in Kalun, Chang So Bong moved about the areas of Changchun, Tieling and Gongzhuling and, by chance, made the acquaintance of Choe Hyo Il. Having met him several times, he realized that Choe was a faithful and upright man. He drew him into the membership of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and introduced him to Li Jong Rak. From that time on Choe Hyo Il conducted activities among our enemies in Tieling.

Maintaining contact with Li Jong Rak, he secretly sold weapons to the companies of the Independence Army. Although the owner of the shop knew that the weapons sold by Choe Hyo Il were going to Koreans, he was so eager to boost his sales that he showed no signs of knowing about it. At first he sold weapons to the Chinese and then to the Independence Army men but, in the end, turned the Japanese shop in Tieling into something of an exclusive shop for supplying and delivering weapons to the communists.

In the process of this his world view changed beyond recognition. Every time Li Jong Rak and Chang So Bong met me, they boasted that they had taken in a fine young man in Tieling. So inwardly I came to entertain great expectations of Choe Hyo Il.

In 1928 or 1929 Choe came to Jirin to see me. I found him handsome, with the fair complexion of a young girl. Nevertheless, despite his looks, he was a heavy drinker. According to the criterion of a

revolutionary, this was something of a drawback. We dined together and talked for many hours in a hotel. When he, imitating the insinuating voice of a Japanese “madam,” told me some scandal about the emperor and high-ranking military and political figures of Japan and the five quisling ministers of Korea, I held my sides with laughter. He had a wife of rare beauty and was looked on with envy by others, but he was carefree and quite indifferent to the comforts of home.

For all this, he was amazingly bold and strong-willed in the revolutionary struggle, which belied his fair, girlish features. It was on the eve of the Kalun Meeting that he fled to Guyushu with his wife, bringing ten or so firearms along with him from the Japanese shop. He was given a hearty welcome because he had come when we were busy preparing for the formation of a small military and political organization as a temporary step towards building a permanent revolutionary armed force.

We realized through reports made by our comrades that everything was ready for founding the Revolutionary Army. When I arrived in Guyushu I found that the list of names of the men selected for the army and the necessary weapons were all in order and that even the site for the ceremony of founding the army and the names of those attending the ceremony had been decided.

The ceremony of founding the Korean Revolutionary Army took place in the yard of Samgwang School on July 6, 1930. Before distributing the arms I made a brief speech. I made it clear that the Korean Revolutionary Army was a political and paramilitary organization of the Korean communists formed in preparation for launching an anti-Japanese armed struggle and announced that it would serve as the basis for building a permanent revolutionary armed force in the future.

The basic mission of the Korean Revolutionary Army was to enlighten and awaken the masses of the people in towns and farm villages and unite them under the banner of anti-Japanese resistance and, at the same time, to gain experiences in the armed struggle and prepare for the formation of fully-fledged armed forces in the future. In the speech I set out the immediate tasks of the army to build up a backbone to serve as the basis for the formation of anti-Japanese armed units in the future, to lay a mass foundation for the revolutionary army to rely on, and to make full military preparations for starting an armed struggle.

We formed many units under the Korean Revolutionary Army, calling them by number. On my recommendation Li Jong Rak, who was a veteran of military affairs and had great leadership ability, was appointed commander of the Korean Revolutionary Army.

Some historians confuse the Korean Revolutionary Army created by Kukmin-bu with the military organization of the same name we founded at Guyushu. They have good reason to do so because many of the members of the former were admitted to our Revolutionary Army. The two military organizations had the same name but differed in their guiding idea and mission. The Korean Revolutionary Army produced by the Kukmin-bu setup had no real identity because its name and commanders were changed often due to the continued antagonism and disputes in its practical activities, which was a reflection of its internal conflicts.

But our Korean Revolutionary Army was a political, paramilitary organization guided by the communist idea which engaged in both mass political work and military activities. When we founded the Korean Revolutionary Army, we debated a great deal over its name. Because it was the first armed force organized by the Korean communists, its name should have the flavor of something new, we said and discussed the matter heatedly. Various proposals were made.

I persuaded them to call our armed force the Korean Revolutionary Army, adopting the name of the army of Kukmin-bu. I told them that when forming the Down-with-Imperialism Union we had named it without using words suggestive of communism in order not to irritate the nationalists, and that if the army we were founding should assume the cover of the Korean Revolutionary Army, it would not offend the nationalists and would be convenient for it to operate. The name the Korean Revolutionary Army benefited our force in many ways in its later activities.

After its formation the Korean Revolutionary Army was organized into many groups and these groups were dispatched to various areas. A few groups were sent into the homeland. When we sent them into Korea, we wanted to lay the mass foundation for an armed struggle and step up the revolutionary struggle at home while at the same time aiming to test the feasibility of an armed struggle in the homeland.

We decided to form an operational group to work in the homeland with Li Je U, Kong Yong, Park Jin Yong and others who had been absent at the foundation ceremony of the Korean Revolutionary Army and to assign it the task of forming revolutionary organizations among the broad masses by going to North Pyongan Province by way of Singalpa and the Rangnim Mountains. Li Je U was to lead the group.

In 1928 we gave instructions to those who were operating in the areas of Fusong and Naidaoshan to move their operational base to the Changbai area where there were many Koreans. On these instructions Li Je U moved to the Changbai area where he organized people and conducted activities for the political enlightenment of the masses, going deep into the homeland.

We decided to send into the homeland another operational group headed by my uncle Hyong Gwon and consisting of Choe Hyo Il, Park Cha Sok and another. The task of this group was to cross the River Yalu at Changbai and advance almost as far as Pyongyang, going via Pungsan, Tanchon and Hamhung. The inclusion of Park Cha Sok in this group was due to uncle Hyong Gwon's friendship with him.

He had been engaged in underground activities while working as a teacher in the rural areas outside Jirin until the winter of 1928 when he took part in forming revolutionary organizations in the Fusong area together with Kye Yong Chun and Ko Il Bong. At that time Park Cha Sok became a bosom friend of my uncle. When he heard that my uncle was going into the homeland, Park insisted on going with him. Understanding his feelings, we readily granted his request. The members of the Korean Revolutionary Army who had left for their appointed areas of activity conducted their operations fearlessly everywhere.

There was a man by the name of Hyon Dae Hong among the members of the Korean Revolutionary Army who were working in the Sipingjie and Gongzhuling areas. He was arrested while working among



the masses in Sipingjie and taken to Changchun. At the moment of his arrest he handed over his weapon to his comrade unnoticed. The police tortured him brutally to get him to tell them where he had concealed his weapon. Hyon Dae Hong mentioned the name of a railway station and "confessed" that he had buried it under an aspen tree near the station. He was seeking a chance to escape. Pleased to hear this, the police took him by train to where he said he had buried his pistol.

While the train was moving Hyon knocked down the two policemen escorting him with his handcuffs and jumped off the train. Then he crawled on all fours using his elbows and knees and returned to his revolutionary organization in Kalun. His comrades in Kalun released him from the handcuffs by using a file. Even after undergoing this dreadful ordeal, he went to Gongzhuling as soon as he was restored to health and continued to work, only to be caught again, this time by the Japanese police.

Gongzhuling was a leased territory wrested from China by the Japanese imperialists, so it was under the jurisdiction of the Japanese. He fought bravely in the court, too. He was sentenced to life imprisonment and was serving his term in the Sodaemun prison in Seoul when he died of the injuries he had suffered at the hands of the brutal Japanese imperialist torturers.

Entering the 1930s, the strength of Li Je U's group increased to dozens of men. Through their efforts, successive anti-Japanese organizations came into being in the Changbai area, a school and an evening class were opened in every village, and debating contests, entertainments and athletics meetings took place frequently. This filled the people with revolutionary ardor. But at that time the Japanese imperialists played the trick of sending an armed group of blackguards disguised as mounted bandits to rob a Korean village to lure out Li Je U and his company. But we had warned them to be wary of mounted bandits, so they did not allow themselves to be caught in the trap. There was only a skirmish in which a few men were wounded, and the incident did not develop into a full-scale battle.

Later the soldiers of a reactionary warlord, in league with the mounted bandits of the Japanese imperialists, launched a surprise attack on the armed men of Li Je U causing a great damage. Park Jin Yong died a heroic death during the battle and Li Je U was taken prisoner. In an attempt to escape the disgrace by killing himself, Li Je U, though bound hand and foot, thrust a kitchen knife into his throat, but he failed. He was handed over to the Japanese police and escorted to Seoul. There he was sentenced to death and died immediately in prison. Kong Yong was also killed, trying to form a united front with some bogus communists who had been sent there by the Japanese imperialists to lure out and capture the anti-Japanese fighters in Manchuria.

It was immediately after the massive peasants' uprising in Tanchon that I received word of the tragic fate of Comrades Kong Yong, Li Je U and Park Jin Yong. When the messenger told me of the fact, I could not calm myself for a long time. My head fell, above all because I felt I had committed the sin of being seriously undutiful to my father. The three men were all members of the Independence Army my late father had particularly cared for and were pioneers of the change of course from the nationalist movement to the communist.

My bitter grief over the tragic fate of Li Je U, Kong Yong and Park Jin Yong was partly due to having lost a reliable operational group that was committed to the implementation of the decision of the Kalun Meeting, but mainly it was due to the regrettable loss of pathfinders in the change of course who had been striving to make my father's will the reality.

At my father's funeral Kong Yong and Park Jin Yong had led the pallbearers. They told my mother they would dress in mourning in my place, so that I need not wear a mourning suit. They must have thought it would be a pitiful sight if I, a boy of 14, took to mourning. For three years the two of them remained in mourning, wearing mourner's hats made of hemp. At the time the Independence Army training center was located at Wanlihe a short distance from the town of Fusong. Once or twice every week Kong Yong would come to my home with a load of firewood on his A-frame carrier and pay his respects to my mother. His wife, too, often visited my home bringing with her edible herbs such as aralias shoots and anise.

Sometimes, Kong Yong would come with a sack of rice over his shoulder. Their support was a great help to our family. My mother treated them as kindly as she would her own brother and sister, sometimes, even admonishing them sternly for their mistake with the authority of an elder sister. After Kong Yong left for Manchuria to join the independence movement, his wife had lived alone in Pyokdong. Then one year she had come to Fusong, to her husband. On her face was a scar from a burn she had got while cooking noodles at home. As he looked at her scarred face, Kong Yong said sullenly that he would not live with her any longer because her face was so ugly.

My mother got angry and scolded him severely, "I say. Are you in your right mind to say that? Your wife has come a long way to see you, and instead of seating her on a cushion of gold for that, you have the outrageous idea of saying that you won't live with her." Kong Yong had always been submissive to my mother, and that day he apologized to her with a deep bow.

I first learned through a newspaper report about the activities of the armed group led by my uncle Hyong Gwon that had gone into the homeland. I cannot remember accurately if it was when I was in Harbin or somewhere else that a comrade brought me the newspaper. It said that an armed group of four men had appeared in Pungsan and shot down a police sergeant, before hijacking a car coming from Pukchong and disappearing in the direction of Huchi Pass.

The comrade who brought me the newspaper was in raptures about the gunshot that had rung out in the homeland, but that gunshot caused me great anxiety. How was it that they had fired shots in Pungsan, which could be called the threshold of the country? I remembered my uncle's fiery temper. It seemed likely that he had lost control of himself and fired his gun.

From his early childhood he had behaved in a manly fashion and was as stubborn as a mule. In mentioning uncle Hyong Gwon, I recall the episode of a bowl of gruel made from coarsely ground millet. As this happened while I was staying in Mangyongdae, my uncle must have been eleven or twelve years old at the time. Our family used to eat gruel of coarsely ground millet every evening. Needless to say it

tasted bad, but the most irritating thing of all was that every time we swallowed it the husks of millet pricked our throats. I hated the gruel.

One day my uncle, who was sitting at the table, hit his bowl with his head and overturned it, spilling the hot millet gruel placed before him by his mother, that is, my grandmother. He knocked his head so hard against the bowl that the bowl went flying down to the floor and his forehead began to bleed. He was still young and not fully matured, and was angry to be so poor as to have to eat gruel, so he had vented his grievance on the bowl of coarse gruel. Grandmother gave him a good scolding, saying, "To see you complain about your food, you won't amount to anything." But turning round, she wept.

As he grew up, my uncle would bother about the scar on his forehead. When he came to China to live with us, he used to wear quite a long forelock to hide the scar. He came to China when we were living in Linjiang. My father had him stay with us in order to educate him. As he was a teacher, he could see that his brother, while he lived with us, would get through a secondary school course without even attending school. His idea was to bring him up to be a revolutionary.

While my father was alive, my uncle grew up reasonably soundly under his influence and control. But after my father's death, he lost control of himself and began to behave recklessly. His disposition of his younger days when he had hit his head against the bowl of coarse millet gruel revived, to our astonishment. Now that his eldest brother was gone, he could not remain calmly at home but roamed everywhere, including Linjiang, Shenyang (Mukden) and Dalian.

He had been betrothed to a girl of his parents' choosing when he went home. People with an inside knowledge of our family would say that having returned from home he was unsettled because the girl was not to his liking. Indeed, that could have been the reason, but the main reason for his restlessness was that he could not overcome the despair and sorrow he felt over my father's death.

When I returned home after leaving Whasung, my uncle was still continuing to live recklessly without coming to his senses, like a drunken man. Life for my family was very difficult; my mother was barely eking out a living from her job of washing and sewing. Lee Gwan Rin had come to my house with some money and rice and was helping my mother in her work. She must have felt sorry to see how hard life was for our family. My uncle should have acted as the head of the family in place of my deceased father. In our household there were things he could have attended to.

There was my father's surgery, where some medicines remained, though not very many, but if it had been run properly, it could have been of some help to us. But my uncle ignored the surgery. Frankly speaking, I was extremely displeased at his behavior at the time. So one day at home I wrote a long letter to be read by my uncle when I was away. As I was in my secondary school days, and had a strong sense of justice, I could not stand anything that was unfair, no matter if it concerned someone older than me or not.

I placed the letter under my uncle's pillow before leaving for Jirin. My mother, however, thought it quite improper for me to criticize my uncle in that way.

"Although your uncle is now up in the air like a cloud unable to set his mind on anything, he will surely join the right path in due course. Say what you may, he will not lose sight of the main thing. He can be relied upon to return home when he gets tired of roaming. So don't do anything, not even criticize him. How dare a nephew criticize his uncle?" Thus my mother admonished me. It was typical of my mother to think that way. But I still left the letter for my uncle.

When I returned to Fusong on a holiday after a year at Yuwen Middle School in Jirin, I was surprised to find my uncle Hyong Gwon leading a steady life. My mother's prediction had been correct. He did not say a word about my letter, but I could surmise that the letter had had a considerable effect on him. In the winter of that year he joined the Paeksan Youth League.

After my departure from Fusong he became deeply involved in the work of expanding the youth league. The next year he was admitted to the Young Communist League on the recommendation of his comrades. This was how he became associated with the revolutionary ranks. From 1928 he guided the work of the Paeksan Youth League organizations in the Fusong, Changbai, Linjiang and Antu areas on the instructions of the Young Communist League.

After their neighbors, who had read in the newspapers that in Pungsan there had occurred an incident in which a Japanese police sergeant was shot dead, reported the fact, our family in my home village of Mangyongdae learned of my uncle's arrest. Hearing of it, my grandfather said, "Why, just as his eldest brother did, is his youngest brother also shooting the Japanese to death? Who knows what will come of it in the end? But in any case, it was well done."

Only after some time had passed did I hear the full story of the activities conducted by the operational group in the homeland at Pungsan. August 14, 1930, on the way to Tanchon the group stopped for a while in the blueberry fields of Hwangsuwon near Pabal-ri, Pungsan, where they were regarded suspiciously by the wicked police sergeant Opashi (real name Matsuyama) who was passing on a bicycle. The fellow was a devil who came to Pungsan in 1919 and had been tormenting the Koreans ever since. So the local people called him by the nickname Opashi (Stinging bee?Tr.).

The inhabitants of the area harbored a deep-seated grudge against this villain. As the group were passing in front of the police sub-station this Opashi called them into his office. No sooner had he set foot in the house than my uncle fired and killed the scoundrel. Then he made an anti-Japanese speech openly before the people. Dozens of people listened to his speech. Li In Mo, the war-correspondent of the Korean People's Army, who is known to the world for never having recanted in spite of many years in prison in south Korea, said that he heard his speech in Pabal-ri.

Although the members of the group had the enemy at their heels, they attempted to approach the areas being swept by the flames of the peasants' uprising. We considered the peasants' uprising in Tanchon to be very important. In the places where the uprising broke out there must, without doubt, have been leaders of the mass movement and a large organized force of politically and ideologically awakened and active revolutionary people.

While the enemy was searching frantically for the prime movers in the rebel areas, we were eager to find the central figures from among the insurgent masses such as Oh Jung Hwa of Wangqing, Kim Jun of Longjing and Chon Jang Won of Onsong. By establishing contact with such core elements and exerting a good influence on them, we could lay the foundation for promoting the revolutionary struggle at home. If we could open the door into the Tanchon area, we could proceed by this route to Songjin, Kilju and Chongjin and, further, advance to Pyongyang by way of Hamhung, Hungnam and Wonsan. This was why we had given the operational group at home led by my uncle Hyong Gwon the assignment of meeting the heroes of the peasants' insurgence in Tanchon.

The armed group which had left Pabal-ri after the shooting captured a motor coach carrying the head of the criminal section of the Pungsan police station at the approach to the valley of Pongo. They disarmed the police officer and then made an anti-Japanese address to him and the other passengers. They proceeded to Munang-ri, Riwon County, and talked to the charcoal burners in the valleys of Paedok and Taebawi and in various other places to enlighten them politically. They worked actively all the time in spite of the difficult conditions. On their way to Pukchong, they divided the armed group into two teams - one with my uncle and Chong Ung and the other with Choe Hyo Il and Park Cha Sok. They agreed that the two teams would meet in the town of Hongwon before going on their way.

Early in September my uncle and Chong Ung raided the Kwangje Temple on Mt. Taedok, Pukchong County, where an enemy search party was ensconced and then, while moving towards Hongwon and Kyongpo, encountered an enemy squad in the vicinity of the Cholbu Temple. There they shot the head of the Chonjin police sub-station dead. My uncle entered Hongwon that very day and went to the house of Choe Jin Yong which was where they had promised to meet. Choe Jin Yong had been a member of the Independence Army and a close acquaintance not only of my uncle but also of myself.

When he had been the head of the Ansong area control office in Fusong, he had often called at our home. Earlier, when he had been a sub-county chief in Korea, he had embezzled some public money and, when this was brought to light and a scandal ensued, he had absconded to Manchuria where he had placed himself under the orders of the Chongui-bu organization. He had once stayed with us for many months, eating the meals served him by my mother.

When the Japanese imperialists showed signs of invading Manchuria, Choe left Fusong on the excuse that he was too old to work for the Independence Army any longer. He left for Hongwon saying that he would buy a small orchard, and spend the rest of his life honestly. As soon as he arrived in Hongwon he became a secret agent of the Japanese imperialists. My uncle did not know this.

Choe hid my uncle in a corner of the yard on the pretext that the enemy was keeping a sharp lookout, and then rushed off to the police station and informed them that the armed gang from Manchuria was staying at his house. When my uncle was taken to the police station, Choe Hyo Il was already there. Needless to say, it was Choe Jin Yong that had informed against Choe Hyo Il, too. Only then did my uncle realize that Choe Jin Yong was a stooge of the Japanese imperialists.

The treachery of Choe Jin Yong was a shock, a bolt out of the blue. He used to repeat over and over again, like a chant to Amitabha, that he would never forget, even in his grave, the kindness of Sung Ju's mother who had served him with three hearty, warm meals and a bottle of wine every day for many months. Who could have imagined that this creature would some day turn traitor? When I first heard that Choe Jin Yong had turned informer against my uncle, I could hardly believe my ears. Even now I say that it is good to believe in people but that it is mistaken to harbor illusions about them. Illusions are unscientific things and so, if one harbors illusions, one may commit an irreparable mistake, no matter how perceptive one may be.

Chong Ung was the only one who slipped out of the enemy's net. He had been taken into the group as a guide by my uncle when leaving for the homeland. Being a native of Riwon, he was familiar with the area on the east coast. But later he, too, was arrested in Chunchon because of a spy.

My uncle was detained in Hongwon police station for a while after his arrest, and then transferred to Hamhung jail where he was put to mediaeval torture. The news of his litigating action in Hamhung local court reached me through many lips. Having accused the Japanese imperialists of their crimes, he had loudly declared that armed burglars should be fought off with arms, I heard. What force was it that had made him behave so proudly in the court? It was his faith in and devotion to the revolution, I believe. If there was anything my uncle feared more than death, it must have been the betrayal of the faith which makes a man righteous and courageous and enables him to be the most dignified being in the world.

Choe Hyo Il was sentenced to death and my uncle to 15 years imprisonment. My uncle and his comrades-in-arms sang revolutionary songs loudly in the court. After singing they shouted slogans. The members of the operational group appealed to the Seoul court of review in order to continue their struggle for a longer period. The Japanese imperialists, after their bitter experience at the trial in Hamhung, heard the case behind closed doors in Seoul, without an audience. They sustained the decision of Hamhung local court. Choe Hyo Il was hanged shortly after the court ruling.

He walked out to the gallows with perfect composure after making his last request to his comrades that they fight on unyieldingly. My uncle was thrown into Mapo prison in Seoul, a prison intended mainly for long-term prisoners sentenced to more than ten years. He did not cease his struggle in prison, either. When the Japanese ruffians tried to seduce the long-term "political offenders" to abandon their stand, my uncle made a passionate speech against ideological conversion before a crowd of prisoners to stir them up and then waged a dauntless struggle at the head of the prisoners for an improvement in their treatment. I think the facts about his struggle are already widely known to the public.

Stepping up their war preparations, the Japanese rogues drove the prisoners out to work on making ammunition boxes. The prisoners were forced to do murderous labor on seventh-grade rations. Indignant at this, my uncle led a prisoners' strike in the prison factory to protest against the jail guards who were forcing them to do the murderous labor, the anniversary of the October Revolution marking its launch. A large number of prisoners participated in this strike. In an attempt to stay the influence of my uncle, the prison authorities locked him up in a dark isolation cell and, not content with this, put irons on his wrists

and ankles so that the irons cut into his flesh whenever he made the slightest movement.

He was given only one meal a day, and this a ball of rice mixed with soy beans as small as a child's fist. Since my uncle continued with his struggle in such terrible conditions, the prison authorities whimpered that Kim Hyong Gwon was turning the Mapo prison red. One day, while working in the prison factory, Park Cha Sok heard that we were actively engaged in an armed struggle throughout Manchuria. He conveyed this news to my uncle. On hearing it, my uncle wept for the first time since being put behind bars and, holding the hands of Park Cha Sok, said in a faltering voice, as I heard later:

"I think my days are numbered. But you survivors, I pray that you fight on to the last. When you have served your time and get out of here, be sure to go and see my mother in Mangyongdae and tell her about me.... If you meet Sung Ju some day, tell him my story and let him know that I fought to the last moment of my life without yielding. This is my last request."

My uncle was now so weak that he was confined to bed. When he was on the verge of death, the prison authorities sent notice to Mangyongdae permitting us to go and see him. My uncle Hyong Rok got a loan of 40 won and went to Seoul with Bong Ju, a relation, and met his younger brother Hyong Gwon for the last time.

"When we arrived at the prison, a warder took us to the infirmary. I saw all the other sick prisoners sitting up, but our Hyong Gwon who was at death's door was lying in bed looking like a skeleton. To think how bitter I felt at that time! ... Seeing me, he just mumbled, unable to utter a word. He was so ghastly I could hardly believe he was my brother. In spite of that, he smiled at me and said, 'Elder brother, although I'm going before attaining my aim, the Japanese villains are bound to fall.' Hearing him say this, I thought it was just like our Hyong Gwon."

This is what uncle Hyong Rok said to me when I visited my old home after my triumphal return to the homeland. When I heard this, I wept at the thought of uncle Hyong Gwon. And I felt remorse for the criticism I had once leveled at him in a letter. My uncle Hyong Rok, who had almost fainted at the sight of his brother in such a terrible condition, said to the warder:

"Please allow me to take my brother Hyong Gwon home for treatment."

"No," said the warder, "your brother will live in prison if he should live and should die the ghost of a prison if he should die.... You can't take him home."

"Then I will take his place in prison. After he has received treatment and recovered, he can come back here."

"You fool, where is there such a law that permits a man to serve a prison term in the place of another?"

"Why, you make up laws as you please, so why can't you do this? Grant me my request, I beg you."

"You rogue, where do you think you are to talk such nonsense? Just as the younger brother is a rogue, so the elder brother is, too. You're all a bad lot. Get out of here right away!"

The warder shouted at him and turned him out of the prison. At his wit's end, uncle Hyong Rok put 16 won in the hand of the warder and asked him, "Please take care of my brother Hyong Gwon." With this he left for Mangyongdae. Doubtless such a small amount of money had no effect on the prison guard, but that was all he had.

After returning from the prison, my uncle could not sleep for a month. When he closed his eyes, the vision of his brother rose before him and he could not bring himself to sleep. Three months later, uncle Hyong Gwon died in prison. It was early in 1936 and I was on the way to the Nanhutou area with the guerrilla unit, having returned from the second expeditionary campaign to north Manchuria. My uncle was 31 years old when he died.

So, by then gone were my father, my mother, my younger brother and now even my uncle. So all my family who had gone through unspeakable hardships and privations for the sake of the revolution were no more. When I received word in the mountains that my uncle had passed away, I made up my mind that I would not die but by all means survive to avenge the death of my uncle who was lying alone on a nameless hill in the homeland with his grief over the nation's ruin unassuaged, and would win back my country, come what may.

I have already mentioned the painful fact that when the notice of his death came, our family at Mangyongdae could not go and recover his body because they could not afford the travel expenses, and that therefore, his body was buried in the cemetery of the Mapo prison. Just before he breathed his last, uncle Hyong Gwon told the other inmates of a fact he had been keeping secret:

"Kim Il Sung is my nephew. He is now leading a large revolutionary force in Manchuria, thrashing the Japanese pigs. It will not be long before his army storms into the country. Wait in arms to greet them. Only when we fight can we expel the Japanese ruffians and liberate the country!"

Whenever I think of my uncle Hyong Gwon, I see before my eyes my innumerable comrades-in-arms who laid down their young lives without hesitation on the road to the implementation of the decision of the Kalun Meeting. Uncle Hyong Gwon had a daughter called Yong Sil. After liberation she attended the Mangyongdae Revolutionary School. I thought I would bring her up with all care to succeed her father. But his only child was killed during a bombing raid during the war.

The feats performed by the members of the Korean Revolutionary Army who had opened up the path ahead of our revolution were truly great and noble. It was by drawing on the experiences and lessons of their heroic struggle and at the cost of the precious blood shed by them that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army came into the world as a permanent revolutionary armed force.



## 4.6. Poet Kim Hyok and How I became 'Kim Il Sung'

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A revolution begins with the recruiting of comrades. For a capitalist money is capital; for a revolutionary the people are the source of his strength. A capitalist builds up a fortune in money, whereas a revolutionary changes and transforms the society by drawing on the efforts of his comrades. When young, I had many comrades. Some of them I had become friendly with in my everyday life, and some had come to share the same idea as me in the course of our struggle. Each of them was worth his weight in gold. Kim Hyok, who nowadays is known as a revolutionary poet, was a comrade of mine. He made a lasting impression on me in my youth.



*Photo: Kim Hyok*

It is more than half a century since his death, but I still remember him. I first met him in the summer of 1927. As I was talking with my teacher Shang Yue in the corridor after a Chinese lesson, Kwon Tae Sok hurried up to me and told me that I had a visitor. He said that the stranger was standing with a spectacled man named Cha Gwang Su at the front gate.

I found a young man with a girlish, handsome face, standing, a trunk in his hand, at the gate with Cha Gwang Su, waiting for me. It was the young man, Kim Hyok, whom Cha Gwang Su had been extolling as a talent whenever he had the opportunity. Before Cha Gwang Su had time to introduce him to me, he introduced himself, saying, "I am Kim Hyok," and held out his hand for a handshake. I gripped his hand and introduced myself I felt a special attraction towards Kim Hyok not only because his name was already familiar to me, thanks to Cha Gwang Su's enthusiastic "advertisement," but also because his face resembled that of Kim Won U.

"Will you take Kim Hyok to the hostel and wait for me there for an hour? I could excuse myself from an ordinary lecture, but the next lesson happens to be a literature lesson given by Shang Yue," I said to Cha Gwang Su, after apologizing to Kim Hyok. "Oh! Everyone is fascinated by his literature lessons. You are set on becoming a man of literature like Kim Hyok, aren't you?" Cha Gwang Su said, jokingly, pushing back his spectacles. "There's no reason why I shouldn't. The revolution seems to require a knowledge of literature, doesn't it, Kim Hyok?"

"It is only now and here in Jirin that I hear what sounds sweet to my ear!" Kim Hyok exclaimed. "It is impossible to talk about a revolution apart from literature. The revolution is the object and source of literature. If the literature teacher is so popular I, too, want to see him".

"I will introduce you to him later." With this promise, I went to my class. When I went out to the gate after the lesson, the two were still there waiting for me, talking about something like variable and

invariable capital. I was caught up in the enthusiasm emanating from their voices. Remembering that Cha Gwang Su had told me that Kim Hyok was a born enthusiast, I was secretly glad to have gained a fine comrade. "I told you to wait at the hostel, so why are you still standing here?"

"Why should we crawl about in a room like cockroaches on this fine day?" Kim Hyok remarked, looking up at the glorious sky, with one eye half-closed. "I would rather walk from here through the streets of Jirin all day, talking."

"There is a saying that it takes a full stomach to appreciate even the best of scenery. So let's have lunch and then go wherever you like, to Beishan or Jiangnan Park. It would be very impolite not to buy a lunch for a man who has come all the way from Shanghai to see us, wouldn't it?" "Seeing you, Comrade Sung Ju, in Jirin, I think I wouldn't feel hungry even if I missed several meals."

Kim Hyok was a man of passion, a liberal in action and words. As luck would have it, I had no money in my pocket at the time. So I took them to the Sanfeng Hotel where I would be welcomed free of charge. The people there were not only kind-hearted, but also good at cooking noodles. I explained to the hostess that I was in financial difficulties, and she served us six bowls of noodles, two for each of us. Kim Hyok stayed with me in my room for three days, and we talked every night. On the fourth day he left for Xinantun, where Cha Gwang Su was working, in order to acquaint himself with the situation in the rest of Jirin.

At my first meeting with him I realized that he was a man of great passion. While Cha Gwang Su was boisterous, Kim Hyok was fiery. Usually he was calm and quiet but, once excited, he boiled like a blast furnace, and was extremely vehement. He had traveled the three Far Eastern countries living through weal and woe just as Cha Gwang Su had done. Though an adventurer, he was upright. Through the conversations we had I found him to be widely informed and a great theoretician. In particular, he had a profound knowledge of literature and the arts.

We talked a great deal about the mission of literature and the arts. He emphasized that literature and the arts must deal with man. After a period gaining experience of affairs in Jirin, his views developed; he said that literature and the arts must sing the praises of the revolution. His outlook on literature was revolutionary. In consideration of his abilities, we gave him the assignment of dealing with mass cultural enlightenment for a while. Thus he gave frequent guidance to the activities of the art propaganda squad. Because he was good at poetry, we nicknamed him Eugene Pottier<sup>9</sup>. Some of us called him Heine. He himself spoke more highly of Heine and Eugene Pottier than any other poets. He liked Li Sang Hwaio best of all the Korean poets.

On the whole he liked impassioned revolutionary poems. Strangely enough, however, he liked the lyrically descriptive novels of Ra Do Hyang' better than the strongly assertive works of Choe So Hae. His conflicting literary tastes led us to reflect on how strange the laws of nature were. Around us there were many instances of the harmonious combination of contrasting things. Cha Gwang Su likened them to the "harmony of positive and negative." He said that Kim Hyok was a literary individual produced from such

a harmony.

In spite of the pressure of the difficult and complex work for the revolution, Kim Hyok found time to write excellent poems. The girl students who belonged to our revolutionary organization used to jot down his poems in their pocketbooks and recite them fondly. Kim Hyok did not struggle with his poetic expression on paper, writing and re-writing them, but polished them from the first line to the last in his head until he decided that they were perfect. Then he would bang on the desk with his fist and write the poem down on paper. Our comrades, who knew that when he banged his fist on the desk he would produce a poem, were delighted at this, exclaiming that he had laid another "egg" We all rejoiced over each of his new poems.

Kim Hyok had a beautiful girl friend named Sung So Ok, who belonged to the Young Communist League. She was of slender build, but daring and ready to stand on the gallows if it was in the cause of justice. She was faithful to the Young Communist League. During the mass struggle in autumn that year against the construction of the Jirin-Hoeryong railway, I heard a speech she made in the street and found her to be extremely articulate. She loved to chant Kim Hyok's poems, carrying them in her pocketbook. She was good at chanting poems, singing and making speeches, and she always went about in a white jacket and dark skirt, whatever the season, so almost every young man in the town of Jirin knew of her.

Kim Hyok, who always approached life with warm feelings and fused it into his poetry, was also ardent in his love for his girl friend. Young communists loved the other sex while they worked for the revolution. Some people say that communists are devoid of human feelings and know neither life nor love that is worthy of human beings. But such people are totally ignorant of what communists are like. Many of us loved while fighting for the revolution and made our homes in the rain of fire. In holiday seasons we used to send Kim Hyok and Sung So Ok together to Guyushu, giving them a few assignments to work among the masses. Guyushu was the girl's home town.

In their leisure hours after working among the masses, they would go for walks in the thick willow woods on the River Yitonghe, or they would go fishing. When Kim Hyok went fishing, his girl friend would bait his hook or pick the fish off the hook. In Beishan Park and on the River Songhuajiang where the scenery was beautiful and on the River Yitonghe, their love deepened as the revolution advanced.

For some unknown reason, however, the girl's father Sung Chun Hak did not seem to be pleased with the affair. He was the founder and headmaster of Changsin School, the predecessor of Samgwang School. Having traveled and studied in the Maritime Province of Siberia, he had had some taste of modern civilization, and as such he was a particularly enlightened man. He had been the first to express his understanding of and active support for our work when, in Guyushu, we were reforming Changsin School into Samgwang School and the nationalist mass organizations into communist, revolutionary organizations. Because such a man was against their love, Kim Hyok, though normally bold, could not help feeling embarrassed.

The girl's mother, who regarded Kim Hyok as an ideal match for her daughter, connived at their

association and often spoke to her husband in favor of their love. After a long period of close observation of the personality of Kim Hyok, the girl's father, too, recognized him as a stalwart revolutionary and approved their engagement. On the day of their engagement, Kim Hyok and Sung So Ok had a photograph taken together; the girl's family had a camera.

At the news of Kim Hyok's death, the desperate girl tried to drown herself in the River Yitonghe. Some of our comrades dragged her out of the river and managed to calm her. Later the girl continued to work faithfully for the revolution. She married Choe Il Chon, the author of *A Short History of the Korean Revolutionary Movement Overseas*, after the death of his wife. She considered it ideal to be the life companion of a man who was as revolutionary as Kim Hyok, even though it meant raising stepchildren.

Kim Hyok's fiery character was expressed in practice in his loyalty to the revolution. As a revolutionary, he had a high sense of responsibility and loyalty. He was older than me by five years and had studied in Japan, but he never revealed any sign of such things. He always accepted sincerely the assignments we gave him. That was why I treasured him and loved him particularly.

From the summer of 1928 Kim Hyok, together with Cha Gwang Su, worked in Liuhe County. Around this time, under their guidance the social science institute (special class) was set up at Tongsong School in Gaoshanzi and a branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League was formed. Kim Hyok taught the history of human evolution, the political geography of the world, literature and music. He was very popular among the students and young people of Gaoshanzi.

Around the time when I was in east Manchuria after my release, Kim Hyok was traveling between Guyushu and Jirin to carry out the assignments given him by the organization. When I went to Dunhua, I gave him the written assignment of preparing to issue a new publication, while guiding the revolutionary organizations in Jiangdong, Jirin and Xinantun. A while later, on my way to Kalun from Dunhua where I had been working, I dropped in on Kim Hyok and found that he was carrying out the assignment well. When I told him about the plan I had conceived while in prison and about the work that should be done at Kalun, he became excited and said that he would go at once with me to Kalun. I told him to follow me later after carrying out his assignment. He was very sorry to hear that, but he remained in Xinantun and accelerated the preparation of a new publication; then he came to Kalun.

After the meeting at Kalun we stepped up the preparation of a new publication in real earnest. Now that establishing a new revolutionary line had become the order of the day, and now that the first Party organization with a mission to mobilize the masses for its implementation had been formed, the issuing of a publication to play the role of the Party organization's ideological mouthpiece had become a most pressing task.

With a clear understanding of this need, Kim Hyok, even after his arrival in Kalun, worked day and night preparing the manuscripts for the publication. The publication was called Bolshevik at his suggestion. We planned to publish Bolshevik in bulletin form for the purpose of equipping the masses with the revolutionary idea and then, after making full material preparations, to enlarge it into a newspaper and

increase its circulation. On July 10, 1930 the inaugural issue of Bolshevik was finally published.

It was circulated to the branch organizations of the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League, many other anti-Japanese revolutionary organizations and to groups of the Korean Revolutionary Army, as well as to schools under our control to be used as teaching material. An explanation of my report at Kalun was also carried in the bulletin. Bolshevik played an extremely important role in giving publicity to the policy adopted at the Kalun Meeting. After a while the monthly bulletin became a weekly newspaper to meet the requirements of the readers and the developing revolutionary situation.

As the first editor of Bolshevik, Kim Hyok, before he left Kalun, stayed up almost every night, writing articles for publication. He was fired with enthusiasm and had hardly any rest. He went to Harbin at the head of a group of the Korean Revolutionary Army early in August 1930. Having worked mainly in Jirin, Changchun, Liuhe, Xingjing, Huaide and Yitong, he was nearly a stranger to Harbin. I myself hardly knew about the situation in this city, either.

While we were in Jirin, we realized the importance of Harbin. The city had a large industrial population. In order to go among the working class, it was necessary to venture into large cities like Changchun and Harbin and develop our strength there. As was demonstrated by the struggle against the construction of the JilinHoeryong railway and the struggle against the treacherous anti-Soviet acts of the warlords in attacking the Zhongdong railway, the workers, students and other young people of that city had a strong revolutionary spirit. If proper organizational lines were laid in such a city, many people could be organized.

We considered Harbin important also because the liaison office of the Communist International was in the city. The Young Communist League organization under the Communist International was also in that city, and it maintained relations with the Young Communist League which I had formed at Yuwen Middle School in Jirin. In order to contact the Communist International, it was imperative to establish a channel in this city for free access to it.

The main purpose of sending Kim Hyok to Harbin was to enlarge our revolutionary organization in that city and establish a liaison with the Communist International. I still remember Kim Hyok who, unable to hide his excitement, cheerfully accepted the task we gave him. It was Kim Gwang Ryol (Kim Ryol) who wrote a letter of introduction for him to the Communist International.

When bidding me farewell, Kim Hyok held my hand in his for a long time. Though he used to accept and carry out instantly any task we gave him, regardless of its importance, he was always reluctant to part with us when going on a mission on his own. He liked to work with many comrades. He hated loneliness more than anything else.

Once I said to him that it was a good idea for a poet to experience solitude frequently as a part of his literary endeavors, and asked him why he was afraid of being alone. He answered frankly that, when he

had wandered in indignation, solitude had been a good companion, but now that he no longer did so, he did not like it. He said that after a few months of solitude in Jiangdong he found it interesting to work among his friends in Kalun, sitting up all night, and he was sorry to be parting from us.

I gripped his hand and said, as if coaxing a child, "Kim Hyok, we have to part with each other because we are working for the revolution. When you are back from Harbin, let us go to east Manchuria and work there together." Kim Hyok smiled a lonely smile. "Sung Ju, don't worry about matters in Harbin. I will carry out the task given me by the organization at all costs and come back to you comrades. When you go to east Manchuria, please make sure that I am the first you call."

That was the last time I bid him farewell. After parting with him, I myself felt lonely. It was towards the end of 1927 that our line began to stretch into Harbin. At that time several students who had been working their way through Jirin Middle School No. 1 had a battle with the teacher of history, a reactionary, who had insulted the Korean nation. They left the school and ran away to Harbin. Among them were some members of the Ryugil Association of Korean Students which was under our guidance.

We gave them the assignment of forming an organization in Harbin. They organized the Korean Students Friendship Society and a reading circle, centered on the Korean students at the Harbin Academy, Harbin Higher Technical School and Harbin Medical College. With the hardcore elements of these organizations the Harbin branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League was formed in the autumn of 1928, and then the Harbin branch of the Young Communist League of Korea early in 1930. In every holiday season we sent Han Yong Ae on a mission to guide the organizations in Harbin. It was thanks to these organizations that the students and young people of Harbin waged a massive struggle in response to the campaign against the construction of the Jirin-Hoeryong railway.

There were many stalwart young people in the revolutionary organizations in Harbin. Comrade So Chol, now a member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, was working in the Harbin branch of the Young Communist League at the time.

When the group of the Korean Revolutionary Army under the command of Kim Hyok arrived in Harbin, the atmosphere in the city was dreadful. Even such legitimate organizations as the students friendship society and the reading circle had been forced underground. The Young Communist League and other underground organizations had to remain very secretive. Kim Hyok discussed with the comrades in the city how to protect the organizations and their members. At his suggestion all the revolutionary organizations in the city were divided into small groups and sent deep underground.

Together with the members of the armed group, Kim Hyok went deep among the dock workers, students and other people of different strata and worked hard to explain to them the policy that had been adopted at the Kalun Meeting. On the strength of his organizational skill and audacity, he educated the young people, enlarged the organizations, made preparations for the formation at grassroots level of party organizations and pressed on with the procurement of weapons. He also established contact with the liaison office of the Communist International, despite the enemy's strict surveillance.

Kim Hyok rendered distinguished service in improving work in Harbin. In charge of one district, he worked hard, moving in all directions. But at a secret rendezvous in Daoli in the city he encountered the enemy who surprised him and fell upon him. Having exchanged fire with the enemy, he jumped from the third floor of the building he was in, resolved to die. But his iron-like physique betrayed his resolve. Having failed in his suicide attempt, he was captured by the enemy and taken to Lushun prison. After suffering cruel torture and persecution he died in prison.

Kim Hyok, along with Paek Sin Han, was a prominent young man from the first revolutionary generation who gave his life and youth for the sake of the country and nation. The death of the talented Kim Hyok at a time when a comrade in the revolution was worth his weight in gold was a heart-rending loss to our revolution. At the news of his capture I spent many sleepless nights. Later, when I went to Harbin, grief-stricken, I walked the streets and the dock where Kim Hyok had trodden, and quietly I sang a song he had composed.

Kim Hyok, like Cha Gwang Su and Park Hun, had joined hands with us after wandering foreign lands far away from his homeland in pursuit of the path Korea should follow. Cha Gwang Su had written to him about us when he was wasting his life sighing, eating another's salt at a lodging house in the French concession in Shanghai. "Don't waste your valuable life in Shanghai. Come to Jirin and here you will find the leader, the theory and the movement you are seeking. Jirin is an ideal place for you!..." Cha Gwang Su had written to him not once, but three or four times. That was how he had come to us.

Having inspected the city of Jirin over several days after making our acquaintance, Kim Hyok had said, as he gripped my hand, "Sung Ju, I will drop my anchor here. My life starts from now." It was when they were studying in Tokyo, Japan, that Cha Gwang Su and Kim Hyok had become bosom friends. I still remember Kim Hyok leading the song International and shedding tears when we were forming the Young Communist League".

That day Kim Hyok took me by the hand and said in the following vein: Once I took part in a demonstration with some Chinese students in Shanghai. When I saw them marching the streets, shouting anti-Japanese slogans, I became excited and jumped into the ranks of the demonstrators. When the demonstration was frustrated, I returned to my lodging, wondering what was to be done next, what was to be done the following day.

As I belonged to no political party or organization, there was nobody to tell me where to gather or what to do the next day, or to tell me how to fight. While demonstrating I thought how good it would be if there was somebody who would shout "Forward!" to me when I was discouraged during the demonstration, how encouraging it would be if I had an organization and a leader to tell me what I should do the following day as I was going home after the demonstration, how happy I would be if I had comrades who, if I was shot and fell, would call "Kim Hyok!" "Kim Hyok!" as they wept over me, and how good it would be if they were Koreans in a Korean organization.

I was haunted by these thoughts even when I was marching towards the enemy's guns, but here in Jirin,

how fortunate I am to meet such fine comrades! I can hardly express my feeling of pride now that I have become a member of the Young Communist League!

He spoke his mind without affectation. He always said that it was the greatest happiness in his life that he had found good comrades. Because of the life he had led, he composed the *Star of Korea* and disseminated it among the revolutionary organizations. At first I knew nothing about it. On my visit to Xinantun I found some young people there singing the song.

Kim Hyok had discussed the matter with Cha Gwang Su and Choe Chang Gol without my knowledge and spread the song in Jirin and in the surrounding area. At first I rebuked them severely for singing a song which compared me to a star.

Around the time the song *Star of Korea* was being spread, my comrades changed my name and began to call me Han Byol. They changed my name despite my protests and called me Han Byol, meaning "One Star." It was Pyon Dae U and other public-minded people in Wujiazi and such young communists as Choe Il Chon who proposed to change my name into Kim Il Sung. Thus I was called by three names, Sung Ju, Han Byol and Il Sung. Kim Sung Ju is the name my father gave me. When I was a child I was called Jung Son. My great-grandmother called me Jung Son, and the rest of my family followed suit.

As I was very fond of the name my father gave me, I did not like to be called by another name. Still less did I tolerate the people extolling me by comparing me to a star or the sun; it did not befit me, young man. But my comrades would not listen to me, no matter how sternly I rebuked them for it or argued against it. They were fond of calling me Kim Il Sung, although they knew that I did not like it.

It was in the spring of 1931 when I spent some three weeks in prison, having been arrested by the warlords in Guyushu, that the name Kim Il Sung appeared in the press for the first time. Until that time most of my acquaintances had called me by my real name, Sung Ju. It was in later years when I started the armed struggle in east Manchuria that I was called by one name, Kim Il Sung, by my comrades. These comrades upheld me as their leader, even giving me a new name and singing a song about me. Thus they expressed their innermost feelings.

They upheld me with such enthusiasm in spite of the fact that I was much younger than they were and my record of struggle was short, because they had learned a serious lesson from the movement of the previous generation in which various parties and factions, behaving as if they alone were heroes, and without a center of unity and solidarity, ruined the revolutionary movement through factional strife, and because they had felt to the marrow of their bones that in order to win back the country the twenty million Korean people must unite, and that in order to unite in mind and purpose they must have a center of leadership, a center of unity.

So it is with a strong feeling of affection that I remember Kim Hyok, Cha Gwang Su and Choe Chang Gol, not because they composed a song about me and upheld me as their leader, but because they were forerunners who ushered in an era of true unity, the pride and glory of our people and the genuine source



of their unfathomable strength, the unity which our nation had been unable to achieve in spite of their burning desire for it, and also because these forerunners, at the cost of their blood, created a new history of unity and cohesion in which the leader and the masses were fused into a harmonious whole in the communist movement of our country.

The communists of the new generation, my comrades in the revolution, had never feuded because they knew no lust for position, and they never broke our unity, our lifeblood, on account of any difference in opinion. In our ranks unity and cohesion were the touchstone by which we judged genuine revolutionaries. Therefore, they safeguarded unity even when they were in prison or on the gallows. They handed it down as a treasure to the communists of the next generation. That was their first historic achievement. The noble and beautiful spirit of the communists of that generation who upheld their leader and united behind him has become a great tradition of unity which is now called single-hearted unity by our Party.

From the days when the young communists, upholding their leader and united behind him in mind and purpose, developed the revolutionary struggle, the national liberation struggle in Korea put an end to factional strife and confusion, and began a new chapter. More than half a century has passed since Kim Hyok left us. But the image of Kim Hyok who worked through many a night and made his way through the biting wind in Manchuria, enduring hunger and frostbite, is still vivid in my memory.

If he were alive by our side, he could do a lot of work. Whenever I find myself facing a trial or a crisis on the path of our revolution, I think of Kim Hyok, our close comrade who made his youth glorious through his struggle, fired with love for the country, and I grieve over him, who left us so early.

We have set up a statue of Kim Hyok in the front row of the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on Mt. Taesong in order to convey his image to posterity for ever. Because he left no photograph and because all his contemporaries passed away, no one knew what he looked like. The sculptors had difficulty in making a bust of him, so I described him to them so that they could complete the bust.

## 4.7. The Summer of 1930

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Before and after August 1, 1930, international peace day, the factionalists of the M-L group again caused a reckless revolt in the areas along the Jirin-Dunhua railway, having failed to learn a lesson from the failure of the May 30 Uprising.

The revolt placed a serious difficulty in the path of our revolution. A few organizations which had gone deep underground after the May 30 Uprising were exposed to the enemy. The organizations which we had gone to such pains to restore by touring different places after our release from prison were again dealt a blow and destroyed. Fine leading-core elements in different parts of Manchuria were arrested en masse and executed. The enemy also got another good excuse for slandering communism and suppressing the communist movement. No particular explanation is necessary as to what a great help the revolt was to the racial alienation policy of the Japanese imperialists. Because of the two revolts the Koreans completely lost credit with the Chinese people. It was only later, through the guerrilla war, that we were able to restore our credit.

The Koreans in east Manchuria gradually began to be awakened to the danger of Left adventurism through the August 1 Uprising and to look on the factionalists and flunkies who had driven the masses into such a reckless uprising with disfavor and alarm. We immediately dispatched political workers to the areas swept by the revolt in order to prevent the revolutionary masses from again being duped by the factionalists' propaganda. I decided to go to Dunhua via Jirin and spend a short time restoring the organizations there.

In Jirin I found the atmosphere to be as terrible as it had been immediately after the May 30 Uprising. Several times a day I went in disguise to visit those who had been involved in the organization. Jirin station, the city gates and the crossroads were all enemy checkpoints. The secret agents of the Japanese consulate wandered the streets searching for Korean revolutionaries. Because the nationalist movement was on a decline the enemy placed cordons in various places to arrest the young people engaged in the communist movement rather than chasing the heads of the Independence Army as they had done at the time of the Ahn Chang Ho incident.

I was angry at the thought that it was difficult to see familiar faces in the streets of Jirin which had previously been astir with the struggle against the Jirin-Hoeryong railway projects.

When parting from me, my comrades had advised me not to stay for long in Jirin and to hurry to Hailong, Qingyuan or somewhere else. Nevertheless, it was not easy for me to leave Jirin. When I thought that I had worked hard day and night to clear a new way for the revolution there for three years, it was not easy for me to turn towards another place. If I had not taken such pains to make the revolution, even being imprisoned, I might not have felt so much affection for the city. A man naturally likes a place where he has worked heart and soul.

Fortunately I met a comrade who had been engaged in the work of the Young Communist League and he told me the whereabouts of several organization members. I gathered them together and told them not to expose any more organization members and, for the time being, bring underground such legitimate organizations as the Association of Korean Children in Jirin and the Ryugil Association of Korean Students in Jirin.

I discussed with them measures for implementing the line of the Kalun Meeting. I gave the most reliable comrades the assignment of restoring the revolutionary organizations, and I sent them to the areas assigned to them.

I decided to leave Jirin. I had too much work to do. While I was handling affairs in Jirin, I ardently desired to go to east Manchuria and restore the wrecked organizations there. I decided to go to Qingyuan or Hailong and take refuge at the houses of some Chinese comrades for the time being and then eliminate the aftereffects of the revolt by touring the areas that had been seriously ravaged by the enemy. If I were to go to Hailong and Qingyuan I would be able to establish contact with Choe Chang Gol whom I had not met since the Kalun Meeting and, together with him, explore the route to south Manchuria. The area around Liuhe was where Choe Chang Gol was conducting his activities.

Choe Chang Gol had formed some basic party organizations and was extending the YCLK, AIYL and other mass organizations, touring the Liuhe, Hailong and Qingyuan areas. The revolutionary movement in these areas was suffering greatly from the antagonism between the pro-Kukmin-bu group and the anti-Kukmin-bu group. With the influence of the August 1 Uprising reaching these areas at this time, revolutionary organizations were being destroyed en masse.

Between Hailong and Qingyuan lived a schoolmate of mine from my Jirin days. He was a Chinese comrade who served in our unit in the early years of the guerrilla war and returned home after the expedition to south Manchuria. I thought that if I stayed at his house for a while the white terrorist outrages would lessen and I would survive the most dangerous period.

The day I left Jirin, several female comrades saw me off at the station. They were finely dressed, like the daughters of a rich family, so I boarded the train without causing suspicion. The warlords did not think that gentlemen could possibly be involved in the communist movement.

I caught my train at a station in the suburbs which was loosely guarded by the enemy instead of at Jirin station. On the train I unexpectedly met Zhang Wei-hua. He said, "I am going to Shenyang to study. I went to Jirin to see you and talk with you about a path for the revolution, but the city was empty. My Korean friends had all hidden themselves and only soldiers, police and cat's paws of the Japanese could be seen. I went there to see you but I could not. Having no friends, I am going to Shenyang." In spite of my protests, he took me to a first-class carriage. He seemed to have guessed that I was concealing my identity to avoid the terrorist outrages.

That day the police examined the passengers particularly closely. Shutting all the carriage doors, they

checked the identity of each passenger as he boarded the train and even examined the belongings of some passengers. The ticket inspectors, too, were unusually careful in checking the tickets of the passengers. The aftermath of the August 1 Uprising had reached not only the cities and rural communities but also the trains. The police rudely examined the passengers but did not dare to approach Zhang Wei-hua who was wearing a good-quality Chinese robe. Because I was sitting beside him, I was not examined by the police either. The ticket inspector passed us by, without asking us to show our tickets. It was because of Zhang Wei-hua, and thanks to him I arrived safely at Hailong station. I had papers and secret documents about me. If the police had searched me, I would have been in danger.

When I arrived at Hailong station, I saw an imposing array of policemen from the Japanese consulate standing on the platform and by the ticket gate. I sensed danger. I became nervous when I saw that the police at the station were Japanese. Chinese police and Japanese police were all alike, but if one was caught by the Japanese police, one could expect no mercy. When they arrested Korean revolutionaries in Manchuria, they escorted them to Korea or tried them at the court of the Guandong government-general and sent them to prison in Lushun, Dalian or Jirin.

As I gazed steadily out of the window, at a loss what to do, Zhang Wei-hua invited me to go with him if I had no particularly urgent matter to attend to. He suggested that I meet his father and talk with him about his future.

According to my initial plan I was to leave the train at Caoshi station and continue to my destination. I should have gone through five or six stations more to reach Caoshi station. If Zhang Wei-hua alighted from the train at Hailong station, there would be no one to protect me and I might be in danger.

So I decided to accept his invitation. Zhang Wei-hua's father was waiting for him at the station. On hearing that his son was coming to Hailong, he had come to meet him on his way back from Yingkou where he had been selling ginseng, he said. A group of privately employed soldiers with Mausers in wooden cases stuck through their belts brought a luxury carriage for us to ride in. Their appearance was imposing. Awe-struck, the police from the consulate did not dare to approach us. We rode proudly in the luxury carriage along the street in front of the station, escorted by the personal bodyguard. That day Zhang Weihua and I stayed at a luxury hotel where we rested well. They threw a two and three-deep cordon around the hotel.

His father said that he was glad to meet me again after such a long interval. He conducted me to a luxury room and treated me to a good meal. Whenever he had met me since the Fusong days he had treated me kindly. When his guests asked who I was he, by way of a joke, introduced me as his adopted son.

At first he called me his adopted son as a joke, but later came to call me so in earnest. I had been on good terms with Zhang Wei-hua since we lived in Fusong, in the full knowledge that he was a rich man's son. As a child I had the conception that landlords were exploiters, but this was no hindrance to my relations with Zhang Wei-hua. I was on close terms with him, since he was honest, conscientious and had a strong anti-Japanese feeling. He had helped me at a critical moment, at which I was greatly moved. If, as I

would normally have done, I had given him a wide berth on the plea that he was a landlord's son, he would not have protected me in the critical situation. Zhang Wei-hua, who could have lived in luxury all his life without taking part in the revolution or supporting it, helped me out of danger together with his father. He did so because he valued our friendship.

Ever since I attended primary school in Fusong, Zhang Wei-hua had been on close terms with me, ignoring the fact that he was rich and I poor and that he was Chinese and I Korean. He showed a deep understanding for the sorrow of our people who were deprived of their country, sympathized with us and wholeheartedly supported our determination to liberate our country. He did so because he was a patriot who ardently loved his country and his nation. He saw the misfortune of the Chinese people in the misfortune of the Korean people.

Though he was a rich man, Zhang Wei-hua's father was a firm patriot who advocated national sovereignty and driving out the foreign forces. His patriotic spirit is reflected in the names of his sons. When his eldest son was born, he named him Wei-zhong. The second character of his name was derived from the first character of "Zhong Hua Min Guo" (Republic of China). He named his second son Weihua, his third son Wei-min and would have named a fourth son Weiguo, if one had been born. If these characters were added together, they made up the name of the Republic of China.

Then Zhang Wei-hua asked, "In spring or autumn next year the Japanese are likely to invade. What are you going to do then?" "If the Japanese invade, I am going to fight to repulse them. My idea is to wage an armed struggle," I said. Zhang Wei-hua said that he, too, would fight, and wondered whether his parents would allow him to do so.

So I said, "What is a home without a country? If you want to fight against the old society, you should make a revolution. There is no other way. Otherwise, what is there to do except merely talk about communism as a public-spirited man and read books? There are the only two ways. So, you should carry out the revolution without asking your parents. This is the way to serve China and save the Chinese people. There is no other way for you. You should make the revolution with the Chinese people. If the Japanese invade, both the Chinese and the Korean people will rise in the struggle."

Thus I implanted the anti-Japanese idea in his mind while I stayed at the hotel for two or three days. Having heard my advice he said that he, too, would make the revolution after leaving school.

I said to him, "When I am in trouble, I might need your help again. Please give me your address in Shenyang." After he had given me his address I asked him whether he could help me to reach my destination safely.

He said he would do anything to help and protect me. With this he took me in his carriage to the house of a Chinese comrade on the border between Hailong County and Qingyuan County. The family of the man I called on was rich like Zhang Wei-hua's. Among the pioneers of the Chinese revolution there were many such people. That is why I always consider the Chinese revolution to be a special one.

Many intellectuals and rich people, together with the workers and peasants, took part in the revolutionary movement, the communist movement. When people from rich families discover contradictions that suppress a man's independence and check social development, they may be ready to take part in the revolutionary movement to do away with those contradictions. That is why fighters and pioneers defending the interests of the working people are also produced from the propertied classes, I think. What is important is not one's class origin but one's world outlook.

If a man regards life as enjoyment he cannot make the revolution and merely tries to live in clover. If a man prefers a life worthy of a man, he, even if he is rich, takes part in the revolution. If such far-sighted people are given a wide berth in the class revolution, the revolution suffers a great loss.

I stayed at the house of the Chinese comrade for several days. He treated me well as Zhang Wei-hua had done. I am not sure now whether his surname was Wang or Wei. I had him search for Choe Chang Gol for a few days, but of no avail. Choe Chang Gol was said to have gone deep underground after the August 1 Uprising.

I met a member of the Young Communist League in the neighborhood of Caoshi and requested him to convey to Choe Chang Gol a letter asking him to restore the ruined organizations in the Hailong and Qingyuan areas as soon as possible and to push ahead with the preparations for an armed struggle.

The few days I stayed at the house of the Chinese comrade, though I was treated as guest, were boring and painful for me. I was eager to throw myself into free and brisk activities, treading the earth as I liked even if my life was endangered. I had to disguise myself and start my political activities, but rash action was likely to bring trouble. It was difficult for me to return to Jirin again and it was not easy to take a train because the south Manchurian railways were managed by the Japanese. I wanted to go to Jiandao but I did not think that I would survive the wave of arrests of communists there. Nevertheless I thought I should go. I decided to go to east Manchuria by all means and there to prepare for the armed struggle.

At Hailong I, together with a Chinese comrade, boarded a train bound for Jirin where I changed trains and headed for Jiaohe. In Jiaohe there were many organizations under our influence. Han Yong Ae, who had been on close terms with me since our Jirin days, and her uncle Han Gwang lived there.

I intended to prepare a hiding place with their help to avoid the pursuit of the warlords and restore the organizations. I had decided to establish contact with Harbin's upper organizations under the International Young Communist League, if I meet Han Yong Ae. Han Yong Ae had returned to Jiaohe after leaving school in Jirin early owing to the family's circumstances towards the beginning of 1929, but continued to maintain contact with us. After thinking over whom I should visit, I called first on Chang Chol Ho who had been a company commander in the Independence Army.

Having broken a way from the upper echelons of the Independence Army after the formation of Kukmin-bu and left the service, he came to Jiaohe and became engrossed in running a rice mill. I called on him because he loved me dearly as my father's friend and was a reliable patriot. I needed a temporary hiding

place until I could meet the organization members. He was delighted to see me but did not invite me to hide at his home. As he seemed to be overcome with fear, I did not tell him why I had called on him. I headed towards the house of Li Jae Sun. When my father was alive, he had aided the independence champions well, while running an inn. He, too, welcomed me, but suggested that we part after treating me to a Chinese meal at a Chinese restaurant.

I needed a hiding place more than a meal or two. He must have known why I had visited him but simply bade me goodbye without even inviting me to stay overnight at his home. He seemed to have considered the trouble that might befall him and abandoned his sense of duty and friendship as an old acquaintance.

From this I learned a serious lesson. Father's friends, too, counted for nothing without ideological cohesion. I drew the bitter lesson that the revolutionary struggle cannot be shared only by relying on friendship or sympathy.

If an ideological mood and faith change, the sense of friendship and of humanity changes. If one of two people who had been on intimate terms with each other in the past, sharing joy and hardship, changes his mind, their friendship is impaired and they part. Friendship which was supposed to be invariable and eternal is impaired if one side degenerates ideologically. Later in the course of the protracted revolutionary struggle I learned the lesson that without holding fast to an idea it is impossible to maintain a sense of duty as a friend and friendly relations.

After parting from Li Jae Sun, I headed for Han Gwang's house. I thought that Han Gwang might have hidden himself somewhere but that Han Yong Ae might be at home, being a woman, and I entertained the hope that if she understood my situation she would help me, even at the risk of her life.

But neither Han Gwang nor Han Yong Ae was at home. When I asked their next-door neighbor where they were, she told me that she did not know. As all the young Koreans who were supposed to be engaged in the movement had hidden, I had no one to call on.

In the meantime someone must have informed on me to the police. There were policemen on my heels. I thought I was caught and despaired of my situation, but the woman living next door to Han Gwang saved me from the danger. She said to me, "You seem to be in danger, though I don't know who you are. Be quick and go into the kitchen."

Quickly she put on my back the baby she was carrying on hers. She said, "I will answer the door. Sit quietly and tend the fire." It seemed that I looked old enough to be disguised as the baby's father. With the baby on my back, I tended the kitchen fire with a poker as she had told me to. While engaged in the revolution, I faced critical moments and danger many times, but I had never been in such a situation before.

The police opened the kitchen door and asked her, "A young man just came this way. Where has he gone?"

The woman replied with composure, "What kind of young man? No one has come to my house." Then she said in Chinese in a casual manner, "There is no one inside. Please come in and have a meal if you like." The baby on my back cried incessantly, as it was shy of me. I wanted to soothe the baby but could do nothing, fearing that an awkward act on my part might reveal my identity, so I merely stocked the fire with the poker. The police talked among themselves, wondering where I had gone and whether they had missed me, before heading for another house.

After they had gone the woman said with a smile, "Please act as if you are my husband until the police leave the village. My husband is out in the field. I will call him home. Stay here and don't worry. When he comes back, let's discuss what we should do." After inviting me to a meal, she went to the field and later returned.

After a while the police came back and shouted at me to come out as they wanted to send me on an errand. She said calmly, "How can this sick man run an errand? If you have some urgent errand, I will do it in his place." Then she went on the errand in my place. Thus, with her help I escaped from the critical situation. Though she was a simple country woman, she was possessed of both wit and wisdom. She also had a fairly high degree of revolutionary awareness.

I received an unforgettable impression from this woman whom I did not know. Instead of my father's friends whom I had visited, counting on our friendly relations of the past, it was this strange woman who had helped me at the risk of her life. Out of a pure desire to aid a revolutionary she had helped me out of danger with a self-sacrificing spirit. A person reveals his true worth in adversity.

An unstained and sound sense of duty as a comrade to which revolutionaries could entrust their lives without hesitation was found among the working people. So, I always told my comrades-in-arms to go to the people when difficulties arose while making the revolution. I told them to call on the people when they were hungry or thirsty and when misfortune befell them.

She was a good woman. If she is alive, even now I would like to bow before her. That winter in Wujiazi the commanding officers of the Korean Revolutionary Army and the leaders of underground organizations active in Manchuria held a meeting at which I spoke about the woman.

Having heard my story, the comrades there said, "Comrade Sung Ju, you're lucky. You were born under a lucky star, so heaven helped you."

It was not because I had good luck that the warlords failed to catch me but because the people were good. I think that the people are precisely Heaven and the people's will is Heaven's will, I said. From then on the words "Madam Jiaohe" were used as words symbolizing our resourceful, self-sacrificing people, words symbolizing the women who make it a rule to help revolutionaries out of their difficulties, even at the risk of their lives. Even now when I recall the bloody summer of 1930 under the scorching sun, I think of Jiaohe and picture "Madam Jiaohe." When I recall the woman whose whereabouts I failed to



discover although I inquired after her for decades, I am seized with remorse for having left Jiaohe 60 years ago without asking her name.

If I had learnt her name I could have placed an advertisement in the newspapers. Since liberation many of my benefactors have called on me. Some of them appeared before me as grey-haired men and women half a century after parting from me in a foreign country. Many of my benefactors who helped me in adversity met me and returned to the liberated homeland where they received words of gratitude from me.

But "Madam Jiaohe" did not appear. She might have forgotten the dramatic event in the summer of 1930, regarding it as an ordinary matter. My benefactor of 60 years ago still remains unknown, leaving no news or trace. The better the jade, the deeper it lies underground. Only when her husband returned from the field, did she take her baby from me. What happened that day is like a detective story.

I could not give them my real name, so I gave her a pseudonym. Introducing myself as a revolutionary, I exchanged greetings with the husband. He had been engaged in the revolution but was unsure what to do, having lost contact with the organization, he said. He warned me against the secret agent living in the house opposite his. According to him, Han Gwang had fled to north Manchuria and Han Yong Ae always concealed her identity because of the harsh suppression, and it would be difficult for me to meet her.

When I heard his story, gloomy thoughts came to my mind. With a secret agent living opposite, I could not stay at his house. It would have been better for me to observe the situation, while hiding in his house, and then go to Dunhua again, but Dunhua was searched closely because it served as a base for the Japanese, and the headquarters of the Tuesday group of the communist party was situated there. Most of the Koreans there, except the women, had been arrested immediately after the May 30 Uprising. The question was whether it was possible to gain a foothold in that place.

After it grew dark the husband conducted me to a secluded straw-thatched cottage some six kilometers from Jiaohe. The elderly master and mistress of the house were very kind to me. That night I was once again clearly aware that we revolutionaries always could believe in and depend on the people alone. I lay down but could not sleep; various thoughts came to my mind. I had met none of those I wanted to meet and wasted several days; what a shame! At such a time one should not be on the defensive but brave adversity: If we remain on the defensive, we shall be finished: We must act: It will not do to go about by stealth. I decided that I should escape the critical situation and go to east Manchuria to activate the revolution.

At early dawn Han Yong Ae unexpectedly came to the cottage. On hearing that I was coming to east Manchuria, Han Yong Ae had asked her mother, when she was leaving home to go into hiding, to send word to her if a man with a dimple on his right cheek should come. We were meeting after a year's separation. We were so glad to see each other after all our difficulties that we gazed at each other without a word for a while. Her face had become terribly thin beyond recognition in only a year, and she was not so cheerful; previously once she burst out laughing she split her sides.

According to her, the atmosphere in Jiandao, too, was terrible. I said to her, "It will not do to remain in hiding like this. We should by all means conduct the movement. The Japanese will soon invade. We should not stand by with folded arms but rise and prepare to fight them, shouldn't we? We should restore the organizations as soon as possible and awaken the people ideologically. We should not remain in hiding out of fear, should we?"

She was of the same opinion and, on hearing what I said, was encouraged. I said, "We can do nothing by sitting here where there is no one. Let's go to Harbin. I will contact the organization for you." Han Yong Ae was delighted at this, for she had been unsure what to do, having lost contact with the organization.

I had sent Kim Hyok to Harbin to establish contact with the Comintern, but I decided that I should go there immediately and meet the people from the Comintern before he returned to report to me the results of his work. The utter wreckage of the organizations because of the revolt and the cities and rural communities where there was a terrible atmosphere, as if they were under martial law, made me realize once again the great harm done by the Left adventurers to the revolution. I became clearly aware that, if the aftereffects were not removed, our revolution would inevitably suffer a great loss from the beginning of the 1930s.

A theoretical argument alone could not prevent the factionalists and flunkeys and the Left adventurers from acting rashly. They would not willingly accept our arguments which were reasonable and beneficial to the revolution. They did not want to understand our view. The outbreak of the August 1 Uprising which caused us a great deal of concern in the wake of the May 30 Uprising meant that they entirely ignored the view we offered at the meeting of party organizations in the area east of Jirin.

It was necessary to get help from the Comintern in order to check the Left adventurism which was being committed without restraint in Manchuria. I wanted to learn the Comintern's view on the revolt and confirm whether it had been launched on the orders of the Comintern or whether it was a rash act undertaken by some people arbitrarily. Even if the Comintern had given the orders, I wanted to prevent the spread of adventurism, although it would mean controversy.

We decided to go by train, but disguised as Chinese, for the enemy's control was strict. Han Yong Ae spent the whole day going about the Jiaohe area to get good clothes and shoes for us to wear, as well as our traveling expenses. We also put some cosmetics in the trunk to allay the suspicions of the army and police. With her help I got safely to Harbin. At the liaison office of the Comintern at the approach to Xiangfu Street near Harbin pier, I met a man and introduced Han Yong Ae to him. I informed him of the situation created by the May 30 Uprising and August 1 Uprising in Manchuria and of the Kalun Meeting.

The liaison office of the Comintern, too, called the two revolts adventurous. The man I met in the liaison office told me that in his view the resolutions we had adopted at the Kalun Meeting were appropriate for the situation in Korea and agreed with the principle of the revolution, saying that our creative attitude towards Marxism-Leninism was encouraging.

He went on to say that in putting forward the new policy of founding a party at the Kalun Meeting and forming the Society for Rallying Comrades, the parent body, as the basic party organization we had not been in conflict with the principle of one party in one country. Thus I received the Comintern's unreserved support for the principle of independence and the creative principle which were the lifeblood of our revolution, and for all the lines we had advanced. Then the people from the Comintern asked me whether I would like to study at its communist college in Moscow.

I knew about the college in Moscow and that our young people who aspired after communism studied there on the recommendation of the Communist Party of Korea. Cho Bong Am, Park Hon Yong, Kim Yong Bom and others were attending the college. In those days the young people of Manchuria had so strong a yearning to study in Moscow that they even sang the Song of Study in Moscow. I did not want to be alienated from revolutionary practice, so I replied, "I want to go and study, but at the moment I am in no position to do so." When I met the Rev. Moon Ik Hwan in 1989 and mentioned the story about Harbin, he said that around that time his father had been engaged in sending students selected by the Comintern to the Soviet Union.

The Comintern appointed me to the post of chief secretary of the Young Communist League in the eastern region of Jirin Province. Through the liaison office of the Comintern I learned that Kim Hyok had thrown himself from the third story of a house and had been taken to prison.

Han Yong Ae and I were gloomy during our stay in Harbin because of Kim Hyok's arrest. Pained by the shackling of Kim Hyok we once even went to stand in front of the house in Daoli from which he was said to have thrown himself. There was a lot of tasty food in the shops and restaurants in Daoli, but they were beyond our means.

The Comintern gave us 15 fen a day as expenses, but 15 fen was far from enough for living in Harbin. Revolutionaries could not stay at ordinary hotels because rigid control was enforced over lodgers. All the hotels were frequented by the police and requested identity papers from lodgers, except the hotel run by white Russians. This hotel's charges for board and lodging were very high. It was a luxury hotel which was accessible only to rich men and not to people like us. After careful consideration I decided to stay at the safe luxury hotel even if it meant eating only one meal a day. I persuaded Han Yong Ae to stay at an ordinary hotel where control over female guests was lax. I discovered the interior of the luxury hotel to be splendid. The hotel was furnished with a shop, a dining hall, an amusement hall, a dance hall and a cinema.

While I stayed at the luxury hotel I experienced many difficulties because I had no money. The first day I entered the hotel a Russian female attendant accompanied me to my room and offered to attend to my nails. I said I had already done it, for I had no money to pay her. Another attendant came in after her and asked what I wanted to order for my meal. I was obliged to say that I had already eaten at my friend's house. Although I was harassed every day like this, I only slept at the hotel without taking meals there, having no money. As for my meals, Han Yong Ae and I went out to the street after finishing our day's business and bought a cheap maize pancake or two.

I related this story to Liu Shao-qi when he visited our country. He said, "I, too, was in Harbin that year. Among the party members there was no Chinese, but there were several Korean communists." He asked whether I had contacted the Comintern at that time. In view of the dates, it seems that I went to Harbin and met the people of the Comintern immediately after he had left, having completed his activities there.

I gave Han Yong Ae the assignment of searching for the dispersed organization members. Han Yong Ae established contact with a certain Han who had served in a branch of the Young Communist League in Harbin and with whom she had been in contact since the Jirin days. Through him she discovered the organization members in hiding one by one and explained to them the line of the Kalun Meeting.

I went to the railways and harbor where Kim Hyok had been active and met the workers who were under the influence of the revolutionary organizations. Thus I restored the underground organizations in Harbin and established contact with some comrades before departing alone for Dunhua, leaving Han Yong Ae behind. I was very pressed for time and parted from her without expressing my gratitude properly.

When I left, Han Yong Ae asked me to take her with me. But as the comrades in Harbin had entreated me to leave her there, I could not agree to her request. After going to east Manchuria, the matter always weighed on my mind. Since the rules of underground activity did not allow correspondence we did not hear from each other. A long time later I learned what had happened to Han Yong Ae, from material gathered by people from the Party History Institute.

When I left for Dunhua, I left behind me a letter addressed to the revolutionary organizations in Harbin. Han Yong Ae was arrested by the police in the autumn of 1930, while carrying out the assignments I had given the comrades in Harbin in the letter. An ordinary woman would have returned to Jiaohe, simply because of homesickness, but she remained in Harbin and carried out the assignments I had given her, forgetting even to sleep. Though quiet and gentle, she acted tenaciously and boldly once she was engaged in revolutionary work.

Immediately after her arrest she was sent to Sinuiju prison where she served her term of imprisonment. At the time Li Jong Rak, Park Cha Sok and others involved in the DIU were also thrown into prison. She and Li Jong Rak were in the same prison. When Li Jong Rak met Han Yong Ae, he said to her, "I was on good terms with Kim Sung Ju and you were led by him. Why don't you join me in persuading him to return to an allegiance? If you want, you can join our 'submission work team'."

Han Yong Ae reproached him to his face. She said, "That will not do. How can we commit such a filthy betrayal, even though we cannot help Kim Sung Ju? If I am in no position to make the revolution after my release from prison, I may not take part in it. But I will not betray him." Li Jong Rak admitted this in the winter of 1938 when he appeared at the meeting we held in Nanpaizi, where he tried to persuade me to give my "submission."

That was how I learned about Han Yong Ae, from whom I had not heard, and how she had remained faithful to the revolutionary principle despite being put to harsh torture in prison. On being thrown into

prison Li Jong Rak, Park Cha Sok and other men signed a written declaration of their conversion, but Han Yong Ae, a woman, endured the hardship bravely. After the "Hyesan incident", revolutionaries were arrested en masse everywhere and some of those who had taken the path of struggle became traitors, causing great damage to the revolution. So the news of her greatly moved and encouraged me.



*Photo: Han Yong Ae. Kim Il Sung's close comrade, who survived WWII only to be killed in a US bomb raid in 1951 while waiting to be reunited with Kim Il Sung.*

Han Yong Ae worked as a shoemaker at the rubber factory in Dandong, China. At the factory she disseminated among the Korean workers the revolutionary songs of the Jirin days and put forward different demands in defense of the workers' rights and interests. She worked energetically to rouse them to the struggle to implement them. Later she went to Seoul, where she passed several more years at the house of Mr. Hong Myong Hui's son.

She married belatedly, having tried to go to Manchuria again to seek an organization. She buried herself in her family life, but did not abandon her conscience and the principle she had adhered to in the years when she had worked to make the revolution with us. When we, arms in hand, beat the enemy in the Mt. Paekdu area she, hearing the news in Seoul, prayed inwardly for our victory, calling her comrades of the Jirin days by their name one by one, so I am told.

Her husband was engaged in underground work, being a member of the Workers' Party of South Korea after liberation, and was murdered by the enemy during the retreat in the Korean war. During the war Han Yong Ae was a great help at the front, taking charge of a women's organization in the Seoul area. After her husband's death she came to Pyongyang with her children to see me. But she could not meet me and, on the night of the 14th of August 1951, she and her two children were tragically killed in an enemy bombing raid.

Han Yong Ae led an honorable life to her dying day. She lived her whole life with the spirit of the Jirin days. When singing, she sang the songs of the Jirin days. Revolutionaries, even on a solitary island, should, like Han Yong Ae, not lose faith or abandon their conscience. Han Yong Ae, too, was a benefactor I have never forgotten. She was a kind woman who called on me in adversity and helped me, at great personal risk. I inquired after Han Yong Ae's whereabouts in the homeland after liberation, but she was not in the northern half of the country.

I had not met her again before liberation as I was engaged in the anti-Japanese war. But still vivid in my memory is the way she went about in the sweltering heat to obtain Chinese clothes for my disguise, the way she protected me, deftly overcoming crises when the police examined the passengers on the train, and the way she divided a piece of a pancake into two and quietly placed one half before me. All the services she did me were the result of a pure, unselfish comradeship transcending feelings of love. I deeply regret that she was killed in Pyongyang in the bombing without seeing me.

Fortunately a photograph of her in her younger days which survived miraculously came into my hands. When I think of my late benefactors, I admire her noble spirit which left a deep impression on me in my youth and express my heartfelt gratitude to her, as I gaze at her photograph.

## 4.8. Crossing the River Tuman

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My father said on many occasions that the people of Jiandao had great fighting spirit. Having experienced the May 30 Uprising and then the August 1 Uprising, I realized that the Koreans in Jiandao had an extraordinary revolutionary spirit.

Jiandao and the northernmost areas of Korea had for a long time been the stage of the activities of the volunteers and the soldiers of the Independence Army. Under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, Marxism-Leninism was disseminated in these areas before anywhere else. Although the communist movement in Jiandao was going through many twists and turns owing to the petty-bourgeois impetuosity that appeared among its leaders, the revolutionary advance of the popular masses was continuing. Therefore, as early as the time I was in prison I was resolved to make the northern border area of Korea with Mt. Paekdu as the center and Jiandao, an important strategic position once I started the armed struggle.

The Japanese imperialists had also been viewing this area for a long time. While we intended to make the northern border area of Korea with Mt. Paekdu as the center and Jiandao, an important strong point for the anti-Japanese armed struggle, they wanted to make the area a strategic point for invading Manchuria and Mongolia. It was with the aim of creating an occasion for realizing this ambition that the Japanese imperialists provoked various incidents in east Manchuria from the beginning of the 20th century.

Under the pretext of "protecting the Koreans" the Japanese imperialists sent their troops into Longjing, Yanji County, in August 1907, and there they set up the "police sub-station under the residency-general in Korea." In 1909 they induced the reactionary Chinese government to conclude the Jiandao Treaty and, further, they even obtained the concessions for the Jilinjn-Hoeryong railway project. Afterwards the "police sub-station under the residency-general in Korea" in Longjing was raised to the status of a Japanese consulate general. It was not with the aim of ensuring that the Koreans in Jiandao could live in luxury that the Japanese imperialists set up a consulate general in Longjing and five branch consulates under it.

In addition to these consular machines, they established police stations in various places and set up numerous organizations of their lackeys, such as the Association of Korean Residents and made them watch with sharp eyes every movement of the Koreans living in Jiandao. The branch office of the Oriental Development Company and the financial circles also exerted their influence on the area. East Manchuria was under the complete control of Japanese imperialism both politically and economically. Thus, east Manchuria was turning into a place of acute confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution.

Therefore, I never ceased to think that the thick forest areas of Mt. Paekdu and east Manchuria should be made the base of the armed struggle. After experiencing the August 1 Uprising I felt many omens of the imminent invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese imperialists. So I became more firmly resolved to unite

the people in east Manchuria who had strong revolutionary spirit and launch an armed struggle as soon as possible. So, I went to east Manchuria.

When I told my comrades about my intention to go to east Manchuria they tried to dissuade me from doing so. They said that going to a place where the Japanese imperialists had established a strict repressive apparatus and intelligence network was like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. However, I left for east Manchuria without fear, fully determined to make the revolution among the workers and peasants there.

It can be said that until then I had worked mainly among young people and students in urban communities. If we were to take our struggle onto a new, higher stage to meet the demands of the revolutionary line adopted at the Kalun Meeting, it was essential for us to mix more closely with the masses from all social sections, such as the workers and peasants, and prepare them as soon as possible for the war of resistance against the Japanese imperialists. The Comintern supported my idea of going to east Manchuria.

First I headed for Dunhua. This was because this area had suffered most in the August 1 Uprising. Dunhua was the source of the uprising, and its central stage. Here were stationed the headquarters of a garrison of the Japanese army, a branch consulate under the Jirin consulate general and the headquarters of the 677th regiment of the former Northeast Army. That such a reckless revolt as the August 1 Uprising had broken out there where the enemy's forces of repression were so concentrated had something to do with the fact that many Left adventurers worked there. Along with Panshi, Dunhua was the base of the M-L group and also the center of the movement to rebuild the Korean Communist Party. Such prime movers of the August 1 Uprising as Park Yun Se and Ma Gon were also based there.

In Dunhua there were various revolutionary organizations, such as the party, the YCLK and the AIYL, which we had established, as well as such reliable comrades as Chen Han-zhang, Ko Jae Bong and Ko Il Bong. When I arrived in Dunhua I made my home at Chen Han-zhang's house. Wearing the Chinese clothes of Shandong Province, I worked to remove the evil consequences of the uprising. Chen Han-zhang, who had attended middle school when I was forming groups of the Young Communist League in Jirin, was also conducting organizational activity in Dunhua.

After the occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese imperialists he worked as chief secretary at the general headquarters of the unit under Wu Yi-cheng. In the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China he worked as divisional chief of staff, division commander, commander of a route army, and secretary of the south Manchurian party committee. But at that time he was a simple and quiet YCLK member.

Chen Han-zhang was the son of a rich man, like Zhang Wei-hua. However, he led a perfectly sincere life in the YCLK organization, displaying extraordinary passion for the revolution. Being a very rich farmer, his father had hundreds of horses and many rifles. His house was surrounded by an earthen wall and looked awe-inspiring. He told me jokingly that his family was one which should have been overthrown



and that they did not encroach on other people's land because all the land around his house belonged to them. Although I do not know exactly how much land his family owned, they were very rich.

Chen Han-zhang treated me hospitably, saying that it was I who had taught him communism. Because they were leading a comfortable life, his family did not grudge me taking my meals without paying for them.

I started to search for the dispersed organizations through Chen Han-zhang and Ko Jae Bong. In the daytime I dressed in Chinese clothes and spoke Chinese when calling on my comrades, and at night I restored the organizations clad in Korean dress and speaking Korean. After dealing with the evil consequences of the uprising like this, I formed in Dunhua the YCLK committee of the eastern region of Jirin Province as I had been authorized by the Comintern.

Afterwards Ko Jae Bong and some other YCLK members left for the areas along the River Tuman with the task, entrusted to them by me, of going to the towns and rural communities in the area, making the masses revolutionary and establishing party organizations there. After giving Chen Han-zhang the task of conducting YCLK activities at Dunhua Middle School, I also left Dunhua.

Helong was the first place I visited when I went to east Manchuria. In Helong there was a Chinese man named Gao Ya-fan who had worked in our YCLK organization when he was attending Jirin Normal School. There was also a Korean whose name was Chae Su Hang. I believed that, by relying on them, I would be able to deal with the aftermath of the uprising and also expand the organizations.

I went first to a place called Dalazi where I met Cao Ya-fan. Pointing out that the consequences of the August 1 Uprising were very serious, Cao Ya-fan told me that, after the uprising, Koreans were nowhere to be seen and that there was no knowing where they were hiding. He said that the people in prison were likely to be released soon and asked me to meet them.

Several days later Chae Su Hang came to see me after having been informed of my arrival. Formerly he had attended Tonghung Middle School in Longjing. When I was attending Yuwen Middle School he came to Jirin and enrolled at the normal school. At that time he started to work for the revolution under our influence. Chae Su Hang was a popular football player among the young people and students of Jirin. In those days many young people from Helong were studying in Jirin.

Kim Jun conducted propaganda about us in the areas of Longjing and Onsong, whereas Chae Su Hang gave publicity to our revolutionary idea going around Helong and Chongsong. Afterwards, together with Comrade Kim Il Hwan who, while working as secretary of a county party committee, was later killed on a false charge of being involved in the "Minsaengdan," he formed the Young Communist League and such revolutionary organizations as the Anti-Imperialist Youth League, the Peasants' Association and the Anti-Japanese Women's Association, rallying many people to them. Comrade Park Yong Sun who was famous as a master at making the Yanji bomb, was working as a member of the AIYL in the Badaogou Mine in Yanji County.

However, the organizations which had been built up with such trouble had been scattered in all directions because of the two uprisings. Many hardcore elements had either been arrested or gone into hiding, and the few remaining members of the organizations were at a loss what to do and trembling with apprehension, not being fully seasoned.

This made me think a great deal about the faith of a revolutionary. On my way to Helong via Jirin, Hailong, Qingyuan, Jiaohe, Harbin and Dunhua after leaving Kalun, I saw many people who were wavering either frightened by the counterrevolutionary attack or having lost conviction in the victory of the revolution. A firm belief in the victory of the revolution comes into being when one realizes in theory that one has a correct revolutionary line and strategy and tactics that are capable of winning the sympathy of all the people and rousing them, as well as one's own revolutionary force. This belief becomes firmer through the struggle.

However, those who had instigated the uprising failed to put forward any program or strategy and tactics which could serve as a banner for the masses. The revolutionary line we adopted in Kalun was not being propagated widely among the people. I held a conference with Chae Su Hang and some other cadres of the YCLK and AJYL and gave them a detailed explanation of the revolutionary line adopted at the Kalun Meeting.

Furthermore, I emphasized the need to build up leading hardcore elements with those who had been tested through the struggle and were popular with the masses, restore the destroyed mass organizations as soon as possible and build up their ranks. It was also at that time that I gave the task of forming a district revolutionary organization in each county along the River Tuman.

Although all the organizers of the uprising had fled, leaving the masses to the mercy of the bayonet and afraid of the prisons and gallows, we emphasized the need to contain the consequences of the uprising as soon as possible. Because I was wearing Shandong clothes, my comrades in Helong called me the "Shandong youth."

The second place I visited was Wangqing. I went there in order to meet Oh Jung Hwa. It was Kim Jun and Chae Su Hang who had told me about Oh Jung Hwa. Whenever they met me in those days on a visit to Jirin, they told me about many people. They told me that a certain man was in a certain place, that if I went to a certain place there was a certain man there who was doing a certain job, what a certain man was like and how clever a certain man was. Therefore, even when I was in Jirin I was comparatively well aware of the situation in Jiandao.

I listened to them attentively and bore in mind all those whom they regarded as clever. When he was told about a good man, my father covered any distance, however long, no matter where he might be, joined hands with him at any cost and won him over as a like-minded man. He taught me that talented people decided everything and that the victory of revolutionary work depended on how many genuine comrades were won over.

In those days I did not mind going hungry for three days, or even ten days, if only I could win over a like-minded man. It was with this feeling that I went to Wangqing. Chae Su Hang accompanied me from Helong to Shixian in Wangqing.

In Shixian I met Oh Jung Hwa, Oh Jung Hup and also old man O Tae Hui. Old man O Tae Hui's family was a very large one. The four brothers of the old man had lived in Kojak village, Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province before moving to Wangqing around 1914. They had dozens of children and grandchildren. They were conducting revolutionary work in wide areas of Wangqing and Onsong with the River Tuman separating them.

In those days Oh Jung Hwa was working as the party secretary of the fifth Wangqing district and Oh Jung Hup was doing YCLK work in Wenjiadian in chunhuaxiang, Wangqing County. Oh Jung Song, Oh Jung Hwa's younger brother, had conducted YCLK activities in Shixian, Wangqing County, before moving to Pungri-dong, Onsong County, at the beginning of 1929 and was now conducting revolutionary activities while working as a teacher at Pomun School.

After leaving secondary school Oh Jung Hwa taught at the private Whasung School in Helong. When I met him in Shixian I told Oh Jung Hwa repeatedly that, in order to make the masses revolutionary, he must first become a revolutionary, then make his family revolutionary and then the villagers.

Later Oh Jung Hwa made his family revolutionary. More than ten of his brothers and near relatives were killed while working as faithful revolutionaries. It was not by chance that such fine communists as Oh Jung Hwa, Oh Jung Song and Oh Jung Hup were produced from among them. When I finished my work in Shixian I made up my mind to cross to the Onsong area at once. Having been born in a western province and lived in a foreign land at a young age, I had no good understanding of the six towns<sup>14</sup> south of the River Tuman.

The area covering the six towns was where, during the Li dynasty, noblemen who had been dismissed from their official posts were exiled. In this area there was a shortage of grain and the climate was harsh. Moreover, because of the unbearable maltreatment and cruelty of their leaders, those soldiers who had been mobilized to defend the frontier here used to flee very quickly. Even those who were in government service regarded it as terrible to be appointed as a public official in this area. Even after receiving notice of their appointment, they idled away their time in the streets of Seoul under various pretexts because they were reluctant to go there. It is said that the feudal rulers worried about this for 500 years.

Whenever Kim Jun told me about the six towns I said to him, "Although our ancestors did not take good care of this land, regarding it as barren, let us turn this area into a revolutionary fortress by making strenuous efforts." According to this far-reaching plan I started dispatching people there.

Onsong was a place where such people as Kim Jun, Chae Su Hang and Oh Jung Song began to work on a wide scale under our influence from the end of the 1920s. We had already grasped the importance of the area of Mt. Paekdu and that of the six towns along the River Tuman, including Onsong, in the

development of the Korean revolution and intended to make this area a strategic base for the anti-Japanese revolutionary war. We also planned to open the way for a fresh upsurge in the revolution in the homeland there. In those days some 100 to 150 young people from Onsong were studying in Longjing.

When they came back home during their holidays they exerted the influence coming from Jirin in this area under the guidance of such far-sighted people as Kim Jun and Oh Jung Song who were in close contact with us. Branches of the Young Communist League of Korea and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League were formed in Onsong. It was a promising foothold for us to extend our influence into the homeland. Thanks to this foothold our idea spread to the area of Onsong.

I went to the area of Onsong with the aim of expanding and developing the Korean revolution as a whole by forming a party organization in the homeland and adopting the measures needed for implementing the policy set at the Kalun Meeting.

Oh Jung Hwa's cousin who had accompanied us from Shixian, crossed first to Pungri-dong where Oh Jung Song was in order to inform him that we were coming. At the approach to a valley of Huimudong, on the far bank from Namyang, Onsong County, we met Oh Jung Song and other members of the organizations who had come there on receiving the summons. That was my first meeting with Oh Jung Song. He was taller than his elder brother Oh Jung Hwa and had a magnanimous disposition. Oh Jung Hwa had said that his younger brother was a good dancer and singer as well as a fine poetry reader.

We quietly crossed the River Tuman by boat at night. Oh Jung Song rowed the boat quickly and well. As I looked at the fields and mountains veiled in darkness, I could not repress my beating heart at my deep emotions at returning to my homeland after five years. Having left the boat at Namyang Sangtan, I told Oh Jung Hwa how good it would be if we were crossing the river after winning the independence of the country.

In a positive response to what I had said, Oh Jung Hwa said that he felt the same each time he crossed the River Tuman.

Having passed Namyang Sangtan village we took the uphill path leading to Mt. Namyang. There we went into a straw-thatched cottage prepared by Oh Jung Song and examined the work of the revolutionary organizations in the Onsong area as well as the trend of the masses. The people of Onsong had achieved many successes in establishing mass organizations. I spent a week guiding the work of the underground revolutionary organizations at home. In the course of this I discovered that although the revolutionaries in the Onsong area had formed many organizations throughout the country, they were lapsing into extreme passivism in expanding and developing them.

In this area it was a universal practice to form an organization with a few reliable core elements and then shut the door and neglect the expansion of its ranks. For this reason the organizations had failed to take deep root among the broad sections of the masses. The Onsong Young Communist League which was formed in the spring of 1929 as an organization under the YCLK, also built a high fence around a few

members and did not go among the masses.

In those days various organizations and factions such as the Local Association, the Promotion Association, the Singan Association and the Group for Rebuilding the Party were competing to win young people over to their side. Under these circumstances the mass organizations were merely maintaining the status quo while trembling with fear, in an effort to prevent the slightest bad influence from being exerted on them.

official said that he had no idea of how to deal with those young people who were associated with the youth league or the Singan Association. Chon Jang Won, who was working as the head of the peasants' association in Pungin-dong, would not speak his mind even to those of his close relations who were working in the enemy's government organs. This was because he was nervous, fearing that the enemy's tentacles might extend to the revolutionary ranks through the many of his relatives who were working as village heads, sub-county heads and policemen.

All this was an expression of distrust in the masses. Without putting an end to these wrong practices it would be impossible to develop the revolution in the Onsong area in depth to meet the requirements of the new situation. The life of a revolutionary can be said to begin with his going among the masses and the failure of the revolution with a failure to believe in the strength of the popular masses and a neglect of mixing with them. I said earnestly to Oh Jung Song:

"It is impossible to make the revolution with only a few people from a good class origin. You should boldly believe in the masses and keep the door to the organization wide open for them. Now that youth organizations with every kind of name are each trying to win the young people over, the organization of the YCLK should not become passive but win over many young people through a positive campaign. You must politically awaken and lead the young people who were once involved in the organizations of the youth league or the Singan Association, as well as those who are either following people from the Group for Rebuilding the Party or are being unconsciously used by them, so as to win them over to our side."

I also told Chon Jang Won about the tactics that must be employed in the work with those who were serving in the enemy's establishments. I said:

"A man who is making the revolution must not be frightened or discredit himself because his family contains a village head, sub-county head or policeman. On the contrary, you must resolve to paralyze the lowest government machinery of the Japanese by going into the enemy establishments, taking advantage of family relations and working on a big scale. If you are to make the area of the six towns a strategic base for the armed struggle, you must be bold and win over those who are serving within the enemy's government organs at the same time as making the masses revolutionary. Try it and acquire experience in this work."

The most unforgettable event from my stay in Onsong was howl, together with Kim Jun, Oh Jung Hwa

and Oh Jung Song, met men working on the railway project in Wolpa-dong, Mipo sub-county. From the beginning of 1929 the Japanese imperialists had been pressing ahead with the project to lay a railway along the River Tuman. Over 1,000 labourers from all parts of the country, including the three southern provinces, as well as from Jiandao gathered there and formed in the Wolpa village a congested residential district called Kaepung Street. Those laborers who had been working on the Jirin Hoeryong railway project also crowded into this street where they had a hard time of it making a living.

On hearing of this when I was in Jirin I met Kim Jun and told him to go among the workers and try to form an organization when the railway project got under way in Wolpa-dong. Kim Jun could not conceal his eagerness, saying that it was something worth trying. He went to Onsong as he had promised and formed in Wolpa-dong a working youth association and an Anti-Imperialist Youth League organization.

When I expressed my intention to visit the railway project my comrades in Onsong asked me to abandon the idea because the enemy was keeping a strict watch. In those days they went to extremes to protect me, telling their comrades, "A representative of the Comintern has come." They organized a guard for me, even giving me the official title of "representative of the Comintern" because, in the homeland, the Japanese police maintained close surveillance against revolutionaries.

Needless to say, I also knew that, if I went to Korea, I must be careful in everything I did and sharpen my vigilance. However, I felt an urge to grasp the hands of the workers and tell them something that might be of some help to them, although I might not achieve much among them immediately. All the work I had conducted with the young people and students until then was aimed at building a bridge for going among the working class. Our ultimate goal was to carve out and complete the Korean revolution by giving prominence to the working class. How ardently had we been yearning for the working class of Korea from the day when we set out its liberation as our program and pledged to devote even our lives to this end!

I joined the workers at the construction site unloading gravel, carrying sand and taking the meals they offered me at their quarters for a day and a half. Kim Jun introduced me as a man who had been studying in Yanji and had come there to earn money to pay his school fees.

Even now I think that it was very good for me to go among the workers at that time. At their quarters and at the construction site I witnessed not only the sad plight of the workers who were toiling with might and main for a few pennies, but also workers who were eager for a struggle, workers who were seeking the correct way for them to shape their future.

This had a strong impact on me. My heart was burning with an eager desire to devote my whole life for the happiness of the working class. At the railway project I got acquainted for the first time with Choe Chun Guk and Choe Bong Song, anti-Japanese fighters from Onsong.

While guiding me to his quarters, Choe Chun Guk told me that he had secretly stored up some powder while he had been working as a dynamiter and that he intended to blow up a tunnel with it when the

project was completed.

I told him that under the prevailing circumstances building up the organization and politically awakening and organizing the workers was more urgent than running such a risk as blowing up a tunnel and advised him to keep the powder and use it when it would be needed during our future armed struggle.

At that time I talked a great deal with the workers. I told them about the matters of launching an armed struggle, founding a party and forming an anti-Japanese national united front. It would be a great gain if we could clearly implant at least the spirit of the Kalun Meeting in the minds of the workers in the homeland. Then, if we told something to one man it would be conveyed immediately to ten people, and would reach the ears of 10,000 people through the mouths of 100 and 1,000 people. Our idea would ultimately be the faith and banner of the people at home. All this was certain.

When the workers at the railway project learned about our line, they expressed full support for it. If they gained confidence from our line, I gained confidence from their looks full of delight at being told of the line. The greatest success achieved in Onsong was the formation of a party organization on Turu Hill on October 1, 1930.

In the course of visiting the revolutionary organization in Onsong I realized that the fighting will and preparedness of the revolutionaries in this area were far stronger than I had expected, although they committed some mistakes in their understanding of the strategic problem and were timid in their work with the masses. I also reached the conclusion that the foundation existed for establishing a party organization in this area.

All those revolutionaries of the Onsong area who were to take part in the meeting gathered on Turu Hill dressed like firewood gatherers. Chon Jang Won had asked the man in charge of the organization in Wolpa-dong to bring an ox-pulled sleigh up to the meeting place. We held the meeting to set up a homeland party organization on a quiet, vacant spot on the top of Turu Hill with the River Wolpa flowing nearby.

Firstly I told those attending the meeting about the line adopted at Kalun and made clear that the primary task for implementing that line was to build a revolutionary party. Then I explained the aim of forming a new type of party organization in the Onsong area. I also set the task for the party organization in the Onsong area of continually increasing and strengthening the party ranks with fine progressive elements who had been tested through an organizational life and practical struggle, and of organizing and mobilizing the masses for the anti-Japanese struggle.

On my recommendation Oh Jung Song, Chon Jang Won, Chon Chang Ryong, Choe Chun Guk, Choe Bong Song and Choe Gun Ju were admitted to the Onsong party organization. Oh Jung Song was elected to head the party organization. Those who had the honor of being party members stood up in succession to relate their past life and briefly state their determination.

I have forgotten the determination of all the others, but that made by Chon Jang Won is still fresh in my memory. Chon Jang Won said that he would never forget the fact that we had admitted to the party even such a man as he who had a problematic family background, and pledged to saw off his bones, slice away his flesh and even offer his life if it was needed for the revolution. He said that if he was ever so silly as to break his pledge, he would not mind even if his body was cut to pieces and thrown into a river. Although his words were violent and plain, they expressed his feelings frankly.

Afterwards Chon Jang Won, true to his resolve, performed great exploits in making Onsong a semi-guerrilla zone and aiding the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. In order to keep it secret, there was no record of what was discussed at the meeting. The meeting adopted no inaugural declaration or manifesto. Those attending the meeting said to the following effect:

"We feel something is lacking because this meeting, a historic meeting held to establish a party organization, is so simple and informal. Even such an organization of the lowest class as the equity society makes public a manifesto and circulates it to the world, so we feel our meeting will fall flat if it is concluded merely by a brief pledge." I encouraged them as follows:

"The pledge you have just made is far more substantial than a statement or a manifesto amounting to hundreds of pages. What is the use of continually drawing up documents? You must not think of a party organization as something which only makes a fuss and wins a name for itself. Party members do a lot of work without making a fuss. Therefore, display your party spirit and patriotism through a practical struggle."

The formation of a party organization in the Onsong area was the start of the laying of the foundation for party building in the homeland and an important turning point in promoting the anti-Japanese struggle of the people there. Thanks to the activities of the party organization in the Onsong area, the process of the political awakening and organization of the masses was stepped up rapidly and the anti-Japanese struggle gained momentum in the area of the six towns.

As the masses started to follow us and the revolution gained momentum, Choe Chang Ik, who was hanging about in this area, his native place, in order to expand the influence of his own faction, fled to Seoul. After liberation he told us frankly what had happened at the time. He said: "I thought the M-L group had gone to Onsong because that is my native place. However, when I reached there, our force was not to be seen and instead the influence of Jirin had reached there. That influence was so powerful that everywhere I could see only your people, Comrade Kim Il Sung. I thought you must be quite old. However, people told me that it was not true and that you were a youth in your twenties and very strong. So I resolved to visit you, but gave up the idea."

The reason that Choe Chang Ik left Onsong for Seoul was that he knew that we disliked factions and did not compromise with factionalists like him. Following the formation of the party organization, I guided the meeting of the political workers and those in charge of the underground revolutionary organizations from various areas including the six towns before starting on my way back. We crossed the river by ferry



from the Ojong ferry. My heart was much lighter than on my way to the homeland. I felt like soaring high up into the sky now that everything had turned out as I had wished. My visit to the homeland at the risk of my life was something worthwhile.

The week we spent in the homeland was an important period which proved that the revolutionary line we had put forward in Kalun was a correct one acceptable to all. It was as if we had had our line judged by the people at home. From that time the people of Onsong remained always faithful to us.

Having crossed the River Tuman in safety I, guided by Oh Jung Hwa, reached Chaoyangcun, Yanji County, going via Liangshuiquanzi and Changgou. Together with Longjing, Chaoyangcun was a place where we were exerting the greatest influence in the Yanji area. Ma Duk Han and Ra Il, members of the secretariat of the party and YCLK in the Jiandao area, were working in Chaoyangcun. Lim Chun Chu, who later worked as a member of the party committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, also conducted revolutionary work here as "Lim Chun Bong, Physician of the Pongchun Dispensary." Before coming to Yanji, he had been arrested for being involved in a student incident and was sent to prison. Working as a doctor of traditional Korean medicine, he carried out the duty of liaising between the party and YCLK secretariat in the Jiandao area and various counties.

At that time I met Lim Chun Chu for the first time, in Chaoyangcun. He, who had managed to acquire skill in traditional Korean medicine at a young age, quite impressed me. Thanks to his skill in traditional Korean medicine, our guerrillas got a lot of help throughout the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

The May 30 Uprising and the August 1 Uprising had caused a big loss to the revolutionary organizations in Yanji. Here the enemy's terror had been more overpowering than in Dunhua. Many who had been making the revolution lost heart and hesitated, and those people who were not sufficiently awakened, clamored that they were being brought to ruin because of the communist party.

I met leading cadres of the party and YCLK such as Ma Duk Han, Ra Il and Lim Chun Chu and discussed the problem of eliminating the consequence of the Left adventurist machinations as soon as possible and further expanding and strengthening the revolutionary struggle. After leaving Onsong I did not go straight to Wujiazi but went as far as Chaoyangcun via Liangshuiquanzi. This was because I foresaw that this area would be the field of our future armed struggle. I had done some preparatory work for laying the mass foundation in Onsong, Wangqing and Yanji of an armed struggle in the future.

Afterwards this area became the most reliable base of the anti-Japanese war, as we had foreseen.

## 4.9. An "Ideal Village" into a Revolutionary Village

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At one time the independence fighters in our country conceived a plan to build "ideal villages," and they tried in every way possible to implement it. When one hears the word "ideal village," one visualizes a village in which everyone is free from any exploitation, oppression and inequality and leads an equally free and happy life. From time immemorial our people have dreamt of such a Utopian world.

The nationalists' endeavor to build "ideal villages" might be considered a reflection of our ancestors' aspiration to a rich, harmonious, peaceful and comfortable life for everyone. Ahn Chang Ho was a proponent and champion of the "ideal village" scheme. Immediately after the proclamation of the "annexation of Korea by Japan" Ahn Chang Ho, Li Dong Hui, Sin Chae Ho and Ryu Dong Yol held talks in Qingdao, China, where Ahn Chang Ho put forward a proposal to build "ideal villages." After serious consideration the leaders of the independence movement decided to buy the land of the Taedong Business Company (in Mishan County, China) which had been managed by Americans, bring it under cultivation and train Independence Army soldiers by establishing a military academy there. They intended to build such "ideal villages" in order to raise funds and educate cadres, and thus lay the material, personnel and financial foundations for the independence movement.

Even after this plan had failed, Ahn Chang Ho made painstaking efforts for many years to procure funds and obtain suitable sites for such villages, because he felt the necessity for an independence movement base which could render material support to his "theory of the cultivation of strength." The attempt to build such villages was a trend in the independence movement at that time. Many nationalists tried to realize their unsophisticated dream of cultivating strength by reclaiming uncultivated land and making it suitable for farming and establishing military academies.

The rural community on the Liaohe was born of this trend. This community was developed by the nationalists who had been active in south Manchuria. Some of the nationalists in south Manchuria, particularly Song Sok Dam, Pyon Dae U (alias Pyon Chang Gun), Kim Hae San, Kwak Sang Ha and Mun Sang Mok drifted west before settling on the Liaohe. Saying that they were building an ideal Korean village, they created a community of 300 Korean families there and began to develop it according to their own principles by cutting it off from the surrounding world. This community was named Wujiazi (a village of five families) after the five families that had settled there originally.

Some of my comrades attending Wenguang Middle School in my days in Jirin were from Guyushu and Wujiazi. They used to say that Wujiazi was a good village. So I became interested in Wujiazi and made up my mind to transform it into a revolutionary village. I went from east Manchuria to Wujiazi in October 1930. Originally I was planning to convene a large meeting in east Manchuria for the preparation of an armed struggle but, in view of the situation there at the time, I considered the place unsuitable for the meeting and changed the site to Wujiazi. I decided to stay there for some months while

I prepared for the meeting and make the village revolutionary. I found the people kind-hearted and their customs agreeable, as I had been told they were.

The people in this village, unable to roof their houses with tiles because of the strong wind, plastered clay on the roofs. The saline clay did not allow the rain in. They also built neat clay walls, walls of adobe which, they claimed, were even bullet-proof. The founders of the village never tolerated the infiltration of any heterogeneous ideological trends into the village. They, together with the peasants, had converted the marshy land into paddy fields and established a school in the village. They formed such mass organizations as the Association of Fellow Peasants, the Youth Association and the Association of Schoolchildren.

They also formed a village council, an autonomous organ. Every year on August 29, the day when Japan proclaimed the annexation of Korea by Japan, the village people gathered and sang the song National Humiliation Day. It is no wonder that the people of Wujiazi called their village a "heaven," it being out of the reach of the Japanese army and police and the reactionary Chinese warlords. The majority of the population of the village was from Pyongan and Kyongsang Provinces. Those from Kyongsang Province were under the influence of the M-L group in the General Federation of the Korean Youth in South Manchuria and those from Pyongan Province were mostly affiliated to Chongui-bu.

In view of the fact that I hailed from Pyongan Province I stayed in most cases at the houses of the people from Kyongsang Province, as I had done in Kalun before. If not, I might have upset them. When I was in Kalun, I had sent some members of the Korean Revolutionary Army to Wujiazi as political workers but they had proved ineffectual because they could not win over the leading figures of the village who were obstinate, yet well established.

I spent the winter there through the good offices of my comrades. I stayed in that one place for so long, more than just a week or two, because we attached such great importance to Wujiazi. We regarded this village as the last stronghold of the nationalist forces in central Manchuria. If successful here, we could turn Wujiazi into a model for making the rural areas revolutionary and, drawing on that experience, bring the rural villages in the whole of Manchuria and the northern border areas of our country under our influence. We recognized that the workers, peasants and working intellectuals were the main force of the revolution, and made particularly great efforts to transform the peasants into revolutionaries in view of the position they occupied in the class composition of our country. The peasantry accounted for more than 80 per cent of the population of our country.

The situation in Jiandao was the same. More than 80 per cent of the population of Jiandao were Koreans about 90 per cent of whom were peasants. Owing to the persecution by the warlords and the ruthless expropriation by the landlords and usurers, they were living in dire poverty, enjoying no rights, and were subjected to harsh exploitation through land rents and to such physical extortions as those imposed upon serfs and slaves. The case was similar with the peasants in the homeland. This showed that the peasantry, along with the industrial working class, was the class which had the keenest interest in the revolution and that the peasants, together with the workers, should become the main force of our revolution.

To make the rural areas revolutionary was the foremost task in laying the mass foundation for the anti-Japanese armed struggle. As the young people in Wujiazi grew more and more enthusiastic about our cause as a result of the activities of our political workers, the village elders shook their pipes and threatened that those who would introduce socialism onto the Liaohe plain would not be safe; they complained that the young people in those days were affected by an alien ideology. Some of them warned that, if the crazy communist ideology that had ruined Jiandao was tolerated in Wujiazi, the village would not be safe, either.

If we were careless and rash, we might fall before the pipes of the old people. Some of the young people wavered. They wanted to march to the communist tune, but they hesitated lest they should offend their elders. Only a few determined young men opposed the elders. On hearing a report from the political workers, I judged that the prerequisite for making Wujiazi revolutionary was to work well with the influential people. Unless we corrected their way of thinking we would be unable to awaken Wujiazi from its pipe dream of building an "ideal village" or execute our plan to transform the village on the Liaohe into a model village in central Manchuria.

Once the elders were reformed, the others would follow us. Our political workers, however, had not approached them for three months, and had only been feeling out their views. It was no simple job to deal with such people. No ordinary man dared argue with them, these learned people with theoretical views as well as records of conducting the independence movement. The group of elders had the village under its control.

One old man, Pyon Dae U, ran the village council behind the scenes and supervised all the affairs of the village. He was at the head of both the group of elders and the village itself. The villagers called him Pyon Trotsky because he frequently mentioned Trotsky. Pyon had traveled through the homeland and various parts of Manchuria in his early years in the interests of the independence movement. At first he had established schools in Hanchon (South Pyongan Province), his home town, and Chasong, and Daoqinggou (in Linjiang County, China), working as a teacher. He had been involved in armed activities from 1918, the year when he joined the Independence Army unit which had its headquarters at Maoershan, Linjiang County. In those days he had frequented our house to contact my father.

When he was unable to come, my uncle, Kang Jin Sok, would maintain contact between them. Having held the posts of propaganda chief of the Korean Independence Association, deputy-commander of the National Independence Army, chief of the military law section and commander of the 1st battalion of the Liberation Corps and then head of the business section of Tongui-bu, he had devoted himself to building up the movement of the Independence Army. He retired from his military posts in 1926, and applied himself to building an "ideal village." Once he had been to the far eastern region of the Soviet Union, allegedly to launch a communist movement. He had the blue-covered membership card of the Communist Party of Koryo.

It was impossible to reform the bigoted village elders and make the village revolutionary unless old man Pyon was won over. Learning that I had arrived in Wujiazi, the old man's son, Pyon Dal Hwan, came to

see me. He was in charge of the Association of Fellow Peasants. He said that he had intended to transform the "ideal village" into a revolutionary village by prevailing on the nationalists, but had been unable to do anything because of his father and the other village elders. He suggested that, now that I was there, we should do away with those good-for-nothings.

Dumbfounded, I asked him, "Do away with them? What do you mean by that?" "I mean we must form our own organizations, ignoring what the old men say, and make Wujiazi a socialist village on our own," was his absurd answer. "No, we cannot do that. It will split the village into two. And it is not in accordance with our policy, either." "Then, what shall we do? We can't leave Wujiazi in the hands of these backward old men, can we?" "The point is that we should win their support. I am going to work with your father. What do you think of that?"

"It will be useless. Many people have been here from Kukmin-bu, from the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai and from the committee for rebuilding the communist party affiliated to the M-L group, to establish footholds in this village, but they have all been given the cold shoulder by my father. Ordinary people have not even been granted an interview with him, and even high-ranking nationalist leaders have been thrown out after being taught a good lesson."

"Your father and mine were on friendly terms and you and I are old friends. So I think I stand a better chance than a total stranger." Pyon Dal Hwan said with embarrassment that an old friendship would not influence his father. He had been to my house in Linjiang 10 years before with a letter from his father to mine.

I talked with Pyon Trotsky for days at his house, where the village elders used to gather. On the first day Pyon talked more than I did. He sat haughtily, his legs crossed, and as he spoke he now and then tapped his pipe on the floor. He said he was glad to see Mr. Kim's son but he treated me as just a boy. He merely gave me condescending advice, every time addressing me as "you youngster." He was a man with good features and a gallant spirit and he had a high theoretical level, so I found him awesome from the start.

When he asked me how old I was, I answered that I was 23, five years older than I actually was. If I had said I was 18, he would have treated me as a mere boy. I looked older than I was, so no one doubted me if I said I was 23 years old. In those days, I always claimed to be 23 or 24. That was favorable for me in my work with both the village elders and the young people.

I behaved politely, listening to old Pyon with patience, not retorting or interrupting him even though what he said did not stand to reason. He said that young people would find fault with him, labeling him as feudalistic and so on, while not understanding even one out of the ten words he said. He said it was interesting to talk to me. One day he invited me to dinner. He said that he had frequently been accorded warm hospitality by my father in Linjiang and that, therefore, he had prepared a dinner, though humble, for me.

After chatting with me for a while, he asked me suddenly: "Is it true that you youngsters have come here

to do away with our 'ideal village'?" Pyon Dal Hwan had been right when he said that his father was guarding against the communists with the highest vigilance.

"Do away with your 'ideal village'? Why should we destroy the results of you old people's hard work, if we are unable to help you? We do not have the strength to destroy it." "Hm, is that so? But the youngsters in Wujiazi who follow my son Dal Hwan are always finding fault with the 'ideal village'; they think only of knocking down the old people and hoisting the red flag in this village. Rumor has it that you, Sung Ju, are manipulating the youngsters in Wujiazi. Do the young people from Jirin hate the 'ideal village'? Tell me frankly what you think."

"We don't think it bad. Why should we hate the 'ideal village'? You have built it to get the wandering Korean exiles in this foreign land to settle down in one place and live in comfort. It is marvelous that you have built a Korean settlement of this size on the swampy land on the Liaohe. You old people must have worked very hard to build it." Satisfied at my complimentary remarks, he stroked his moustache. He no longer called us "you youngster."

"Yes, that's it! As you will learn, there is neither a policeman nor a prison nor a government office here. All the village's affairs are dealt with in a democratic way by the Koreans themselves through an autonomous organ called the village council. Where else in the world is there such an ideal village?"

I thought that now was the time to state our opinion of the "ideal village" clearly. "Sir, I think it is patriotic of you to have built a village where the Koreans lead a fair life by democratic methods through an autonomous body. But do you think we can achieve the independence of the country by building villages like this?"

The old man who was speaking in a dignified manner with his legs crossed, waving his pipe, shut his mouth and raised his eyebrows. Then, he heaved a sigh. "No, we can't. You have touched me on the raw. We have built an 'ideal village,' but it is of no help to the independence movement. That is why I am in anguish. How good it would be if we could win the independence of the country by building 'ideal villages'!"

I did not lose the opportunity to prove the absurdity of the building of such villages. I said: "It is impossible for a ruined nation to build 'ideal villages' in a foreign land. It is true that Wujiazi, thanks to your efforts, has become a more comfortable village to live in than other Korean settlements, but we cannot say that the ideal of the Korean people has been realized. The ideal of the Korean nation is to live in their motherland which is independent of the Japanese and free from exploitation and oppression by landlords and capitalists. How can you say you are living an ideal life when you are in debt to landlords? When the Japanese invade Manchuria Wujiazi will not be safe. And sooner or later Japan will invade Manchuria. They do not want the Korean people to lead an ideal life." "Then, you mean we should give up the idea of building an ideal village?" he asked with irritation.

"We wish to transform this village into a revolutionary village that fights for the liberation of the country,

rather than seeing it so quiet." "That means you are going to spread socialism in Wujiazi? No, you can't. I detest socialism. When your father said in Kuandian in 1919 that we should switch over to the communist movement we all supported him. But, while following the Koryo Communist Party, I discovered the communists all to be crazy. They were all involved in factional strife. Since then I've been disgusted by the mere mention of communism."

Then he showed me his membership card of the Koryo Communist Party. "However hard you may be working for the revolution, you don't have such a membership card, do you?" the old man said in a casual manner, looking at me craftily. I opened the card and examined it before putting it in my coat pocket. He found this so unexpected that he looked at me in blank dismay.

"Allow me to keep as a souvenir your membership card of the Koryo Communist Party that has gone bankrupt on account of factional strife." I thought he would want it back, but he didn't. He asked me if we had any special policy for making the village revolutionary. I spent a good while explaining to him how we had made such villages as Jiangdong, Xinantun, Naidaoshan, Kalun and Guyushu revolutionary. He listened to me attentively. Then he said, "What you say smacks of Stalinism, but I am not against you. Nevertheless, you should not pay tribute only to Stalin. There is some sense in what Trotsky said."

He then expounded Trotsky's theory. Yet he did not seem to be opposed to Marxism-Leninism. I learned that he had an extremely good impression of Trotsky. I had talked to many people who were known to be well-versed in communist theory, but none had spoken so highly of Trotsky as he did. Out of curiosity I asked, "Why do you worship Trotsky?"

"Frankly, I don't worship him. I just don't like the young people nowadays worshipping people from major powers indiscriminately. Trotsky is Trotsky and Stalin is Stalin. Young people nowadays are in the habit of quoting from them, but I don't see what is so great about their propositions. It is for the Russian people to consider their propositions. The Korean people should speak in the spirit of Korea in order to promote the revolution in their own country, don't you think?"

The old man was right in a sense. In the course of my conversations with him over several days I found him to be no ordinary man. At first I wondered if he was a Trotskyite, but I learned that, tired of factional strife, he was just warning us young people, warning us against the blind worship of everything, against talking only about other countries, about Russia and Stalin, and against copying everything from Russia. In short, he was telling us to live in the Korean spirit.

He continued: "I don't care what the young people do, nor do I interfere in my son's work. Whatever he does, it is up to him. But I will fight to the end against those who put on airs, chanting foreign propositions without having their own principles."

What he said convinced me that our consistent stand against factionalism, flunkeyism and dogmatism was correct and that our policy of carrying out the revolution through the efforts of our own people and by believing in our own strength was correct. The following day I talked a lot more than the old man. I

explained to him in detail the line we had adopted at the Kalun Meeting. He seemed to be strongly impressed by my explanation that we should form a party and an army of a new type, organize an anti-Japanese national united front by enlisting all social strata irrespective of ideology, religious belief, status of property, age and sex and liberate the country through the resistance of our 20 million people. In particular, he hailed our intention to organize an anti-Japanese national united front.

Pyon Dae U was a widower and his son was a bachelor. The old man's daughter kept the house, but she could not sweep away the lonely, dull air prevailing in the family. After repeated discussions with Pyon Dal Hwan and other comrades about choosing a suitable match for him, I singled out a girl with the surname Sim who lived in a rural village near Wujiazi and got my comrades to prepare for a wedding ceremony for them. I felt it presumptuous and awkward for a bachelor to arrange the marriage of his elders, but after their wedding the villagers were happy, and gave me unstinted praise.

The event won us the trust of the village elders. One day Pyon Dal Hwan came to see me and inform me of his father's attitude. He quoted his father as saying to the village elders, "Some new masters who will take over the 'ideal village' from us have now appeared. They are Sung Ju and his friends. If socialism is what they adhere to, we can accept it without a worry. We must not take Sung Ju for a mere youngster. We are old and lagging behind the times, so let us hand over the whole of Wujiazi to Sung Ju and his friends, and help them in all sincerity." The other elders were said to have expressed their admiration for what we had said.

Hearing this, I went to old man Pyon. I said, "I have come to return you your membership card of the Koryo Communist Party." But he replied, without so much as glancing at it, that he did not need it. I was at a loss what to do with it. Later the card was passed around my comrades.

In 1946, the year following the liberation of the country, the old man came to Pyongyang to see me. When I reminded him of the happenings in Wujiazi, he looked back upon the old days with emotion and then grinned. He said that now that he had witnessed the northern half of the country having become a great and ideal land, a land of perfect happiness, he would not regret it even if he were to die there and then. He was 67 years old at that time. That year he passed away in Yitong County, Jirin Province, China, so I learned much later.

His son Pyon Dal Hwan worked in Wujiazi as the head of the Peasants Union organization. On the charge of having been involved in the anti-Japanese struggle under our guidance, the Japanese put him in Sinuiju prison in 1931, and there he served a term of several years. Thus the breakthrough in making Wujiazi revolutionary was achieved. After that, the village elders' attitude towards the political workers from the Korean Revolutionary Army changed. They vied with each other to invite them to dinner.

During the revolutionary transformation of Wujiazi I made great efforts to win over the Chinese people. Without winning over influential Chinese people, it would have been impossible for us to establish a foothold for conducting free activities in central Manchuria. Therefore, I did not hesitate to bring even landlords around to our side and make use of them, if it was possible.



At that time a landlord named Zhao Jia-feng was living near Wujiazi. Once he quarreled with another landlord in the neighboring village over some farm land and resolved to bring a law suit against him. But he did not know how to write the indictment. He had a son who had received secondary education in a nearby town, but the son did not know how to draft it, either. It seems he had idled away his time at school.

Zhao Jia-feng asked Kim Hae San, a doctor of Korean medicine in Wujiazi, to recommend someone capable of writing the indictment for him. Kim Hae San came to see me one day and asked me if I knew how to write it. When we were engaged in underground activity, books on the composition of letters, funeral orations and indictments had been available in China for students and the public in general to use as reference.

Kim Hae San and I were invited to a dinner at the landlord's house. The host explained at length that he was seeking judgment over a land dispute. I wrote an indictment in Chinese for him and went with him to the county town where I helped him behind the scenes to win the case. Had it not been for my assistance, he would have lost dozens of hectares of land. The landlord told me that I was a very good man, not a communist. Regarding me as his benefactor, he gave me unqualified support in everything I did. On holidays he never failed to invite me to dinner. There I met many influential people in China and gave them anti-imperialist education. Thus my revolutionary activities, including the work of the Korean school at Wujiazi, became legitimate, and the foothold for our revolutionary struggle began to be consolidated.

After winning over the village elders and other influential people, we set about reforming the mass organizations into revolutionary ones. First we restructured the Youth Association, making it the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. It had previously been under the nationalist influence. Thanks to the activities of the detachment of the Korean Revolutionary Army, the core members of the association had been educated. But the association itself was not yet completely free from the remnants of nationalism. First of all, its fighting objective and tasks were not clear.

In addition, its membership was small and it had no proper working method. It was an organization that existed in name only, doing almost nothing to rally the young people. The Wujiazi area consisted of hamlets sprawling over distances of 4, 8 and even 24 kilometers away from one another, but the association had no branches in those hamlets. This being the situation, the youth organization could neither strike root among the young people nor motivate them.

Some people insisted that we should reform the Youth Association into the AIYL right away. But it was premature to reform the existing organization into a new one without taking into account the political and ideological preparedness of the young people, they being still under nationalist influence and still believing in the association.

The men of the KRA visited the nearby hamlets with cadres from the association and conducted ideological work for forming the AIYL. In the course of this our revolutionary line was propagated

among the young people. I also had conversations with them every day. After making such preparations we formed the Anti-Imperialist Youth League of Wujiazi in a classroom of Samsong School. The league established branches in the hamlets. Choe Il Chon was elected chairman of the league committee, and Mun Jo Yang chief of the organizational section.

Later the Association of Fellow Peasants was reformed into the Peasants Union, the Association of Schoolchildren into the Children's Expeditionary Corps and the Wujiazi branch of the Educational Federation of Korean Women in South Manchuria into the Women's Association, and thus a fresh upsurge was brought about in the activities of the mass organizations in Wujiazi. After their restructuring the organizations admitted many new members. Almost all the people living in Wujiazi became affiliated to an appropriate organization and led a political life.

We also restructured the village council, an autonomous administrative organ, into a self-governing committee, a revolutionary one. The pioneers of Wujiazi had formed the village council in the first half of the 1920s. The council paid primary attention to economic and educational affairs and improving the peasants' life by maintaining normal relations with the Chinese government authorities and operating a rice sales agency at Gongzhuling and similar agencies under it.

But the people of Wujiazi openly accused the councilors of having no popular spirit and of being dishonest. In the course of talking to the peasants I learned that the councilors were not distributing some foodstuffs and daily necessities that had been purchased by the sales agency at Gongzhuling to the peasants equitably and were disposing of them as they pleased out of their own selfish desires. I sent a man to Gongzhuling to ascertain whether this was true. On his return he told me that the village council was corrupt. He confirmed that the councilors were misappropriating money collected from the peasants and were feathering their own nests.

Because the village head was dealing with most of the affairs of the council by himself in a subjective and arbitrary manner, the opinions of the masses were ignored. As they had no right to participate in the work of the council, the masses did not know about the mistakes made by it. Since the people, their life and the way they worked were all in the process of being transformed, the village council could not work as the masses required with the existing organizational structure and conservative work method.

We called a consultative meeting attended by the cadres of the council, the chiefs of all the hamlets and the chairmen of the organizations of the Peasants Union, and reviewed the work of the village council. At the meeting we restructured the council to form a self-governing committee. The committee eradicated subjectivism and arbitrariness as we had intended and gave full play to democracy in its work.

We paid particular attention to the rice sales agency at Gongzhuling which was under the control of the self-governing committee. The peasants of Wujiazi had previously had to take their rice as far as Gongzhuling 25 miles away on oxcarts or horse carts to sell it. Normally it was good business to store it somewhere when the price of rice was low and sell it when the price had risen. But there was no one for them at Gongzhuling to entrust with their rice. This being the case, they had sold it to anybody without

waiting for a better price. Then, in the autumn of 1927, in order to remedy the situation they installed a rice sales agency at Gongzhuling.

We appointed to the agency the most popular people from among the members of the mass organizations. We also sent Kye Yong Chun, Park Gun Won and Kim Won U, men of the KRA, to help the agency in its work. After we had taken over the agency it performed the secret mission of establishing contact with revolutionary organizations and providing the KRA with the information it needed in its activities while still fulfilling the function of a legal commercial organ serving the peasants.

Our restructuring of the village council to form a self-governing committee and our conversion of such a legal commercial organ as the rice sales agency at Gongzhuling into a servant of the revolution were a great experience in our revolutionary struggle in the early 1930s.

In Wujiazi we sent political workers to many parts of Manchuria to expand our organizations and widen the scope of our activities. In those days we also sent several political workers to the Kailu area. Park Gun Won, one of the first members of the DLU and a former pupil of Whasung Uisuk School worked for some time in that area.

Many Mongolian people lived in the Kailu area. Cut off from the civilized world, they did not know how to treat illnesses and, when they were sick, they only prayed to God. So our comrades took medicines with them whenever they visited that area and administered them to the sick, which were very effective. From that time the people of Kailu treated Korean visitors with hospitality.

In order to improve the political and professional qualifications of those in charge of organizations, we gave a short training course to the heads and core members of every organization. Cha Gwang Su, Kye Yong Chun and I gave lectures for two or three hours every night on the Juche line of revolution and the strategic and tactical policies adopted at the Kalun Meeting, as well as on how to conduct political work among the masses, how to expand organizations and consolidate them, and how to educate the organization members and guide their life in their organizations.

After the short course we took the people into the field and taught them working methods; how they should form organizations, train core elements, give assignments and review their fulfillment, conduct meetings, talk to individuals and so on. Then the leading personnel of Wujiazi went boldly among the masses. We put great efforts into enlightening and educating the people of Wujiazi.

We paid primary attention to education. We appointed men of the KRA and able young men from among the members of the underground organizations as teachers at Samsong School and ensured that they played the leading role in improving the education provided by the school in a revolutionary manner. It was after we began to run the school that the subjects which inculcated nationalist and feudal-Confucian ideas were discontinued and political subjects were included in the curriculum. And it was around this time that tuition fees were abolished at Samsong School. The upkeep of the school was financed by the self-governing committee. All the children of school age in Wujiazi were given free education from that

winter.

We later included an article on free and compulsory education in the 10-point program of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, but in fact the communists of Korea first tried and implemented free education in Guyushu, Kalun and Wujiazi. Samsong School in Wujiazi, along with Chinmyong School in Kalun and Samgwang School in Guyushu, was an important educational establishment, the first to introduce free education in our country. We also ran night schools for the education of the grown-ups, particularly housewives, who could not go to school. I saw to it that night schools were organized not only in the village but also in the surrounding hamlets, and that all these people were enrolled in them.

Drawing on the experience we had gained in launching Bolshevik in Kalun, we published a magazine Non g-u in Wujiazi. The magazine played the role of the organ of the Peasants Union. While Bolshevik was a little hard to understand, the articles in Non g-u were written in a concise and plain fashion so that the peasants could understand them. This magazine, along with Bolshevik, was circulated as far as Jiandao.

In those days we propagated many revolutionary songs to the villagers through the pupils. If the Red Flag and Revolutionary Song were taught at the school, they would spread throughout the village on the same day.

In Wujiazi we had formed an art troupe. This troupe was based at Samsong School and worked successfully under the guidance of Kye Yong Chun. I worked hard to complete the libretto of The Flower Girl which I had begun to write in my days in Jirin and then staged rehearsals for it. Once the libretto was finished, Kye started the production of the opera with the members of the drama group that had been formed at the school. We staged this opera in the hall of the Samsong School on the 13th anniversary of the October Revolution. This opera was not seen on stage for many years after liberation, and then was improved and adapted for the screen, re-written as a novel by our writers and artistes under the guidance of Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il and presented to the public in the early 1970s. At that time the Organizing Secretary did a lot of work.

With the strong support of the people of Wujiazi, we transformed the village on the Liaohe into a reliable operational base for the KRA in a short span of time. We had worked among the peasants in the outskirts of Jirin and in the vicinity of Changchun, but we had never so thoroughly transformed a rural village into a revolutionary one as we did with Wujiazi. Kim Gwang Ryol, a liaison officer of the Comintern, expressed his admiration for all the success we had achieved in Wujiazi.

Because we had put forward an original revolutionary line and were paving the road of revolution in an independent way, the Comintern showed great interest in us. It seems that the Oriental Department of the Comintern discussed us a lot at that time. They seemed to have been curious about the emergence in Korea of revolutionaries of a new generation who were quite different from those of the previous generation and who, while not affiliated with any faction, were working independently and without fuss

on a sound mass foundation. It must have been out of curiosity that the Comintern sent a liaison officer.

Kim Gwang Ryol, who had been at the liaison office in Harbin, came to Wujiazi and talked to my comrades, the heads of the revolutionary organizations and the village elders. After talking to many people, he met me and made many encouraging remarks concerning our work. He said that the young communists of Korea had been paving an original road for the communist movement and for the struggle for national liberation from colonial domination, and that in the course of this we had accumulated rich experience. He gave his full support to our revolutionary lines and policies.

He expressed great surprise at our line of the anti-Japanese national united front. He said that a serious discussion about the definition of the supporters of, and sympathizers with the revolution was being conducted in the international communist movement, and asked me how he should understand our alliance with the bigoted nationalist forces, religious believers and even the propertied class.

I said: "A revolution cannot be carried out by a small number of communists or by workers and poor peasants alone. In order to defeat Japanese imperialism we have to enlist even middle-of-the-road forces. I don't know about the situation in other countries, but in Korea most of the national capitalists and religious believers are all opposed to foreign forces. Only a handful of landlords, comprador capitalists, pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation are against the revolution. We intend to mobilize all the rest of the people in a nationwide resistance.

The key to liberating Korea through the efforts of the Korean people is to win all the anti-Japanese forces over to our side." After hearing my explanation he said, "I am most gratified with the original way you are dealing with everything, without being restrained by the classics." Then he advised me to study in Moscow, saying, "The practical struggle is important but since you are a promising young man, you should study."

Then he produced a suitcase containing a suit, a shirt, a tie and a pair of shoes, and told me that it would be a good idea for me to comply with his request because the Comintern was expecting a great deal from me. He had probably been to the Comintern and come to me with instructions to persuade me to go to Moscow.

I answered, "I am very grateful to you for your interest in me, but I intend to go to east Manchuria, to the masses. If I go to the Soviet Union and eat Russian bread, I may become a pro-Russian which I do not want. "There are many factions in Korea such as the M-L group, the Tuesday group, the Seoul group<sup>15</sup> and others which I find distasteful. I cannot be the same. I shall learn Marxism-Leninism from my books."

Cha Gwang Su, Park So Sim and other comrades, too, had once advised me in Toroju to go to Moscow, after preparing daily necessities needed in my studying abroad. Late in December that year I called a meeting of the leading personnel of the KRA and heads of the revolutionary organizations in Wujiazi. The meeting was to review the experiences and lessons gained in the struggle to implement the tasks put

forward at the Kalun Meeting and to expand and develop the revolutionary movement as required by the prevailing situation.

Militarist Japan, resorting to the force of arms, had spurred up her preparations for war to seize new colonies and expand her territory by mobilizing all her strength. She ruthlessly destroyed anything she found standing in her way. We were planning to go to east Manchuria, anticipating Japan's invasion of Manchuria, and to entrench ourselves there to fight against the invasion. In order to go to east Manchuria we had to review our activities in the central part of Manchuria and take the necessary measures for preparing for an armed struggle, and the Wujiazi Meeting was convened for this purpose.

All the core members of the KRA and heads of the revolutionary organizations attended the meeting. Chae Su Hang and many other heads of revolutionary organizations came to Wujiazi from the Jiandao, Onsong and Chongsong areas, braving the severe cold of 30 degrees below zero. Many young revolutionaries, who had not known one another, became acquainted, exchanged opinions and conducted a serious discussion on the future of the Korean revolution.

The focus of the debate at the meeting was the matter of radically strengthening our activities in east Manchuria. We were firmly resolved to move the main theatre of our activities to east Manchuria. This was a pressing need in view of the prevailing revolutionary situation. That was why I, though staying in Wujiazi, did not forget east Manchuria and was waiting impatiently for the day when I could move there.

At the meeting I also proposed that the preparations for the anti-Japanese armed struggle be speeded up and solidarity with the international revolutionary forces be strengthened. The meeting fully displayed our determination to switch over from the youth and student movement and from the underground movement in the rural areas to an armed struggle and a decisive offensive against the enemy. While the Kalun Meeting had crystallized the will of the Korean nation to defeat Japanese imperialism by force of arms and liberate the country, the Wujiazi Meeting reaffirmed that will and indicated a shortcut to the theatre of the great war against the Japanese.

This meeting served as a bridge between the meeting held in Kalun and the meetings held in Mingyuegou in the spring and winter of 1931 and the meeting held in Songijang in the same year, meetings which led us young communists to the field of the decisive battle against the Japanese imperialists.

Our youth and student movement finally developed to the stage of the armed struggle in the 1930s. Wujiazi played the role of a springboard, so to speak. When I was leaving Wujiazi, Mun Jo Yang followed me for 4 kilometers to see me off, with tears in his eyes.

## 4.10. Unforgettable Men and Women

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Once I met Comrade Fidel Castro in Pyongyang, and I talked to him for a long time about my experience in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. He asked me many questions, one of which was how we had obtained food while conducting the armed struggle. I said that we had taken food from the enemy sometimes, but that the people always supplied us with it. During our youth and student movement and underground work, too, people offered us food and bedding.

The Shanghai Provisional Government, Chongui-bu, Sinmin-bu, Chamui-bu and other Independence Army organizations each made laws and raised subscriptions and war funds from their compatriots, but we did not do so. Of course, we needed money for our revolutionary activities, but we could not enact laws to collect taxes. Restricting the people by laws and rules and raising funds by traveling about villages with a book in which was noted down which family should contribute how much money, did not accord with our ideals. Our attitude was that we would take what the people offered us, but if they did not offer us anything, we would not mind.

However, the people helped us in any circumstances even risking their lives. They were awakened to political awareness and always ready to help revolutionaries as they would their own children. Therefore we always trusted them. Where the people lived we never had to skip a meal. We could emerge victorious, even though we had started the struggle empty-handed, solely because the people trusted and supported us. Hyon Ha Juk, Kim Bo An and Sung Chun Hak in Guyushu, Ryu Yong Son, Ryu Chun Gyong, Hwang Sun Sin and Chong Haeng Jong in Kalun, Pyon Dae U, Kwak Sang Ha, Pyon Dal Hwan, Mun Si Jun, Mun Jo Yang, Kim Hae San, Li Mong Rin and Choe Il Chon in Wujiazi, they were all unforgettable men and women who helped us in south and central Manchuria.

Though they lived on gruel, the people treated us kindly, offering us boiled rice. Sometimes we slept in the night-duty room of a school on the excuse that we had an urgent task to perform that night, because we were sorry to bother the family. We used classrooms at Chinmyong School as a lodging in Kalun and those at Samgwang and Samsong Schools were our bedrooms in Guyushu and Wujiazi.

Whenever I tried to sleep with my head on a wooden pillow in a classroom at Samgwang School, Hyon Gyun would come and seize me by the hand in a fit of anger. He was a member of the DIU and a soldier of the Korean Revolutionary Army. He was clever, upright and kind-hearted. His elder brother Hyon Hwa Gyun worked in the Peasants Union in Guyushu and helped us a lot in our work. Two brothers were involved in our organizations and, what is more, their father, too, was an independence fighter, as a result of which their family was exceptionally kind and warm towards us.

As a man of some social standing Hyon Gyun's father Hyon Ha Juk enjoyed high prestige among the independence fighters. Ha Juk was an alias, his real name was Hyon Jong Gyong. Instead of addressing him by his real name, the people of Guyushu called him Mr. Ha Juk. In those days all the Koreans resident in Manchuria knew of him.

In his lifetime my father, too, was on intimate terms with him and spoke a lot about him. Not only as mere friends but also as comrades who shared one idea and purpose for the independence movement, they had frequent contact and discussed matters until they came to a mutual understanding. They devoted themselves to the independence movement, respecting each other as close friends.

Mr. Hyon Ha Juk was the chairman of the central legal commission in the days of Tongui-bu'6, a member of the central committee in the days of Chongui-bu and, in the days of Kukmin-bu, the head of the political department of the Korean Revolutionary Party which was known by the nationalists as the one and only party of the nation. He had a deep understanding of communism and always sympathized with the young men who aspired to communism, mixing freely with them.

When Comrades Kim Hyok, Cha Gwang Su and Park So Sim were establishing the Anti-Imperialist Youth League organizations following the formation of the social science institute in Liuhe, he would often appear as a lecturer to enlighten the young people. Those who had attended his lectures in their school days in Wangqingmen and at Hwahung Middle School days frequently recalled him.

Whenever I went to Guyushu, Hyon Ha Juk invited me to spend the night at his house. "Make yourself comfortable. Treat this as if it were your uncle's house," he would say. He was over ten years older than my father. I stayed at his house for ten days, twenty days and even a month to work with the masses. One year I celebrated the Tano festival with his family in Guyushu. In those days, the family's circumstances were so difficult that offering a guest food and bedding for a day or two, let alone several weeks, was no easy matter. Because the farmers offered food to the revolutionaries from the small amount of grain which remained after paying their farm rent to the landlord, they did not have even enough gruel to eat. Hyon's family did all they could to feed me well. Sometimes they served chicken, bean curd, ground beans and chard soup.



*Photo: Kim Sun Ok.*

Whenever the women of his family were turning a hand mill to make bean curd, I rolled up my sleeves to help them. I still remember Hyon Hwa Gyun's wife Kim Sun Ok, who was twenty two or twenty three years old and who, out of shyness, would not show her face when I helped her to turn the hand mill. Mr. Hyon Ha Juk belonged to Kukmin-bu, a nationalist organization, but he did not conceal his involvement in the progressive group within Kukmm-bu and said openly that he would follow communism in the future.

I was told that he went to Xian to avoid a quarrel within Kukminbu after I left Guyushu. Apparently he went there seeking something from Zhang Xue-liang when his army moved to Xian. Because Zhang's anti-Japanese feelings were strong, many people wanted to conduct the anti-Japanese movement under his umbrella. Before and after the Manchuria incident many Korean independence fighters who had been active in the three eastern provinces of China moved the theatre of their activities to such places as



Shanghai, Xian and Changsha.

Whenever I passed the northeastern area of China by air or by train on a foreign tour after liberation, I recalled Guyushu, Mr. Hyon and his family, as I saw the familiar mountains and rivers. He may have passed away, but one or two of his children must still be alive. However, there was no news from them. I have been able to do nothing because I do not know their address, but they could have written to me. I thought that it was easy for a man to receive kindness but it was difficult to repay it.

Unexpectedly, in the spring of 1990, I had an emotional meeting with members of his family. Kim Sun Ok, the eldest daughter-in-law of Mr. Hyon, sent to our revolutionary museum the brass bowl which I had used when I had eaten at their house, as well as the hand mill which had been used to make bean curd for me. She had preserved them for 60 years as souvenirs. This story was carried in Toraji, a Korean magazine published in Jirin, and our Rodong Sinmun copied the article.

When I heard that my benefactors, from whom I had heard nothing for sixty years, were still alive, I could not control my feelings. I had intended to repay the debt I owed in Guyushu someday when the country was independent, so I was anxious to meet Kim Sun Ok to share our past experiences with each other, offering her simple dishes of my own. Kim Sun Ok, too, said that she could wish for nothing more than to meet me again before she died.

So I invited her to Pyongyang in March 1990. When I met her I found her in her 80s, hardly able to walk because of a serious illness. When she came to our country, she was accompanied by six of Mr. Hyon's children and grandchildren who were all strangers to me. Hyon Gyun's son was there. His lips closely resembled his father's. As I looked at the familiar lips I felt as if Hyon Gyun had come to life again and was calling on me. I made sure that her party stayed in a guest house for foreign VIPs for about a month while they traveled about the homeland. What troubled me was that she could not catch what others were saying because she was hard of hearing. Her pronunciation was not clear and she had a poor memory.

Though I had met her, one of my benefactors, whom I had been anxious to meet for sixty years, we could not make ourselves understood to each other. I had hoped that we could spend a long time looking back on the days in Guyushu, she reminding me of what I had forgotten and I reminding her of what she had forgotten. I was very sorry that my wish had not been granted. Mr. Hyon Ha Juk's family knew little about his life and activities. So I told them how he had fought for the independence of Korea and how he had helped us in our revolutionary activities. I regarded this to be my duty as a man who knew well about his personal history.

The cause of the previous generation is not inherited naturally by the children of the same stock. Only when the younger generations know all about the distinguished service rendered by their forerunners and its value, can they inherit the revolutionary cause begun by their grandfathers and fathers' generations.

When I met Kim Sun Ok, we sat together with Kong Guk Ok, Mun Jo Yang and Mun Suk Gon who had helped us in our revolutionary activities in Wujiazi. Kong Guk Ok was the daughter of Kong Yong who,

when my father passed away, had remained in mourning for three years in my place. One year when I was studying at Jirin Yuwen Middle School I went home to Fusong for the holiday. At that time Kong Yong's wife, whom he had treated badly because of a scar on her face, came to our house with a baby on her back. That baby was none other than Kong Guk Ok.

While directing a meeting of the peasants union in Pyongyang immediately after liberation, I met a man from Pyokdong, a delegate to the meeting, and asked him if he knew where the bereaved family of Kong Yong lived. Because Kong Yong came from Pyokdong I guessed that his widow and daughter might be living there. The delegate said that many people in Pyokdong had the family name Kong, but he had never heard of Kong Yong's family. I was disappointed at what he said. My mind was troubled because I did not know the whereabouts of Kong Yong's family, while other bereaved families had been found.

In those days we were preparing to establish a school for the bereaved families of revolutionaries at Mangyongdae. When I returned, after 20 years, to my old house where my grandparents were waiting for me after I had given my address on my triumphal return to the citizens in the Pyongyang public playground, my classmates from my primary school days called on me and suggested that a middle school named after me be established on the old site of Sunhwa School at which my father had taught. They said, "Mangyongdae is the famous place where General Kim was born. How wonderful it would be if we were to build a large school and name it 'Kim Il Sung Middle School.'"

At that time there was no middle school in my home village. I said to them, "In the past innumerable patriots sacrificed themselves in the armed struggle while fighting at my side in the mountains. With their dying breath they asked me to educate their children and train them into fine revolutionaries after the independence of Korea. Since then, I have believed that, true to their last words, I should provide education for the bereaved children of my comrades and ensure that they inherit their parents' will, after the country became independent. Now that we have won back our country, my determination has become firmer. A school for bereaved children of revolutionaries should be established at Mangyongdae, rather than a middle school."

When I said this, the villagers asked me how many bereaved children of revolutionaries there were and if they were so many that a school should be established exclusively for them. Even some cadres who were working at important posts of the Party and administration said the same. They could not even guess how many martyrs had sacrificed themselves in the fight for the country. Whenever I met such people I was dumbfounded because I had buried innumerable comrades in the mountains of a foreign country.

We established the school for the bereaved families of revolutionaries at Mangyongdae, using as capital rice donated by the peasants to the country as a token of their patriotic devotion out of their first harvest after the land reform. I dispatched many officials to various places at home and in northeast China to find the bereaved children of revolutionaries. At that time hundreds of such children came home from China. Some of those children whom Comrade Lim Chun Chu brought back have now become members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of our Party.

Some children who had been living by selling dyestuffs or cigarettes returned home on foot of their own accord after hearing that a revolutionary school would be established at Mangyongdae. Among them were descendants of Independence Army men and the children of the patriots who had died while fighting against the Japanese in labor unions or peasants unions.

However, only Kong Guk Ok was nowhere to be found. Whenever I went to North Pyongan Province I searched for Kong Yong's family by following up rumors, and I requested the officials of the province to find them. Whenever I visited the revolutionary school to enjoy the holidays with the children and saw them singing and dancing merrily, I felt a heartache at the thought of Kong's wife who would come to my house in Xiaonanmen Street wearing straw sandals and with a wild herb package on her head, and Kong Guk Ok who was licking her hand on her mother's back.

I discovered Kong Guk Ok at last in 1967. It was after her mother had died. If her mother had known that Kim Il Sung was Kim Sung Ju, she would have called on me. Apparently she said nothing about her husband's activities to her daughter because she did not know who Kim Il Sung was and, moreover, she was afraid that the communist party which had seized power was prejudiced against her husband who belonged to the Independence Army.

I sent Kong Guk Ok to the Higher Party School. After her graduation she worked for the Pyongyang City Party Committee and in the museum of the Ministry of Railways. Because she is now too old to work, she is spending the rest of her life at home on an old-age pension. Kim Bo An from Guyushu was a friend of my father's, as Hyon Ha Juk was. Once he was a company commander of the Independence Army. He said with regret that I had never visited his house, and only went to Mr. Hyon's, I was told. When friends of mine called on him, he said that he had been on intimate terms with Kim Hyong Jik and was friendly with Sung Ju, too, but that I had not visited him.

From then on I dropped in at his house whenever I went to Guyushu. He had established a pharmacy and offered some of the money coming from it to support our Samgwang School. As a man of great enthusiasm for education, he was deeply concerned in enlightening the young people and children. Whenever we requested him to give a lecture at Samgwang School he readily complied. He said that the people of Guyushu did not know even how to count money, so he worried about how we would gain the independence of Korea with such ignorant people. Nowadays people may not believe that adults could not count money, but in those days many of the Chinese and Koreans living in Jirin were not able to calculate prices.

The money issued in the province was different from that being circulated in the counties and, in addition, there were various kinds of money of different values, such as the Jirin government cheque, the Fengtian rayang, the Jirin syotayang and the silver coin. So many people could not calculate prices in the markets.

We got the peasants together at the night school and taught them how to calculate prices. Seeing that those who had been regarded so ignorant were now mastering the four rules of arithmetic, Kim Bo An

said with satisfaction, "Of course, Koreans are naturally clever." He observed the lessons at the night school and at Samgwang School, saying that seeing their development from ignorance to intelligence was very interesting.

Every student of the advanced course at Samgwang School was clever and resourceful. Among them Ryu Chun Gyong and Hwang Sun Sin still remain in my memory as unforgettable figures. Both of them came to the school on the recommendation of the revolutionary organization in Kalun. Ryu Chun Gyong's father Ryu Yong Son helped us in our revolutionary activities, teaching the pupils at Chinmyong School.

At that time Comrades Ryu and Hwang were only 14 or 15 years old. When we were returning to Kalun or Jirin after finishing our work in Guyushu, we would ask them to carry our weapons. The warlords were not so careful in searching women. The two girls always complied with our request. They would follow about 50 meters behind us with our weapons under their skirts. The warlord authorities searched us carefully, but they allowed the two girls to pass without taking any serious notice of them.

Hwang Sun Sin returned home after liberation and worked as a farmer in her home village. She worked well, worthy of a member of the children's expeditionary corps in her Samgwang School days and became famous for her good harvests. She enjoyed respect and love among the people throughout her life and, in the postwar period, worked as a deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly.

Ryu Chun Gyong lived in various parts of Manchuria before returning home in 1979, saying that she would spend the last years of her life in the homeland as Lee Gwan Rin was doing. If she had returned home at a young age as Hwang had done, she would have become a famous career woman and enjoyed a more worthwhile life in her old age for the society and people. Of the girl pupils at Samgwang School she was the best at writing and speaking. She was clear-headed and very promising.

## 5.1. The Earth in Agony

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With the advent of 1931 the whirlwind of white terrorism that had started in the wake of the May 30 and August 1 Uprisings swept across the whole territory of Manchuria with increasing force. In an attempt to root out the revolutionary forces that had been painstakingly fostered over many years by the Korean communists and patriots, the enemy resorted to bloody repression everywhere. When I arrived in east Manchuria, I found the atmosphere there more strained than in south or central Manchuria; the consequences of the uprisings were even more horrible and devastating there.

When I saw the heads of the rebels on spikes at the South Gate of Dunhua, I realized how far the offensive of the enemy against the revolutionary forces had gone. Even after the May 30 and August 1 Uprisings the factionalists and flunkies who were steeped in dogmatism and petty-bourgeois vainglory staged riots in the name of anniversary revolts, harvest revolts and terror revolts on such occasions as the anniversary of National Humiliation Day, the anniversary of the October Revolution and the anniversary of the Guangzhou Uprising. The number of such riots reached several hundreds. This was why the storm of terrorism by the enemy was continuing into the following year.

In the course of this nearly all the revolutionary organizations in Jiandao broke up. Even the people who had followed the insurgents with food for them, to say nothing of the hardcore men who had fought in the front line, were all captured or killed. The organizations we had rebuilt a year before when we were on our way to the River Tuman also suffered a considerable loss. Some of those taking part in the uprisings either surrendered to the enemy or fell away from the revolutionary organizations.

When I visited villages in search of the organizations that had gone underground, some people would not speak to me and would only look at my face fearfully. Others would say, "The communist party has ruined Jiandao," "The whole area of Jiandao has become a sea of blood, a sea of flames due to the senseless moves of the communist party," and "Because they dance to the tune of the communist party, all your family will be exterminated," and would turn away from or give a wide berth to people known to be communists, regardless of their affiliation.

When I went to Mingyuegou, Li Chong San who was a member of the Weng district party committee told me of the afflictions he had gone through following the uprisings. He said: "Those higher up tell me incessantly to go among the masses and restore and expand the organizations, but to be frank with you, I find meeting people now uninteresting and discouraging. Those people who used to treat me with respect as a revolutionary, and even those who were admitted to the organization on my recommendation, have been keeping out of my way for months now.

I feel so sad I can hardly carry on my revolutionary work. The wind of revolt blew a few times and public feelings have turned nasty in Jiandao, I tell you. Sometimes I have the sudden thought that, if I

have to live on like this with people giving me the cold shoulder, I would rather give up the revolution and go away somewhere just to earn a living, and then I shall find peace of mind. But it's easier said than done. how can a revolutionary abandon his original aim that he was determined to attain, come what may? In any event there must be some measures taken to find a way out, but I'm quite at a loss what to do, and I only resent the confused situation."

This was the anguish of Li Chong San and, at the same time, my anguish. All the revolutionaries in Jiandao experienced such mental agony in the years 1930-31. The situation was so grim and dark that even such a faithful and reticent old revolutionary as Li Chong San had unburdened himself to me in that way. Of course, he did not abandon the revolution. Later I met him again in Antu. While I was away touring many counties on the banks of the River Tuman, he was transferred to the Antu district party committee. His face was much brighter than when he had been in Wengshenglazi.

He said with great pleasure that things were going well at his new post. "Gone are the days of my nightmare," he remarked. This expressed the change in his life. I could not find a trace of the bitter and dismal look he had worn on his face when he complained that people kept aloof from him. But until I met Li Chong San at Wengshenglazi the revolutionaries in Manchuria had suffered terribly under the white terrorism and had had to suffer anguish due to the cold and wary attitude of the people.

I was also distressed with the same affliction. It was at that time that I had to eat watery maize gruel and pickled mustard leaves and stems for my meals and sleep in the cold, drafty front rooms of people's houses at night, resting my head on a wooden pillow and fighting with my hunger pangs. The greatest pain molesting me in those days was that of hunger. Moving about Jiandao, I suffered much from the cold and hunger. I had to pass the winter in my Western clothes without a quilted coat, and so I always suffered more from the cold than other people did. In houses where no bedclothes were available, I would lie down in my clothes at night and try to fall asleep.

When I stopped at the house of Li Chong San, they had no bedding or pillow to offer me. So I lay down in my Western clothes at night, but I felt so cold that I could not fall asleep. It was such a tormenting experience that later when I went to my home in Antu I told my mother of what I had gone through that night. On nearing this, in a few days my mother made me a large quilted coat that looked like that of a cart driver. Whenever I happened to stop for the night at a house with no bedclothes I would cover myself with the quilted coat and sleep cuddled up with my head on a wooden pillow wrapped in a handkerchief.

But such hardships were nothing to me. During my tour of Jiandao in the spring of that year I never once had a good night's sleep. When I lay down to sleep at night, I remained awake because of cold and hunger and, to add to that, I could not calm my mind at the thought of my murdered comrades and of the ruined organizations. I was also tormented by feelings of despair and loneliness caused by the people's unkind attitude. When I lay down in a cold room resting my head on my arm after meeting people who were cold and aloof, I could not get to sleep because of visions of trusting people floating before my eyes.

To tell the truth, we had pinned great hope on the Jiandao area. Although factionalism had been rife in Yanili, the other parts of Jiandao had been relatively free from the filth of factionalism. This had provided favorable conditions for the rapid growth of a new generation of communists in the area to develop the revolution in a new fashion. For many years our comrades had, through tireless efforts and painstaking work, pushed steadily ahead with preparations for taking the anti-Japanese revolution onto a higher stage in the area. Nevertheless, the two uprisings had severely impaired the results of their hard work. The Left tendency had bewitched the masses for a time with its ultra revolutionary phrases and slogans, but the harm it did was as serious and destructive as this.

I believed it was not absurd to say that the Left tendency was an inverted manifestation of the Right tendency. So we hastened to Jiandao, setting aside everything else, out of our desire to make good the damage caused by the Left excesses and speed up the preparations for switching over to the armed struggle as soon as possible. Our expectations had been great when we came to Jiandao, but the damage suffered there was more disastrous than anticipated and, moreover, the people regarded the revolutionaries with distrust and remained aloof from them, witnessing such a state of affairs was terribly distressing. What could be sadder for the fighters who were devoted to the people than to be forsaken by the people, who had given birth to them?

If a revolutionary should forfeit the people's confidence and support even for a single day, he can scarcely be regarded as a living man. When the masses were cold and unkind towards the revolutionaries, regardless of their affiliation, we were deeply grieved because to our great regret the uprisings had discredited the communists, the masses had lost faith in their leaders and were falling away from the organizations and barriers of distrust and misunderstanding had appeared between the Korean people and the Chinese people. This was our greatest anguish at the time.

But we did not just remain in a state of distress, anguish and agony. If a revolutionary did not face problems in his struggle, he was not conducting a revolution. Faced with an ordeal, he should strengthen his resolve and pull through it without flinching and full of confidence. In 1931 we worked tirelessly to sweep away the evil consequences of the May 30 Uprising in Jiandao. The first obstacle in the way of implementing the line adopted at the Kalun Meeting was the aftermath of this uprising. Without removing this obstacle quickly and regrouping the revolutionary forces, it would be impossible to save the revolution from the crisis and to develop it.

When departing for east Manchuria after winding up the Wujiazi Meeting, I set myself and my comrades two tasks.

One was to conduct a general review of the aftereffects of the May 30 Uprising. Although we had not planned or directed it, we felt it necessary to analyze and review the uprising in a scientific manner from various angles. Despite the fact that the revolt had gone from setback to setback, there were still fanatical believers in terrorism and adherents to Li Li-san's line in east Manchuria and they were instigating the masses to conduct a reckless, violent struggle. Li Li-san's line of "victory first in one or a few provinces" was a dogmatic application of Lenin's proposition on the possibility of victory in the socialist revolution

in one country.

This line had been a powerful stimulant in urging the masses to riot. It was a line laid down by someone who held power in the Chinese party and passed down through organizational channels. Therefore, people followed it for a long time until the man responsible, that is Li Li-san, resigned from his post in the party and his view was labeled as Left adventurism. In spite of their bitter experience of failure and setback, the people could not shake themselves free from the sweet illusion they had been given by Li Li-san.

A review of the May 30 Uprising would free them from this illusion. We decided to warn people against the careerism, fame-seeking and petty-bourgeois vainglory of the factionalists and flunkeys through a review of the May 30 Uprising. I thought that the review would also mark a historic turning-point in awakening the revolutionaries in Manchuria to the importance of a scientific strategy and tactics and a method of leading the masses.

The other task was to put forward a correct line for organizing the broad masses into a single political force and to equip the new generation of communists with this line. The communists in the Jiandao area had no clear organizational line to serve them as a guide in restoring and consolidating the ruined organizations and expanding and strengthening them. The factionalists and flunkeys active in east Manchuria were committing a glaring Left error also in organizing the masses.

While advocating a "theory of class revolution," they admitted only poor peasants, hired farmhands and workers to the organization. They regarded all the other sections of society as having nothing to do with the revolution. In consequence, the people left out of the organization would say in anger: "So this is what communism is like!

The small fry are closeted together, leaving all the other people out in the cold. That's communism, then." In order to remove this exclusivist tendency and unite the patriotic forces of all social quarters, it was imperative to lay down and implement as soon as possible a correct organizational line which would make it possible to overcome the flunkeys and dogmatic tendency of clinging to the propositions of the classics and the experience of other countries and unite and take in all the patriotic forces.

I set this as the object of the first stage of my work in Jiandao as I hurried on my way to east Manchuria. But while on my way towards Changchun in company with Ryu Bong Hwa and Choe Duk Yong after giving guidance in the work of the mass organizations at Guyushu, I was arrested by the reactionary warlord authorities because of a report made by a spy. The warlord authorities had been keeping a sharp watch on our activities. They were as eagle-eyed as the Japanese police.

They were even aware that we were going to east Manchuria to prepare for an armed struggle. Having realized that Guyushu was a major operational center of the Korean communists in central Manchuria, the warlord authorities had instructed the administration office of Yitong County to send an inspector there and had all our movements closely watched.



It had been spying on our movements. It was this Li who informed the inspector when we left Guyu and set off in the direction of Changchun. We were arrested at Duonandun by guard corps members who had rushed to the spot on the instructions of the inspector. After a few days' interrogation in the detention room of the county office, we were escorted to Changchun, where we spent some 20 days behind bars.

That was my third time in prison. Headmaster Li Guanghan and teacher He from Yuwen Middle School in Jirin happened to be in Changchun at the time. On hearing of my arrest, they went to the warlord authorities and protested strongly, saying, "Kim Sung Ju was found innocent and acquitted at Jirin prison, so why have you arrested him again? We stand guarantee for Kim Sung Ju." I was set free thanks to the help of the two teachers.

They were both communist sympathizers who had an understanding of communism, and that was why, I presume they did not hesitate to come to my rescue when I was in trouble. When I saw how they sympathized with me, protected me and understood our cause with their whole hearts as ever, I was deeply touched and filled with great emotion, an event which I could not forget all my life.

The first thing we did after arriving in east Manchuria was to conduct a short training course in Dunhua for the men of the Korean Revolutionary Army and hardcore members of the revolutionary organizations. In this short course lectures were given on the tasks for stepping up the preparations for an armed struggle in real earnest and the ways to implement them, on the cardinal problems arising in providing unified leadership to the basic party organizations and on the question of uniting the dispersed revolutionary masses in organizations. This class, it could be said, was preparatory to the Winter Mingyuegou Meeting held in December that year.

After that short course, I toured Antu, Yanji, Helong, Wangqing, Chongsong and Onsong giving guidance to the work of the revolutionary organizations in those areas. On the basis of a full understanding of the actual situation in Jiandao and in the six towns on the Korean side of the River Tuman, we called a meeting of cadres of the party and the Young Communist League at the house of Li Chong San in Wengshenglazi in mid-May, 1931. Historically this meeting is called the Spring Mingyuegou Meeting. Wengshenglazi means a rock giving out the sound of a ceramic jar.

Before the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, Mingyuegou used to be called Wengshenglazi. After they had usurped Manchuria, the Japanese established a railway station at Wengshenglazi and called it Mingyuegou. The name became accepted and people came to call the place Mingyuegou. At present Mingyuegou is the Antu county town, but when we held the meeting, it belonged to Yanji County.

The Spring Mingyuegou Meeting was attended by the cadres of the party and Young Communist League organizations, members of the Korean Revolutionary Army and underground workers, numbering dozens of people in all. Of the communists of the new generation in the Jiandao area, Paek Chang Hon and nearly all the other renowned revolutionaries were present at the meeting, I suppose.

My speech at the meeting was edited and published under the title Let Us Repudiate the "Left"

Adventurism Line and Follow the Revolutionary Organizational Line. In this speech I mentioned the two tasks I set on leaving for east Manchuria. As I had planned, at the meeting we analyzed and reviewed the true nature of the May 30 Uprising and put forward the revolutionary organizational line of Uniting the whole nation into a political force by firmly rallying the masses of workers, peasants and intellectuals and banding together the anti-Japanese forces of all other social sections around them.

The meeting discussed the tasks for the implementation of this organizational line, the tasks of building up a hard core of leadership and enhancing its independent role, of restoring and consolidating the ruined mass organizations and enlisting people from all walks of life in them, of tempering the masses in the practical struggle, and of strengthening the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples and promoting their friendship and solidarity.

At the same time, the tactical principles were laid down of advancing from small-scale struggles to large-scale ones and from economic struggles gradually to political struggles, and of skillfully combining legitimate struggles with underground ones, with special stress being laid on the matter of thoroughly overcoming the Left adventurism tendency.

It can be said in short that the Spring Mingyuegou Meeting in May 1931 was a gathering aimed at winning over the masses. The largest barrier to this was the Left adventurism line. This was why we resolutely criticized that line.

When we criticized Leftist and advanced the comprehensive organizational line, those attending the meeting voiced their whole hearted approval of it. Many people took the floor, and all their speeches were revolutionary. The speakers were unanimous in their opinion that Japan's invasion of Manchuria was imminent and that therefore they should make full preparations and fight a decisive battle when the time came. Since the meeting was attended by many revolutionary veterans, there were many things to listen to and learn from.

I learnt many lessons from the meeting. Following it, political workers left for all parts of Jiandao and the homeland. I stayed in Mingyuegou for some time directing the work of the party and mass organizations in the area before proceeding to Antu. My plan was to help the revolutionary work in Jiandao and in the homeland while staying in Antu. Antu was situated in a mountain recess a long way from the railways, main roads and cities, well beyond the reach of Japanese imperialism's evil power.

Surrounded by steep mountains and thick forests, the place was a favorable location for establishing contact with the organizations in the six towns and other areas in the homeland, to say nothing of the regions of Yanji, Helong, Wangqing, Hunchun, Fusong, Dunhua and Huadian, and was very convenient for founding and training a guerrilla army and promoting the work of building party organizations. The composition of the population was also very good.

In addition, Mt. Paekdu, our ancestral mountain, was nearby, and we, the people who had not forgotten our motherland even for a moment, could draw great mental comfort and inspiration from its solemn and

majestic appearance. On a serene, bright day, the silvery grey peaks of Mt. Paekdu were visible under the distant southwestern sky. At the sight of it in the distance, I felt my heart beating violently with a desire to take up arms and win back my country as soon as possible. Although we were going to launch an armed struggle in a foreign land, we desired to raise the sound of gunshots against Japan within sight of Mt. Paekdu. This was a feeling common to us all.

In April, after the short training course in Dunhua, I happened to go to Antu and guided the work of the mass organizations there. My mother was weak with illness. Medical science was still backward and no correct diagnosis could be made of what was wrong with her. She would only say that she felt as if a "lump" were kicking about inside her and take some kind of decoction. She did not care how serious her illness was but she worried about my moving about strange places all the time without a penny and gave herself body and soul to the work of the Women's Association.

As I went back to Antu after two months' absence, I was anxious in my mind about my mother. But when I arrived, I was relieved to see an unexpected glow in her cheeks. She used to tell me not to care about my home but devote myself heart and soul to the work of winning back our homeland, and yet when I turned up, she could not repress her joy and would try to conceal her sickly appearance.

On hearing of my arrival, my grandmother who had come from Mangyongdae rushed out in her stocking feet and gathered me into her arms. Since coming to Manchuria in the year of my father's death, she had stayed on in Fusong without returning home, eking out a scant existence with my mother. When my mother had moved to Antu from Fusong, she had gone, also. In Antu she had taken up residence at the house of Yong Sil's maternal grandparents, and stayed there and at my home in turns. Yong Sil was the only daughter of uncle Hyong Gwon. After my uncle's imprisonment, my aunt (Chae Yon Ok) had had a severe nervous breakdown. She had just had her first baby and was looking forward to a happy life when her husband was sadly taken away to prison. So she had good reason for falling ill.

After uncle Hyong Gwon had been condemned to 15 years penal servitude and started to serve his time in prison, I wrote to my aunt advising her to give her child to someone else and remarry. But she did not marry again. She wrote: Even my elder sister-in-law who has no husband has not remarried and is raising her three children in spite of all the hardships, so how can I marry for a second time when my husband is alive and well? If I take a second husband, how grieved the father of my Yong Sil will be when he hears of it in prison! If I give away Yong Sil to someone else and start a new home with another man, shall I be able to sleep in peace and shall I be able to eat? Never suggest such a thing again.

My aunt was a prudent, graceful and strong-willed woman. My mother had been living with her, but after coming to Antu, she had sent her sister-in-law to her parents' home for a change. My grandmother, who was then staying with my aunt at her parents' home, would look after her and keep her company. Then, when her thoughts ran to her sick eldest daughter-in-law, she would go hurriedly to my home and decoct some herb medicine and cook meals for my mother. While she looked after her two weak daughters-in-law, my grandmother silently worried a great deal. So she spent years in an unfamiliar land unable to return home readily.

This I think was due to her kind and sympathetic affection as a mother-in-law for her two pitiable, lonely daughters-in-law. The night I arrived in Antu, she slept at my side. I awoke in the dead of night to find my head resting on my grandmother's arm. It seemed to me that after I had fallen asleep, she had quietly pushed my pillow aside and taken my head in her arm. My grandmother's kindness touched my heart and I could not bring myself to shift my head back onto the pillow. But she was not asleep. She asked me quietly: "You've forgotten your home, haven't you?"

"How can I, grandma? Never for a moment have I forgotten Mangyongdae. I am longing to see my family and relatives at home."

"To be honest, I came to Manchuria to take all my family here back home. If I could not take you along with me, I thought I would still take back home your mother, your younger brothers and all the others. But your mother won't listen to me. She says that you have all come here pledging not to cross back over the River Yalu before winning back the country. How then can she turn back on the spur of the moment and retrace her steps just because your father has passed away?"

So stubborn is she that she would not even look back just once when we were leaving Fusong. So I cannot ask her any more to go back home. If your living here is helpful to the winning of Korea's independence, I won't try to take you away but go back to Mangyongdae alone. When you feel homesick and yearn for your grandfather and grandmother, please write us a letter. Then we'll think we've seen you. You know I can't come here often."

Later I could not comply with my grandmother's request even once. I did not write her a letter because I thought that she would hear of my name and the reports about the military achievements of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army carried often in the newspapers of my homeland. My grandmother sighed quietly as she said that if I was to do something great my mother should be in good health, and that it was embarrassing that she was working so hard while her illness was going from bad to worse. On hearing this, I could not sleep because of my anxiety about my mother. I had many things to worry about as her eldest son and the heir to the Mangyongdae family who should look to family affairs.

In those days it was much in vogue among the young people who were my revolutionary companions to think that a man who had stepped out on the road of struggle should naturally forget his family. The young revolutionaries were generally of the opinion that he who cared about his home was not equal to a great cause. Criticizing such a tendency, I would say that he who did not love his home could not truly love his country and the revolution. Yet, how much did I love and care for my home? It was my view of filial piety in those days that earnest devotion to the revolution represented the supreme love for one's family. I never thought of pure filial duty detached from the revolution. This was because I believed that the fate of a family and that of the country were inseparably interrelated with each other.

It is common knowledge that the peace of the country is a prerequisite to peace at home. It is a rule that national tragedy will inevitably affect the millions of families that make up the nation. Therefore, to safeguard the peace and happiness of families it is necessary to safeguard the country; and to safeguard

the country, everyone must faithfully discharge his duties as a citizen. But a man should not lose sight of his family on the ground that he is engaged in the revolution. Love for his family constitutes a motive force which prompts a revolutionary to the struggle. When his love for his family cools, his enthusiasm for the struggle will cool also.

I knew in principle about the interrelation between a family and the revolution, but I had no clear, established view of how a revolutionary devoted to the revolution should love his family. As I looked around the house, inside and out, after getting up in the next morning, I found many things that needed a male hand to put them right. There was not enough firewood, for one thing. I decided that I would find time to lend my mother a hand in looking after the housekeeping. Putting aside everything else, that day I went up the mountain with my brother Chul Ju.



*Photo: Kim Chul Ju, standing, and Zhang Wai-hua. Chul Ju, Kim Il Sung's younger brother, served with a Chiang Kai Sek guerrilla unit and was killed in action.*

I had decided to gather some firewood. But my mother came after us with a head-pad and a sickle in her hands. I wondered how she had discovered where we were, after she had gone out to the well. I implored her to go home but to no avail. "I haven't come just to help you. I want to have a talk with you here. Last night grandmother talked with you all night, didn't she?"

Mother smiled brightly as she said this. Only then did I understand As a matter of fact, grandmother would have me to herself. When she let go of me, my younger brothers would hang on to me and give me no peace. While collecting firewood, mother kept close at my side, speaking to me all the time.

"Did he? But why did he say he wanted to discuss with me?"

"He said he wanted to tell you he was displeased with you for going around telling the people that the May 30 Uprising was a mistake. He shook his head and said he could not see why a sensible young man like Sung Ju should be so critical of the uprising when it had been supported and countenanced by people higher up. I'm afraid you're out of favor with the people."

"That may be possible. It seems there are some people who don't take kindly to my views. But mother, what do you think?"

"I can't claim to know anything of the world. I only think it a serious matter when crowds of people are being killed and arrested. When all the hard core is gone, who will carry out the revolution?"

My mother's simple yet clear thought delighted me. The people always had an unerring eye. There could

never be a social phenomenon which defied the people's judgment. "You're right, mother. You have passed fairer judgment on the matter than that man Choe Dong Hwa. Even now, the revolution is suffering because of the uprising, isn't it? I have come to Antu to repair the damage."

"So I suppose you must dash around busily as you did last spring. Don't worry about household affairs again but devote yourself to your duties."

This was the point of what she wanted to say to me. She must have begun talking about Choe Dong Hwa so as to tell me this.

After that I dedicated myself heart and soul to the work of building up organizations, as my mother wished. Antu also had been greatly victimized because of the May 30 Uprising. To add to that, the work of organizing the masses was unsatisfactory in this area. To make Antu revolutionary it was essential above all else to expand the party organizations and party ranks and firmly establish the organizational leadership system of the party in the area. So in mid-June 1931 we formed the area party committee of Xiaoshahe, Antu County, with Kim Jong Ryong, Kim Il Ryong and other core elements, and gave the party committee the assignment of sending out political workers to the areas of Erdaobaihe, Sandaobaihe, Sidaobaihe, Dadianzi, Fuerhe and Chechangzi to set up basic party organizations.

Following the formation of the district party committee, Young Communist League organizations were extended to Liushuhe, Xiaoshahe, Dashuhe and Antu, and anti-Japanese organizations such as the Peasants' Association, Anti-Imperialist Union, Revolutionary Mutual-Relief Association and Children's Expeditionary Corps were founded in these areas.

As a result, the groundwork for organizing the masses was completed in the Antu area in the summer of that year. There was no village without an organization. The greatest problem in making Antu revolutionary was that the revolutionary ranks were divided among themselves. Antu was divided in two halves - north and south - with a river in between. Different youth organizations had these villages under their influence.

The young people's organization in the northern village was under the control of the followers of the Chongui-bu machinery and that in the southern village was under the thumb of such Chamui-bu people as Sim Ryong Jun. These two organizations were at daggers drawn, and even the young people's organization of the M-L group led by Choe Dong Hwa was reaching out its hand to them, thus greatly complicating the situation within the youth movement. This being the situation we did not limit ourselves to restoring the youth organizations to their original state but educated and led the young people to unite them into one organization. We guarded against and ruthlessly criticized the slightest attempt to split the youth movement.

This compelled people steeped in factional strife such as Choe Dong Hwa to adopt a prudent attitude to our opinion that a unified youth organization should be set up in the Antu area. In the process of making Antu revolutionary we ran up against the vehement obstructive moves of the hostile elements.

In places like Kalun and Wujiazi the village heads were all under our influence, but in Xinglongcun the village head cringed to the wicked landlord Wu Han-chang and acted as his spy. He always spied on the movements of the villagers and mass organizations and sent reports to the town. So we called a meeting of all the village inhabitants, men and women, young and old, to denounce the fellow, and threw him out of the village. A few days later Wu Han-chang came to bargain with me. He said:

"I am aware that you, Mr. Kim, are a communist. I am really worried because I am always away in old Antu and only my bodyguard remain here. If those reckless men in my bodyguard should find out who you are and do harm to you, I shall be an enemy of all the communists, shan't I? I am worried that I have to get along as I am doing now. Should the Japanese find out that I know about you, they will behead me right away before anyone else. So let's settle the matter amicably between ourselves. I pray you, Mr. Kim, to leave this place for all time. If you need money for your travel expenses, I'll give you as much as you like."

After hearing him out, I replied:

"There is nothing for you to worry about. I believe that, although you are a landlord, you must have a conscience as a Chinese man and hate the Japanese imperialists who are out to swallow up China.

"I think you have no cause to turn against us or hurt us. I take no exception to you and the Chinese young people who are members of your bodyguard.

"If you were a worthless man, I would not talk to you in this manner. Rather than worrying about me, you ought to take care that you are not called a 'running dog' of the Japanese ruffians."

At this, Wu Han-chang had nothing more to say and left Xinglongcun village. After that, the man and his bodyguard behaved discreetly towards us, maintaining a more or less neutral position. The newly-appointed village head always considered our position and carefully performed only those of his administrative duties that he was obliged to.

If we had failed to carry through the line of organizing the masses in Antu, we would have been unable to subdue such an important landlord as Wu Han-chang and neutralize him in the vast, wild land of Jiandao that was swept by white terrorism. The power of the organized masses was truly unlimited and there could be no such word as impossible for this power. The revolutionary organizations in Xinglongcun and the surrounding area moved forward in high spirits, expanding their forces.

## 5.2. The September 18 Incident

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When the revolutionary organizations in Antu became active, I went out to the local organizations in the Helong, Yanji and Wangqing areas in the summer and early autumn of 1931 and rallied the masses who had dispersed following the May 30 Uprising. The September 18 incident occurred when I was conducting brisk activities based in Dunhua, establishing contact with the comrades in Antu, Longjing, Helong, Liushuhe, Dadianzi and Mingyuegou. At the time I was working with activists from the Young Communist League in a rural village near Dunhua.

Early on the morning of the 19th of September Chen Han-zhang arrived suddenly in the village where I was staying and told me that the Kwangtung Army had attacked Fengtian. "It's war! The Japanese have at last started the war. Groaning, he plumped down on the earthen verandah like a man with a heavy burden. The word war that came from his lips sounded pathetic.

The incident had been foreseen long before and its date virtually coincided with our guess, but I was shocked when I thought of the calamity it would bring to hundreds of millions of Chinese people, as well as to the Korean people, and of the great change that would affect my fate.

Later we learned what had happened from various sources. On the night of the 18th of September 1931 the railways of Japan's Manchurian Railway Company were blown up in Liutiaogou west of Beidaying in Shenyang. The Japanese imperialists then launched a surprise attack on the absurd excuse that Zhang Xue-liang's army had blown up the railways and attacked the Japanese garrison, and they occupied Beidaying and seized the airport in Fengtian on the morning of the 19th.

After Shenyang, Dandong, Yingkou, Changchun, Fengcheng, Jirin, Dunhua and other big cities in the northeast of China were occupied in succession by the Kwangtung Army and the army stationed in Korea which had crossed the River Yalu. The Japanese aggressor army occupied almost all of Liaoning and Jirin Provinces in less than five days and surged towards Jinzhou, extending the front. They were advancing at lightning speed.

The Japanese imperialists shifted the responsibility to China, distorting the truth of the incident, but no one in the world believed their version, for people knew only too well the nature of the crafty Japanese. As those who concocted the incident later admitted, it was the secret service of the Kwangtung Army that blew up the railways of the Manchurian Railway Company and touched off the incident. In an article published in those days we disclosed that the Liutiaogou incident was caused by the Japanese imperialists as part of this scheme to swallow up Manchuria.

On the morning of the 18th of September 1931 when the Kwangtung Army was on standby prior to the Manchurian incident one of the plotters, Colonel Tohihara Kenji (chief of the secret service in Shenyang),



unexpectedly appeared in Seoul. During a call on Kanda Masadane, senior officer of the staff of the Japanese army stationed in Korea, he gave a roundabout account of the aim of his Visit to Korea, saying that he was visiting him because of his annoyance at the press. What he meant was that he had come to Korea to avoid the harassment to which he would be subjected by the press when the Manchurian incident broke out.

At the same time General Watanabe Jotaro, commander of the Japanese air force, is said to have visited General Hayashi Senjuro, commander of the Japanese army in Korea in Seoul to take a rest, hosting a banquet at the Paekunjang restaurant. Their trip was very peaceful and leisurely.

When I read this historical account, I was reminded of the fact that Truman had stayed at his villa without any particular reason at the time of the outbreak of the Korean war. We find common features in the September 18 incident and the Korean war not only in the fact that these two wars began without any declaration of war, but also in that those who provoked the two wars displayed the craftiness and impudence that are incidental to imperialists and their disposition to invade and dominate other countries.

Some say that history is a sequence of non-repetitive events, but we cannot entirely ignore the similarity and common trends existing in different events.

We had always known that Japan was going to swallow up Manchuria by provoking the like of the September 18 incident. We foresaw it when the Japanese imperialists had Zhang Zuo-lin assassinated by a bomb, when the Wanbaoshan incident took place with the result that the Korean and Chinese peoples were pitted against each other and when they created the incident in which Captain Nakamura, who was serving with the staff of the Kwangtung Army and was spying in the guise of an agronomist, "disappeared."

I was particularly shocked by the Wanbaoshan incident. Wanbaoshan is a small rural village about 20 miles northwest of Changchun. The Wanbaoshan incident was a dispute over the irrigation canal in the village between the Korean immigrants and the Chinese natives. The Korean immigrants had dug the canal to draw water from the River Yitonghe with a view to turning the dry fields into paddies, but the canal encroached upon the fields of the Chinese natives. Also the damming of the river might cause floods in the rainy season. So the natives were against the project.

The Japanese egged the Korean peasants on to complete the project, and thus extended the dispute into Korea, causing casualties and damage to property. Thus they deftly used a local dispute, common in the rural villages, to cause discord between nations. If the Japanese had not sown discord, and if farsighted men from among the Korean and Chinese peoples had followed the dictates of reason, the dispute would have been a brief quarrel and would not have developed into a fight.

The incident sowed great misunderstanding, mistrust and antagonism between the Korean and Chinese peoples. I considered the matter all night without sleeping. Why should the people of two countries who were suffering similar misfortune because of the Japanese imperialists fight a bloody battle with their

fists? What a shame it was to be feuding with each other because of a canal when the two nations should fight the common anti-Japanese war! Why did the misfortune arise and who caused it? Whom did it benefit and whom did it harm?

It suddenly struck me that the incident was a prearranged farce, a prelude to something terrible. Above all it roused my suspicion that the Japanese consul in Changchun was out to "protect" the interests and rights of the Koreans, while meddling in a casual conflict between peasants. It was in fact a political farce that should have been exposed to public ridicule that those who had taken away the farmland of Korea through the predatory "Land Survey Act" and pursued a murderous agricultural policy were suddenly out to "defend" the Korean peasants in the guise of protectors.

I was suspicious of the fact that the branch office of the newspaper Kyongsong Ilbo had hastily reported the dispute in Wanbaoshan to its head office and that an extra issue was hastily put out and distributed in the homeland. Did this not mean that the best brains of Japanese imperialism had thought up a terrible trick, deftly using a small local dispute, and that it had worked? What was the purpose of it?

The Japanese imperialists were evidently making hasty preparations for something while we were putting in order the revolutionary organizations in the mountain recess of Jiandao. The "disappearance" of Captain Nakamura in the summer of that year when the aftermath of the Wanbaoshan incident was still evident brought Sino-Japanese relations to the brink of war.

Simultaneously with this incident alarming events were taking place in Japan proper. Some young officers in Tokyo got together and held a memorial service for Nakamura at the Yasukuni Shrine, drew a Japanese flag with their blood and put it up on top of the shrine to fan the war fever of the nation. Various organizations with interests in Manchuria held a joint meeting to discuss the problems of Manchuria and Mongolia and told people that the use of force was the only way to settle the problems there.

At that time I judged that the invasion of Manchuria was only a matter of time. I had ample grounds for this.

As was mentioned in Tanak's Memorial to the Throne, it was basic Japanese policy to swallow up Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia and then China so as to dominate Asia. Militarist Japan, ambitious to become the leader of Asia, was advancing steadily in accordance with her national policy.

The Japanese imperialists massed the Kwangtung Army in Shenyang and completed their arrangements for an attack, using as an excuse the "disappearance" of Captain Nakamura. Chen Han-zhang was very worried at this. He said, "The Japanese army is going to invade Manchuria, yet we are as good as empty-handed. What should we do?" He had put some hope in the Zhang Xue-liang-led warlords of the Kuomintang.

They have been irresolute so far, but once the sovereignty of the nation was violated, they would have to resist in the face of the pressure of hundreds of millions of Chinese people, even if only to save their face,

he thought. I said to Chen Han-zhang, "It is absurd to expect that the warlords of the Kuomintang will resist.

Remember Zhang Zuo-lin's assassination in a bombing'. Clearly it was the work of the Kwangtung Army and they obtained convincing proof of the fact, but the warlords of the Northeast Army made no inquiries into the matter and did not call the Kwangtung Army to account. They even received the Japanese who went to offer their condolences and pay their respects to-the departed. How can this be attributed only to their prudence, weakness and irresolution?

The Kuomintang is throwing an army of hundreds of thousands of men into the central Soviet region in Jiangxi Province in an attempt to destroy the communist party and launch 'punitive operations' against the Worker-Peasant Red Army. The ulterior motive of the Kuomintang is to annihilate the communist party and the Worker-Peasant Red Army even if it means yielding part of the territory to the Japanese imperialists.

It is the line of the Kuomintang to eliminate the communist forces and control the political situation in the country before beating back the foreign enemy. Zhang Xue-liang, who began leaning towards the Kuomintang after his father's death, is blindly following its cursed line. Therefore, he will not resist the Japanese and it is absurd to pin your hopes on him."

He listened to me attentively but did not express any support for my view. Nor did he relinquish his hope in the warlords, and he said, "Even if Zhang Xue-liang follows the line of the Kuomintang, surely he will resist the aggressors, since he is likely to lose northeast China, the political, military and economic base of his army."

Then the September 18 incident broke out and the hundreds of thousands of men of Zhang Xue-liang army surrendered Shenyang without offering any resistance. That was why Chen Han-zhang had come running to me, his face pale and shaking his fist.

"Comrade Sung Ju, I was naive and an idle dreamer."

His whole body was shaking. He reproached himself in excitement, saying, "I was foolish enough to think that Zhang Xue-liang would defend northeast China. He is a coward and a beaten general who did not resist Japan, thus breaking faith with the Chinese nation. When I went to Shenyang before, the whole city was swarming with his troops. Every street was alive with troops shouldering new rifles. To think that an army of such strength retreated without firing a shot! How lamentable! I can't understand it."

That morning Chen Han-zhang, who was normally cool and mild, could not keep his feelings under control and was shouting. Later Zhang Xue-liang came to support resistance to Japan and contributed to collaboration between the Kuomintang party and the Chinese Communist Party, but his failure to act at the time of the Manchurian incident lost him popularity. I showed Chen Han-zhang into my room and said quietly, "Comrade Chen, don't get excited. We expected the Japanese army to invade Manchuria,

didn't we? Why then are you making such a fuss? From now on we must closely watch developments in the situation and prepare ourselves to counter them."

"Of course we must. How annoying! I seem to have pinned too great a hope on Zhang Xue-liang. I could not sleep all night, and this morning came straight here.

"Comrade Sung Ju, do you know how strong is the Northeast Army under the command of Zhang Xue-liang? It is 300,000 men strong. I say, 300,000! It is a huge army. To think that a 300,000-strong army gave up Shenyang in a night without firing a shot. Is our Chinese nation so inferior and powerless? Is the homeland of Confucius, Zhuge Liang and Du Fu and Sun Yat-sen in such decline?"

Thus Chen Han-zhang lamented, beating his chest. Tears trickled from his eyes. It was natural that he should lament the tragic fate of his nation. He was lamenting out of the pure feeling of someone who loves his country. His lamenting was his inalienable right. I once wept secretly in a pine grove in the homeland, thinking of the homeland that had been trodden underfoot by the Japanese. It was on Mangyong Hill on the evening of one Sunday when I had been in a gloomy mood all day, unable to calm my anger on returning from the walled city of Pyongyang where I had seen an old man, his body covered in bruises, writhing in agony as he was kicked by the Japanese police.

That day I was in a rage like Chen Han-zhang, thinking: How was it that our country with its proud history of 5,000 years should suffer the disgrace of being ruined in a day? How could we wipe away the disgrace?

In this light Chen Han-zhang and I suffered the same disgrace. Formerly common ideas had brought us closer. From then on the same status promoted our friendship. In adversity people become more intimate with one another and their friendship and affection deepen. In the past the Korean and Chinese peoples and communists had fraternized easily with each other because they shared a similar status, goal and cause. Imperialists form temporary alliances for profit, whereas communists forge firm internationalist unity for the liberation and welfare of humanity, the goal of their common struggle.

I regarded Chen Han-zhang's sorrow as mine and the sufferings of the Chinese people as ours.

If Chiang Kaisek, Zhang Xue-liang and other heads of the political and military circles who had command of several million men had had such patriotism and insight as this youth from Dunhua had, the situation would have developed otherwise. If they had put the fate of the nation ahead of their interests and the interests of their groups and collaborated with the communists instead of opposing them, and roused the whole nation and the entire army to a war of resistance, they would have frustrated the invasion of the Japanese imperialists at the start and defended the country and people with credit.

But they gave no thought to the homeland and nation. Prior to Japan's invasion of Manchuria, Chiang Kaisek restricted the army's potential resistance by issuing to Zhang Xue-lian's Northeast Army a written command to the effect that "In the case of a challenge by the Japanese troops prudence should be

exercised to avoid conflict," which later roused the resentment of hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

Even after the outbreak of the September 18 incident Chiang Jieshi's government in Nanjing issued a capitulationism statement to the effect that the Chinese people and army should maintain their composure and exercise patience instead of resisting the Japanese troops, and this dampened the morale of the army and nation. The fate of Manchuria was as good as decided before the September 18 incident.

The government in Nanjing even sent delegates to Tokyo and held secret negotiation with the Japanese government in which the Japanese were told that Chiang Kaisek did not scruple to commit such a treacherous act as agreeing to yield to Japan the border area between the Soviet Union and China on the condition that Japan would not seize other regions of China.

Chiang Kaisek did not hesitate to commit the reckless act of sharing out to the Japanese a large piece of territory, abandoning his self-respect as the Head of State with a population of hundreds of millions and an area of several million square kilometers, because he feared the struggle of the people against the landlords, comprador capitalists and Kuomintang bureaucrats more than a Japanese attack.

The 300,000-strong Northeast Army fled, abandoning the whole of vast Manchuria with its inexhaustible natural resources, in the face of the Kwangtung Army whose strength was less than one-25th of its own.

I said to Chen Han-zhang, who was so indignant at the nation's ruin, "Now it is impossible to believe in any party, military clique or political force. We must believe only in ourselves and our strength. The situation requires that we arm the masses and come out in an anti-Japanese war. The only way out is to take up arms."

Chen Han-zhang grasped my hands firmly without saying a word.

I passed the whole of that day with him to divert him. I suffered the sorrow of a ruined nation more than Chen Han-zhang. He had lost part of his country, whereas I was deprived of the whole of mine.

He invited me to his house, so the next day I left for Dunhua with him. The September 18 incident shook not only Korea and China but also the rest of the world. The world, which had been alarmed at the annexation of Korea by Japan, raised a cry of protest at the September 18 incident. Mankind thought of the incident as a prelude to another world war.

Japan described it as an unexpected local incident which could be settled through negotiations between China and Japan, but the world's people did not believe her version. Public opinion in the world denounced Japan's attack on Manchuria as a violent act of aggression against a sovereign state and called for the withdrawal of the Japanese troops from the occupied area.

But the imperialists, headed by the US imperialists, assumed a sympathetic attitude towards the aggressive act of Japan, secretly hoping that Japan would turn her spearhead to the Soviet Union. The

League of Nations sent the Lytton-led fact-finding commission to Manchuria, but it failed to discriminate clearly between right and wrong, adopting an ambiguous attitude, and did not even call Japan the aggressor.

The incident shook the continent, the large army of the Zhang Xue-liang's military clique was routed in a day by the sweeping attack of the Japanese troops, and the morale of hundreds of millions of people was destroyed. The myth of the "invincible Japanese army born of its victory in the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War" became the reality. Waves of rage and horror swept not only Korea and Manchuria but also the rest of Asia. In the face of this terror all the armed forces, political forces, revolutionary organizations, public-spirited men and distinguished figures of different hues began to show their true colors.

The September 18 incident drove most of the remaining, disintegrated, troops of the Independence Army into the mountains and pushed those who advocated the cultivation of strength into the embrace of the Japanese imperialists. Soldiers from the Independence Army, dejected, returned home, burying their rifles in the ground, while the national reformists advocated collaboration with Japan. The public-spirited men who had clamored for a war of resistance for the salvation of the nation and had made a declaration of independence, went into exile abroad, singing the Nostalgia. Some independence champions fled to Jinzhou, Changsha or Xian, following Zhang Xueliang's retreating army and abandoning the former base of their activities.

The complicated process of the break-up between patriotism and betrayal of the nation, resistance to Japan and collaboration with her, and self-sacrifice and self-preservation proceeded rapidly within the nation after September 18. Each person attached himself to the positive or negative pole according to his view on life. The Manchurian incident acted as a touchstone revealing the tendency and true intention of each member of the nation. I continued my discussion with Chen Han-zhang on the September 18 incident in Dunhua for a few days. At first I, too, was extremely alarmed. I judged that the time had come for us to take up arms, but I did not know what to do and how to act, with the Japanese troops surging in en masse. But I soon recovered my composure and coolly watched the situation develop.

At that time I thought a great deal about the influence Japan's invasion of Manchuria would have on the Korean revolution.

With the sending of Japanese troops to Manchuria and its occupation we had the enemy at our side. The Japanese police authorities intensified their crackdown on the Korean independence champions and communists, getting help from the Chinese reactionary warlords on the strength of the "Mitsuya agreement," but the instances were few in which the army and police from Korea entered Manchuria across the border. The agreement with China did not allow the Japanese army and police to cross the border.

It was generally the police of the Japanese consulate in Manchuria who searched for and arrested the Korean revolutionaries there.

Before the Manchurian incident the Japanese army in Korea was not allowed to enter Manchuria. When withdrawing from Siberia during the Russian civil war, two companies of the Korea occupation army were stationed in Hunchun on the agreement of the Chinese side. These were the only troops occupying Korea that were stationed in northeast China.

However, with the September 18 incident Manchuria swarmed with Japanese troops. Tens of thousands of soldiers surged into Manchuria from Korea, Shanghai and Japan. Manchuria became the front where friend fought foe. The border between Korea and Manchuria was as good as removed with the invasion of the Japanese troops.

The occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese troops caused great difficulties to us in our struggle, which we were waging with Manchuria as our base. We felt threatened by the Japanese army and police authorities in our activities, since one of the aims of Japan's invasion of Manchuria was to suppress the mounting national liberation struggle of the Korean people there and promote the maintenance of peace in Korea.

I realized that the iron club of the "new public peace maintenance act" enforced in Korea would fall on the heads of the Koreans in Manchuria.

If Japan established a puppet state in Manchuria, it would present a great obstacle to us. In fact, "Manchukuo," which was set up by Japan later, became a great hindrance to us in our activities. Japan's occupation of Manchuria would reduce the hundreds of thousands of Korean people who lived there with a fence around them, to misery.

So an end was to be put to the freedom of the Korean immigrants who lived out of the reach of the government-general administration in a place that had been free of Japanese. Leaving their home towns to seek a living in a foreign country was to become pointless for Koreans. But we did not consider only the unfavorable aspects of the September 18 incident. If we had resigned ourselves to pessimism and merely lamented, considering only the unfavorable aspects of it, we would have remained dejected and failed to rise.

I was reminded of a Korean saying "If one wants to catch a tiger, one must enter the tiger's den." The philosophy of life our ancestors had grasped and formulated over several thousand years told me the profound truth.

I thought: Manchuria is a tiger's den; in this den we must capture the tiger called Japanese imperialism; now is the time to take up arms and fight; if we do not fight to a finish at a time like this, we shall never prove our worth.

With this thought I made a firm resolve to rise, without losing the opportunity. For victory in the future war the Japanese imperialists will intensify their colonial rule in Korea and become hell-bent on economic plunder to supply their war needs. National and class conflicts will grow extremely acute and

the anti-Japanese feelings of the Korean people will mount. So if we form armed ranks and begin the anti-Japanese war, the people will actively aid and support us materially and morally.

Hundreds of millions of Chinese people will also rise in a nationwide anti-Japanese war of resistance.

The invasion of Manchuria will be escalated into aggression in China proper and China will be enveloped in the flames of an all-out War. It goes without saying that the Chinese people, who have a strong Sense of independence, will not look with folded arms on the danger facing their homeland. By us stand numerous Chinese communists and patriots who are burning with the desire to frustrate the imperialists' aggression and defend their national sovereignty, and hundreds of millions of Chinese brothers who love freedom and independence. Those who sympathize with us Koreans as stateless people will become reliable allies and fight our enemy in the same trench with us. The Chinese people, a great ally with an allied army, will always stand by us.

If Japan extends the war into China proper, she will come into head-on collision with the interests of the Western powers, which will lead to another war. If the Sino-Japanese war becomes protracted and Japan becomes involved in another world war, she will suffer difficulties due to shortages of manpower and material resources.

That Japan has swallowed up Manchuria means a further extension of the area controlled by her. The extension of the area she controls will inevitably weaken her ability to rule. Japan will not be able to maintain the rigidity of her colonial rule. The whole world will denounce imperialist Japan as an aggressor and Japan will inevitably be isolated in the world.

All this will be strategically favorable for our revolution. This is what I thought. With the general retreat of Zhang Xue-liang's army and the sweeping attack of the Japanese aggressor army, a marvelous opportunity was created for us. The officials of the government and administration offices and security police stopped work and fled in all directions. The local offices of the rule of the warlords had all shut their doors within a few days.

With the flight of Zhang Xue-liang's army the ruling system of the warlords was paralyzed. The Japanese aggressor army failed to direct its efforts to the maintenance of public peace, being bent on following up its success in the war. As a result, chaos prevailed for some time in Manchuria.

We decided that the situation would persist for a while until the Japanese imperialists established their new ruling system on the continent. This void afforded us a golden opportunity to form armed ranks without anxiety. The opportunity was not to be lost. The revolution was approaching a fresh turning point.

The time had come for each person to decide what he should do to carry out the duties devolving on the Korean revolution and to devote himself to fulfilling them. The September 18 incident was aggression against the Chinese people and, at the same time, an attack against the Korean people and communists in



Manchuria. So we Korean communists had to counter it.

I decided to speed up the formation of armed ranks.

## 5.3. To Oppose Armed Force with Armed Force

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Owing to the September 18 incident we were confronted with the task of starting the anti-Japanese war immediately. The time was ripe for responding with the cannonade of justice to the cannonade of injustice which had heralded a new world war. On hearing of the invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese imperialists, all the revolutionaries came out of hiding. At the sound of the bombardment shaking the continent, the people in Manchuria generally came to their senses in the autumn of that year. The bombardment did not dishearten the people but rather awakened and inspired them to make renewed efforts. A new fighting spirit emerged in Manchuria, which had been reduced to ashes owing to the oppression of the enemy.

We considered that a good opportunity had arisen for us to harden the masses in the struggle. Frankly speaking, in those days all the people in Manchuria were distressed owing to their feeling of frustration caused by the failure of the uprising. If we were to take the revolution onto another stage, we had to give them confidence. However, we could not do so if we merely made appeals and talked idly.

In order to give the masses, who were used to failure, strength and confidence, we had to inspire them to a new struggle and lead the struggle to a victorious conclusion. Only a victorious struggle could save the masses from their nightmarish inactivity. An armed struggle waged by a few farsighted people alone would not bear fruit; the masses had to be tempered through a struggle.

The outbreak of the September 18 incident afforded the people in east Manchuria the opportunity to rise in a struggle once again. The mutinous advance of the people in the homeland also gave them great impetus.

Successive tenancy disputes by the peasants and anti-Japanese uprisings were taking place in the homeland. Typical examples of this were the tenancy disputes at the Kowon Farm of the Oriental Development Company, at the Ryongchon "Fuzi" Farm and at the Kimje "Oki" Farm. In the Ryongchon area the peasants' struggle continued even after 1929. At that time the organizations there fought well in connection with us. Many of our underground workers worked there.

More than 3,000 peasants in Yonghung and over 2,000 peasants in Samchok started a huge uprising against the Japanese imperialists who, after the September 18 incident, were intensifying their fascist oppression and plunder on the excuse of a "time of emergency." At that time we organized a harvest struggle in Jiandao.

The struggle committees in various areas had propaganda squads and pickets under them and made full preparations printing leaflets and appeals and formulating fighting slogans and so on. Then they started the harvest struggle with each area under the control of a revolutionary organization as a unit. At the beginning it was a legal, economic struggle aimed at cutting farm rents.

Some historians gave this struggle the name of "Harvest Uprising," but I did not think this name to be appropriate. The harvest struggle was neither a copy nor a repetition of the May 30 Uprising. It was a victorious mass struggle waged according to a new tactical principle on the basis of completely getting rid of the evil ideological aftereffects of Li Li-san's reckless Leftist action. While the factionalists had played the leading role in the May 30 Uprising, in the harvest struggle the communists of the new generation led the masses. The participants in the harvest struggle did not regard violence as their main resort.

The participants in the May 30 Uprising had no scruples about committing arson and murder, setting fire to transformer sub-stations and educational institutions and overthrowing all the landlords and wealthy people. The participants in the harvest struggle, however, put forward just demands such as the three-to-seven or four-to-six system of tenancy and acted in an orderly manner under the unified leadership of the struggle committee and in concert with the neighboring villagers.

Their demand for a cut in rent could in no way be considered unjustified in view of the circumstances of the peasants, who were on the brink of starvation. Because this demand was just, even the government of Jirin Province was obliged to proclaim that the tenancy system would be three to seven or four to six (30-40 per cent for the landlord and 60-70 per cent for the tenant).

Violence was never employed against those landlords who acceded peacefully to the demands of the peasants. Violence was employed against the evil landlords who stubbornly rejected the demands of the struggle committee, and against the soldiers and policemen who suppressed the struggle of the peasants by force of arms. In the case of the obstinate landlords who did not accede to the demands of the peasants, the participants in the struggle carried the share of the tenants - 60 or 70 per cent of the crops - from the fields or seized their granaries and divided the grain in them among themselves.

The predatory Oriental Development financial institutions, usurers and reactionary organizations which assisted the Japanese imperialists in their rule, such as the "Association of Korean Residents," were also targets of the struggle.

The following happened when I returned to Antu after leading the harvest struggle in Yanji. Choe Dong Hwa, who had been in hiding to avoid discovery by the Japanese imperialists after the May 30 Uprising, came to see me. He was worried that the harvest struggle was gradually assuming a violent character. He was the instigator of the May 30 Uprising in Antu. Furthermore, he later disagreed with us when we defined that uprising as a blind Leftist action and even tried to argue the matter with us. But he had suddenly changed and was talking about the harmfulness of violence. So, I was greatly surprised. He said:

"Comrade Sung Ju, what is the matter with you? You who once denounced the May 30 Uprising as a blind Leftist act, are now using violence in a purely economic struggle. How on earth should I understand this?"

Having asked me this, he walked round me several times, his arms folded inside his sleeves. He seemed

to be inwardly pleased at the thought that he had hit home.

"Sir, you seem to misunderstand something. Do you consider the 'red violence' advocated by you during the May 30 Uprising to be similar to that which we are employing in the harvest struggle?"

I asked him this without even thinking that I was being impolite. Choe Dong Hwa said:

"Of course there may be a slight difference. However, violence is violence, isn't it?" To this I replied: "We employ violence only when there is a just reason and when it is proper to do so. For instance, if a landlord does not obey the peasants' demand, we seize his granary by force. When the soldiers and policemen arrest people, we use force to release our comrades. So, should we be benevolent towards the enemy when they are suppressing our struggle by resorting to violence?"

Choe's reply was: "I am critical of you not because I don't know the general principle of Marxism that violence must be met with violence. What I mean is that now is not the time to answer violence with violence. The May 30 Uprising is an old story. Unfortunately our revolution is at an ebb."

"At an ebb?"

"Yes, it's at an ebb. It's a period of two steps back. Even the Stolypin reactionary period was no darker than now, I believe. Didn't you see the ease with which the Kwangtung Army occupied the whole of Manchuria? Even the 300,000-strong army of Zhang Xue-liang retreated. At a time like this we must preserve the revolutionary forces instead of exposing them. If you provoke the enemy, I fear that such a tragedy as the large-scale 'punitive operation' which began in 1920 may recur in east Manchuria."

Thus Choe Dong Hwa insisted on preventing the harvest struggle from becoming a violent struggle and on stopping the participants in the struggle from taking up arms. He also opposed our idea for an armed struggle, claiming that the time was not ripe for it and that undertaking it would be like building a castle on the sand.

Arguing with him was beyond my power. He was an intellectual with a clear head as well as a high level of communist consciousness. Therefore, it was hard to persuade him of the justness of my idea. He frequently quoted propositions from the classics to prove the justness of his assertion, and all his remarks were logical. It was not easy to convince Choe Dong Hwa of the justness of my idea.

In the final analysis, his assertion proceeded from his view that the revolution was at an ebb. Although he saw such unfavorable omens as the wholesale armed offensive of the Japanese imperialists, the rout of Zhang Xue-liang's troops and the breaking up of the Independence Army, he was utterly ignorant of the violent advance of the people in the homeland and in east Manchuria. It was without doubt a purblind man who was standing before me, a man who could not see reality even when it was clear to others.

The counterrevolutionary offensive and the flight of some cowardly groups did not immediately mean

that the revolution was at an ebb. Everything depended on the tendency of the popular masses, the motive power of the revolution.

As was the case with all the communists of the preceding generation, Choe Dong Hwa underestimated the strength of the popular masses. He could not regard the people as the motive force of the revolution, and he underestimated their strength and did not believe in it.

When I heard Choe Dong Hwa talking about the revolution being at an ebb, I felt the radical difference between the communists of the preceding generation and us. In the final analysis, it can be said that all the differences between them and us arose from our views of the popular masses. It was precisely because of that difference that we could not combine our efforts and were like strangers, although we shared the same ideal and aim. I said to Choe Dong Hwa:

"You may think it paradoxical, but I consider this moment, when the popular masses are advancing violently without yielding to the aggression of the Japanese imperialists, to be a period of a great upsurge in the revolution. We have decided to awaken and organize the masses immediately after the harvest struggle without missing the opportunity and thus take the anti-Japanese struggle onto a higher stage. No matter how the general trend of the times may change, my resolution will neither change nor waver."

Choe Dong Hwa could say no more and left in a bad temper.

Although people like Choe Dong Hwa were trying to stop us by talking about the disadvantages of revolutionary violence, we led the harvest struggle with confidence and without deviating in the least from the course we had chosen.

From September to the end of 1931 over 100,000 peasants in Jiandao waged a bloody struggle, refusing to yield in the face of the cruel suppression of the Japanese soldiers and policemen and the reactionary warlords.

In the course of this struggle many legendary incidents displaying the heroic mettle of the Korean nation took place. The story of the battle which the people of the Kaikou area fought against the Japanese and Manchurian soldiers and policemen on the ice of the River Tuman during the demonstration was an inspiration to the people in Manchuria.

The story of the dramatic end of Kim Sun Hui, a woman fighter, also emerged in the flames of the harvest and spring struggles. Kim Sun Hui was a member of the Red Guards in Yaksudong and a member of the harvest struggle committee there.

When some "punitive troops" appeared in Yaksudong, they asked her what she had in her stomach, poking her there with the muzzles of their rifles. It was near her time. Glaring at the Japanese soldiers from the garrison and policemen from the consulate as they surrounded her, she answered, "The best that can happen is that it will be a king, the worst that can happen is that it will be like you, who have to walk

the street before the outer gate." This famous response amazed the enemy. Finally Kim Sun Hui even bit out her tongue to ensure that she would not betray the secret of the organization. She ended her precious blooming life at the age of 22 in the flames kindled by the enemy.

The harvest struggle ended in the victory of the peasants.

Through this struggle the people of east Manchuria gained confidence in victory. For the first time they realized that the victory of the struggle depended on the indomitable will of the masses themselves as well as on the method of guidance. They looked up, with their eyes full of wonder, at the young communists of the new generation who had led the harvest struggle to victory, and they rallied closely around them.

Through the victory of the harvest struggle the masses discovered why the May 30 Uprising had failed; they also discovered that the degree of violence employed could never be the main factor deciding the results of the struggle, and they came to believe this firmly. They all came to realize that, just as the cause of the failure of the May 30 Uprising did not lie in the fact that a small degree of violence was employed, so the factor determining the victory of the harvest struggle was not that a large degree of violence was employed. Violence was in no way omnipotent. It was merely a means to achieve an aim.

Only violence which is just, well-advised and timely and is used for a just purpose can promise victory for those who use it. Only such violence can make a genuine contribution to the transformation of society and the development of history. We support only such violence.

Everything depended on how the masses were mobilized, organized and led. The communists of the new generation created a model in this respect. The harvest struggle was a unique struggle. In this struggle we always held the initiative and kept the enemy on the defensive, closely linking an economic struggle with a political one and properly combining peaceful methods with violent ones. The struggle that was waged in the spring of the following year was also such a struggle.

Through the harvest struggle the solidarity between the Korean and Chinese peoples was strengthened and the revolutionary ties between the Korean and Chinese communists were consolidated.

The harvest struggle was a good occasion for awakening and hardening the popular masses. In the course of this struggle simple and ordinary people grew into fighters, into revolutionaries. The revolutionary organizations in east Manchuria were able to strengthen their ranks with many hard-core elements who had been trained in the harvest struggle. The creation of such core elements would also be of benefit in the armed struggle that would soon be launched.

The many young revolutionaries produced in the course of the harvest struggle became the backbone of the guerrilla units that were later formed in various parts of east Manchuria. While leading the harvest struggle, I continually developed my idea on the armed struggle. The mass heroism and indomitable fighting spirit of the people in east Manchuria that were displayed in the course of the struggle were a great encouragement to me as I sought the revolutionary line for a new stage. They instilled in me the

confidence that the masses would always support and encourage us once we took up arms and waged a bloody battle against the Japanese imperialists.

In October 1931 when the flames of the harvest struggle were spreading to the whole of east Manchuria, I paid a brief visit to the Chongsong area in North Hamgyong Province. The aim of my visit was to meet my comrades who had been in the homeland to discuss with them the matter of an armed struggle and to recall the political workers active in the area of the six towns in order to give them some important tasks relating to the armed struggle. Chae Su Hang and O Bin accompanied me to Chongsong.

Chongsong was Chae Su Hang's home town; the home of his wife's parents was there. His deceased parents had lived there until the end of the Li dynasty. His great-grandfather had once worked as an adviser to the Chongsong County administration. It was immediately after the "annexation of Korea by Japan" that Chae Su Hang's family had left the homeland to move to Jingu, Helong County.

Chae Su Hang came of age in Jiandao, but he always longed for his home town where he had nurtured his childhood dreams. Whenever he crossed to Chongsong with me, he could not suppress his joy.

However, on that occasion he seemed very melancholy.

Thinking that the waves of the harvest struggle had reached Chae Su Hang's family, I asked him quietly:

"Comrade Chae, is it, perhaps, that your family, too, has been expropriated?" Chae Su Hang's family was rich. His father held the post of president of the Toksin Company, and for this he was disliked by the people.

"What do you mean by expropriated? Before the peasants demanded, we distributed to them 70 per cent of the grain right in the field."

"Oh, how different is the family of the county party secretary! But why do you look so sad?"

Chae said: "Some people have told me to try to persuade my father to give up his post as the company president. But my father will not agree."

Chae Su Hang did not know that his father held the post, having been entrusted by the revolutionary organization with it. His father could not tell him because of revolutionary discipline. Therefore, it was natural for Chae Su Hang to regret that his father would not comply with his request.

Having heard him out, I understood the reason for his feeling sick at heart. In those days there were some Leftists who were holding important positions in the higher party organizations. They indiscriminately imposed extreme demands upon their subordinates, demands which ran counter to the interests of the revolution, and thus put them in an awkward position. Once they went so far as to dismiss Chae Su Hang from his post of county party secretary, charging him with the "blame" for having failed to establish his

class "demarcation" from that of his father; later they reinstated him.

I changed the topic of our conversation to that of the armed struggle in order to remove his melancholy.

Chae Su Hang said jokingly that if we formed an army he would be the first to join it and become a machine gunner.

"You are not fit to be a military officer. Comrade Chae, your gift is as a civil official," I said, also smiling.

Although I had spoken jokingly, I meant what I said. I considered him to be a born political worker. I am sure if he had remained alive long enough to join the revolutionary army, he would have become a political worker at regimental or divisional level.

When we were launching the armed struggle vigorously after founding the Guerrilla Army, he was killed at the hands of the Japanese "punitive troops" in the vicinity of Dalazi. O Bin was famous as a sportsman from his days at Tonghung Middle School in Longjing. He had once even won an ox as first prize in a wrestling contest at a sports meeting in Hunchun County. He was free and easy, cheerful and quick.

I regarded O Bin to be the type of a military officer who would be a brave soldier of the revolutionary army. Whenever I met people, I wondered what type of work in the revolutionary army would be suitable for each of them. I acquired this habit about then. It seems that the acute situation in those days when the anti-Japanese war was impending made me this "calculating man."

After crossing the River Tuman by boat from the Shijianping ferry we visited the beans selection ground of the Tonggwangjin Turyang Corporation. This corporation weighed the beans, which the Japanese imperialists had plundered from Manchuria, by dividing them into various grades before putting them into flax sacks and sending them to Japan by ship.

We disguised ourselves as day laborers from Jiandao and talked to the workers there, while giving them a helping hand.

On hearing that we were from Jiandao, the workers started to talk about the harvest struggle. Their view of this struggle was generally pessimistic. The worker' view was thus; "The many uprisings that broke out in Jiandao even before the Japanese imperialists' occupation of Manchuria ended in failure. Moreover, now that they have invaded Manchuria, will there be any chance of victory merely by waging such a struggle as the harvest struggle? In the final analysis, this struggle will without doubt meet the same destiny as the May 30 Uprising. It is useless to launch a struggle. Look! The Japanese army is winning victory after victory. On top of that, the international organization made up of the big powers also sides with the Japanese. There is no one on whom a small and weak nation can rely, is there?"

When I heard what the workers had to say I learned three lessons. One was that if a revolutionary were to know the public feeling well, he must always mix with the masses; another was that if he were to launch



an armed struggle, he must first step up the work of awakening the masses politically and organizing them; and another was that no form of struggle could succeed unless the masses fully understood its importance and took part actively in it.

Having listened to the nihilistic and desperate views of the workers, I felt even more keenly that the Korean communists should start an armed struggle as soon as possible and give our nation the hope of rebirth and the hope of independence.

That day, in the house of Choe Song Hun, chairman of the Kwangmyong village youth association, we held a meeting of the underground political workers in the homeland and those in charge of underground organizations and discussed the task of the homeland revolutionary organizations with relation to the armed struggle.

I emphasized to those attending the meeting that the sudden change in the situation following the September 18 incident, as well as the historic lesson of the anti-Japanese national liberation movement in our country, urgently demanded that we should wage an organized armed struggle and that launching an armed struggle was a requirement of our revolutionary struggle and a qualitative advance in it. Then I set two major tasks, namely, the task of making full military preparations for the armed struggle and the task of laying a firm mass foundation for it.

Those attending the meeting could not conceal their excitement at the mention of an organized armed struggle, a very significant event; they made fiery speeches advancing creative opinions to help the formation of armed ranks.

The matter of preparing the revolutionary forces needed for organizing and waging an armed struggle had already been discussed and decided upon at the Kongsudok Meeting held in May 1931. So, on the basis of this, the Kwangmyong Village Meeting discussed the practical tasks confronting the revolutionary organizations in the homeland with something new, the armed struggles in the imminent future. This meeting tolled the bell announcing the armed struggle for the people and revolutionaries at home. The ready response which the revolutionaries at home expressed for the armed struggle in the course of the meeting gave me great strength.

After a day in Chongsong I returned to Jiandao and there parted from Chae Su Hang and O Bin. We decided to meet in Mingyuegou again in about the middle of December and there review the preparations for the armed struggle and discuss in detail ways to conduct the armed struggle and strategic and tactical matters relating to it.

Afterwards, my whole schedule was devoted to preparations for the Mingyuegou Meeting. At the mention of preparations for a meeting, what may first come to mind is such documents as a report and resolution. However, in those days the preparations for a meeting meant a process of laying down the revolutionary line and defining a strategy and tactics. Putting an idea into writing was a secondary process.

I devoted a lot of time to a consideration of the form to be chosen for the armed struggle. Marxist-Leninist theory emphasized the importance of an armed struggle. However, it provided no formal definition of the form in which the armed struggle should be waged. This is because there cannot be any ready-made solution which suits any era and can be applied in any country. In seeking a form for the armed struggle, I strove also not to be guilty of dogmatism.

Having made up my mind to deepen the consultation on the armed struggle and discuss tasks for coping with the new situation, I visited the east Manchuria Ad hoc committee in order to meet Dong Chang-rong. Since we intended to found the armed forces and start an anti-Japanese war in Manchuria, we could not ignore our cooperation with the Chinese communists. The question of an armed struggle was also coming to the fore among the Chinese communists in Manchuria. Following the September 18 incident the Communist Party of China and the Worker-Peasant Red Army of China addressed an appeal for the masses to be organized in resistance against the aggression of the Japanese imperialists so as to deal a direct blow at them by force of arms.

The Korean and Chinese communists who were aiming at the same target were confronted with the urgent task of forming an unbreakable, firm united front and cooperating closely with and supporting each other.

Dong Chang-rong, secretary of the Ad hoc committee, had narrowly escaped death in the "punitive operations" by the Japanese troops. I heard that he was staying in the city of Longjing and wanted to see me.

Because it was dangerous to go to that city where there were many secret agents, I sent word asking him to come to Mingyuegou.

However, the east Manchuria Ad hoc committee conveyed to me the news that Dong Chang-rong who was still unaware of the situation in Jiandao, had been wandering from place to place to inquire into the whereabouts of the Ad hoc committee, without knowing that it had moved, in the course of which he had been caught by secret agents and dragged off to prison. This unexpected news disappointed me. After the September 18 incident Luo Deng-xian, secretary of the Manchurian provincial party committee and Yang Lim, secretary of the military commission under the provincial party committee, left Shenyang and went into hiding, and Yang Jing-yu was still in prison. So there was no one with whom I could discuss matters.

I resolved to save Dong Chang-rong and consulted some comrades concerning a way to do so. Ko Bo Bae (Bo Bae is his nickname) volunteered to save Dong Chang-rong. Being extraordinarily quick with his hands, like a conjurer, he was good at "'stealing." He could in an instant remove the fountain-pen from the pocket of the man he was talking to. Because Ko Bo Bae was good at such tricks, everywhere he went there was trouble over something being "lost."

He went to Longjing and stole something so as to be arrested by the police. In prison he met Dong Chang-rong. There Ko Bo Bae handled the policemen so skillfully that the secretary of the Ad hoc committee was released before long. Thus he was able to attend the Mingyuegou Meeting.

Around the middle of December 1931 we convened the meeting of Party and YCL cadres in Mingyuegou. We called this meeting the "Winter Mingyuegou Meeting" for convenience. This meeting was attended by over 40 young fighters who enjoyed the love and reputation of the masses because of their devotion to the struggle. Among them were Cha Gwang Su, Lee Gwang, Chae Su Hang, Kim Il Hwan, Yang Song Ryong, O Bin, Oh Jung Hwa, Oh Jung Song, Ku Bong Un, Kim Chol, Kim Jung Gwon, Kim Ii Ryong, Li Chong San, Kim Jong Ryong, Han Il Gwang and Kim Hae San.

At Mingyuegou I tasted for the first time what they called *yongchae* kimchi. At supper on the day when I arrived at Mingyuegou, Li Chong San's family served me with kidney-bean-and-maize porridge and yongchae kimchi. I ate them with relish. The people of K. ilju and Myongchon, North Hamgyong Province, are good at pickling that kind of kimchi. Nowadays it is served even at dinners given by the state.

At the time of the Mingyuegou Meeting, Lee Gwang caught five pheasants for us. He had hunted them, together with some activists from the Young Communist League, because he was sorry to see that the delegates to the meeting had been eating only maize porridge and foxtail millet all the time.

For supper that evening Li Chong San had noodles prepared, saying that pheasant meat was good for garnishing noodles. Rice was scarce in the area of Mingyuegou, but starch was available there.

Cha Gwang Su, who was helplessly fond of noodles, boisterously teased Lee Gwang, saying, "Hey, old man from Wangqing, five pheasants are not enough to go round all of us, are they?" Cha Gwang Su, who suffered from chronic stomach trouble, used to eat very little, but among young people he would pretend to be very hungry, as if he were a great eater. "Don't talk so big, you from Jirin who cannot even eat a bowl of maize porridge," Lee Gwang retorted, jokingly. "Listen, you oaf. I'm exhausted, carrying those five pheasants on top of my load of cereal."

Cha Gwang Su argued vehemently, saying that, because the five pheasants would not be enough to go round all of us, the delegates should be divided into two rooms and that those in one room should be served with noodles garnished with pheasant and those in the other room with noodles garnished with chicken.

But the delegates all objected to his idea. We saw to it that the pheasant and chicken were mixed and that all the delegates ate convivially in the same room. Park Hun, a big eater, ate three bowls of noodles and earned the nickname of "noodle lover."

In order to ensure the meeting's success, we held a preliminary meeting at Li Chong San's house beforehand. At that meeting the agenda, the participants and the order of the meeting were discussed.

Then the meeting was held, lasting for 10 days. The discussion was concentrated on the problem of what form the armed struggle should take. It was only when this problem was settled that it would be possible to decide other matters, such as the form of the armed organization and that of the base.

Because we had no country, resistance by a regular army could not be expected. Yet conditions were not ripe for all the people to be mobilized immediately for an uprising. In these circumstances it was only natural that my mind was drawn to guerrilla warfare. Lenin defined guerrilla warfare as an auxiliary form of the struggle which is inevitably adopted either when the mass movement has already become an uprising or when there is a midway period between major battles in a civil war. I very much regretted that Lenin regarded guerrilla warfare as a temporary and auxiliary form of struggle instead of regarding it as the basic form. This was because it was not regular warfare but guerrilla warfare which I was interested in at that time.

I thought a great deal about whether guerrilla warfare by a standing revolutionary armed force would suit the circumstances in our country, should we choose guerrilla warfare as the basic form of the armed struggle. In the course of this I read Sun Tzu's Art of War and reread the Three Warring Kingdoms. Among our country's books on military science I read such books as the Military Books of the Eastern Country and Instructions on Military Science.

Some people said that the origin of guerrilla warfare dated back to the 4th century A.D. However, we did not know in what country and how that guerrilla war was waged.

The guerrilla warfare which Marx and Engels studied with the greatest interest was the activities of the armed units of the Russian peasants during the Franco-Russian war of 1812. The story of Denis Davidov, a partisan hero born of the Franco-Russian war, and of General Kutuzov who skillfully commanded the combined operations of the regular units and guerrillas, fanned my curiosity about guerrilla warfare.

The Imjin Patriotic War<sup>22</sup> gave me many ideas concerning a definition of guerrilla warfare as the basic form of our struggle. I regarded the struggle of the volunteers who won a glorious victory in the Imjin Patriotic War as an example holding an outstanding place in the history of guerrilla warfare. I was totally fascinated by the bravery displayed and the varied fighting methods employed by the famous generals who emerged from among the volunteers such as Kwak Jae U, Sin Dol Sok, Kim Ung So, Chong Mun Bu, Saint Sosan, Choe Ik Hyon and Ryu Rin Sok. The words guerrilla warfare gripped my heart with the approach of the great battle against the heavily-armed Japanese imperialists.

However, some people said that a guerrilla war could be waged only when there was a home front or support from a regular army. This presented me with a problem. These preconditions laid down in the classics of Marxism-Leninism forced me to go through a complicated process of inquiry to choose the form of the armed struggle. No one could decide whether a guerrilla war would be possible, given the circumstances of Korea which had no home front or regular army. It was a serious and controversial issue for us.

Successive dramatic incidents pushing us towards revolution occurred around us. Military disturbances took place among the patriotic officers and men of the former Northeast Army who were displeased by the capitulation of Chiang Kaisek and Zhang Xue-liang. Wang De-lin, Tang Ju-wu and Li Du did not follow Zhang Xue-liang they all altered course and left the former Northeast Army. General Ma Zhan-

shan created a military disturbance and then took up arms, calling for resistance to Japan. With these people as the center the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units were formed and the movement of the national salvation army began in various parts of Manchuria.

This situation created favorable circumstances for us who were aspiring to an armed struggle.

I spoke to the following effect: So far as the form of the armed struggle is concerned, there has been regular warfare and guerrilla warfare throughout history. Regular warfare has been predominant, but guerrilla warfare has also been employed. We must choose one of these two forms. I am of the opinion that guerrilla warfare will be more suitable to the situation in our country. Under the conditions in our country where regular warfare is impossible, guerrilla warfare should be the main form of our struggle, irrespective of what has been happening until now.

Then I said, "Constantly-varying guerrilla warfare is the main form of the armed struggle which we must choose. In our country which has lost its statehood, it is impossible to oppose the Japanese imperialists by waging regular warfare. We must wage constantly-varying guerrilla warfare because we must fight the powerful Japanese imperialist aggressor army with an armed force which is inferior both in military equipment and in numbers. There can be no other way than this."

The young people who had seen only the warlord army of Zhang Xue-liang, the Independence Army and the Japanese army knew nothing about a guerrilla army.

After explaining the difference between a regular army and a guerrilla army, I went on: "If we are to beat the strong Japanese aggressor army, we must conduct every type of military, political and economic activity, such as superb combined operations by small and large units, surprise attacks, ambushes, political activities, political underground work and production activities. To this end we should form a guerrilla army that is capable of waging war constantly and of freely dispersing and concentrating its soldiers."

After hearing me some people expressed doubts: Will it be possible to defeat the enemy by waging such a form of the armed struggle? Will it be possible to beat, with an irregular armed force such as a guerrilla army, an army several millions strong equipped with modern, highly efficient weapons such as tanks, artillery and warplanes when we will have to fight without any home front or the support of a regular army, and in a foreign territory at that?

It was not unreasonable for them to express such doubts. As a matter of fact, I myself had considered such a possibility many times.

I thought: Will we not be exposed to the ridicule of the world if we, with only a few guns, dare to oppose such a military power as Japan? All of the Righteous Volunteers, the Independence Army and the 300,000-strong army of Zhang Xue-liang have not been able to escape the fate of being beaten by the great strength of the Japanese army. So, what shall we be relying on when we try to defeat them? Have

we state power, territory or wealth? I said to them:

"We are the sons of mined people who have been deprived of all their state power, territory and resources. We are empty-handed young people who are now living in a foreign country. However, we have not hesitated to challenge the Japanese imperialists. What is it we are relying on in doing so? We have decided to start an anti-Japanese war by relying on the people. The people are the state, the people are the home front and the people are the regular army. When the war starts, the people will become soldiers and rise up. Therefore, the guerrilla warfare which we shall wage can be called a people's war."

Thus after a long argument we reached complete agreement on the matter of organizing and waging an armed struggle with guerrilla warfare as its basis.

Guerrilla warfare is a method of armed struggle with which one can deal heavy political and military blows to the enemy while preserving one's own forces and annihilate, with a small force, an enemy who is superior both in numbers and equipment. We firmly believed that we would ultimately be able to defeat the enemy if we organized and waged an armed struggle by relying on guerrilla warfare, the active support and encouragement of the popular masses and the favorable natural and topographical conditions.

When all others regarded guerrilla warfare as a means of helping regular warfare, we confirmed it as the basic form of our struggle and adopted it as our policy. This was a scientific and creative decision commensurate with our situation. When our consultation on waging an organized armed struggle with guerrilla warfare as the basis was over, we discussed ways of conducting it.

First the problem of building a revolutionary armed force was brought up for discussion. We decided to organize first a small-scale guerrilla unit for each area and gradually develop them into a revolutionary armed force consisting of large units while fighting to arm these units. We also agreed that we would form battalions at the first stage and expand them gradually into a people's revolutionary army. Following this the way to obtain arms was also discussed.

The discussion on the formation of a guerrilla army gave way for one on bases. We put the following questions: If an anti-Japanese guerrilla army is formed, where should the base for its operations be? Should it be on a mountain, in a city or in a rural village? Now that both Korea and Manchuria are under the occupation of the Japanese imperialists, should the base for guerrilla warfare be in the homeland or in Manchuria? We exchanged serious views on these problems.

That there must be a stronghold for any army is simple common sense which even a primary school pupil knows.

Our armed forces had to fight without any home front and without the support of a regular army. Therefore, only when there was a base where we could rest securely after battle while putting our ranks in good order, replenishing our weapons and ammunition, carrying out military training and giving medical treatment to the wounded soldiers, would we be able to wage a guerrilla war for a long time. Therefore,

we had to build a base at the same time as forming a guerrilla army.

At the end of an animated discussion we decided to build a guerrilla base in the mountainous areas of Jiandao where there was a good mass foundation, fine supply conditions and favorable terrain. We decided to establish a base first in Jiandao for the time being because in Manchuria with its wide area the enemy's rule was spread more thinly than in Korea. And we agreed that when the time came, we would go into the homeland and occupy the wide forest area of Mt. Paekdu and the Rangnim Mountains.

The form of the liberated area, the area where the enemy's rule could not reach, had to be the main form of the base and we had to establish that base without fail in the mountainous areas along the River Tuman which were convenient for us both in conducting our operations into the homeland and in getting support from the people there. Along the River Tuman there were many mountain villages providing good conditions for supplying materials and unfavorable for the enemy to attack but favorable for us to defend ourselves. When we started to choose real places for establishing our base Lee Gwang, Oh Bin, Kim Li Hwan and many others vied with one another in advancing many good opinions.

According to their proposal it was decided to establish the base in such natural strongholds as Yulangclin, Niufudong, Wangougou, Hailangou, Shirengou, SandaOwan, Xiaowangqing, Gayahe, Yaoyinggou, DahuanggOu and Yantonglazi. In those areas were concentrated the revolutionary masses who had gone there after the harvest struggle to avert the "punitive operations" of the Japanese imperialists even the Red Guards had been formed there and were defending the revolutionary organizations and the people.

As the discussion deepened and became more detailed, the matter was raised of operating and maintaining the base for a long time; there were many complicated practical problems such as how to conduct agricultural production and manage the economy, how to build an ordnance repair shop and a hospital and who should take charge of population administration and how to conduct this work.

At the meeting we also discussed the matters of laying a mass foundation for the armed struggle and forming an anti-Japanese joint front of the Korean and Chinese peoples, as well as the problem of strengthening party organizational work and the work of the YCL. All these were important problems which had to be solved in order to wage an armed struggle with guerrilla warfare as the major tactic. At the meeting all these matters were formulated as a policy.

It was truly gigantic and unfathomable creative work. There was no history of guerrilla warfare in any era or in any country which could provide something to serve as a model for our revolutionary struggle. Therefore, we had to think over all the problems by using our own brains and establish the base by our own efforts. It was an unavoidable task for us Korean communists who had to wage a guerrilla war in unprecedented arduous conditions without any home front or the support of any regular army.

If, in solving this task, we had dogmatically copied the experience of other countries which had waged a guerrilla war in combination with a regular army, regarding its support as essential, we would have met with failure.

One year a Latin-American resistance fighter came to see me and asked me to tell him about our experience in waging a guerrilla war.

I told him about some of the experience we had gained during our anti-Japanese war and said: "There cannot be a universal formula in guerrilla warfare. That is a creative struggle in which the creative wisdom of man should be displayed to the highest degree. Our experience may be of some help to you, but you must not regard it as absolute and adopt it mechanically. Circumstances differ from country to country. So you, too, create and apply fighting methods and forms which are suitable in your situation. The key to victory lies precisely in that."

After listening to me, the leader of the resistance movement thought over something for a while and then spoke to the following effect: There are many mountainous areas in our country. However, until now we have put too much stress on guerrilla warfare in the towns without taking this into consideration. It is probably for this reason that we have achieved little success and suffered much loss. From now on we will conduct our resistance movement with a guerrilla war in the mountainous rural areas as our major tactic, in conformity with our situation.

We wound up our discussion at Mingyuegou after reaching an agreement on starting the formation of guerrilla units immediately upon our return to our respective areas of activity following the meeting. Whenever they had lost their kinsmen and comrades owing to the bloody suppression and "punitive operations" of the Japanese imperialist aggressors. The young people beat their chests and craved for our army, for our armed forces. And now that they could see the birth of this army, these armed forces, as something to happen in the near future, these young people rose up all at once and solemnly and loudly sang the Revolutionary Song and the *Internationale*, expressing their oath to their beloved fatherland and revolution.

The Mingyuegou Meeting was also attended by Dong Changrong and many other Chinese communists. They were farsighted revolutionaries who had from the start attached great importance to the friendship between the Korean and Chinese peoples and cooperation between the Korean and Chinese communists in view of the specific situation in east Manchuria where the Korean communists and residents formed the overwhelming majority.

Dong Chang-rong repeatedly requested that the Korean comrades who had fought for a long time in east Manchuria and accumulated a lot of experience should make major speeches. With the subjects under discussion at the meeting as the main point, I made an inflammatory speech in Korean and Chinese about our idea of forming armed ranks and waging an armed struggle.

Our Chinese comrades expressed their full support for this idea. They were of the same opinion as us on all matters such as that of the form of the guerrilla warfare, that of forming a guerrilla army and that of a guerrilla base.

From that time on the armed struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples against the Japanese



imperialists, their common enemy, shook the continent, and the tradition of great Korea-China friendship started to strike root amid a bloody battle.

The Winter Mingyuegou Meeting of 1931 marked the start of the anti-Japanese armed struggle; it was a historic meeting that brought about a fresh turn in the anti-Japanese national liberation movement and communist movement in our country. The line of the armed struggle advanced at the Kalun Meeting was developed in depth through this meeting.

If the will of the Korean nation to switch from the anti-Japanese national liberation movement to an armed struggle, its highest stage, was confirmed in Kalun, in Mingyuegou that will was reaffirmed and an anti-Japanese war was formally proclaimed with a view to annihilating the Japanese imperialists under the slogan "Oppose armed force with armed force, and resist counterrevolutionary violence with revolutionary violence!" At this meeting the main point of the strategy defining the direction of the guerrilla war and of its tactical principles was defined and, on the basis of this, immensely rich and varying methods of armed struggle were created.

After the Mingyuegou Meeting Dong Chang-rong and I talked about many things while we sat under a white rock. I think it was at that time that I heard from him about Kim Lee Gap who was then in Dalian prison and Chon Gyong Suk who was supplying him with clothes and food while working at a textile mill and doing YCL work.

Dong Chang-rong said that an analysis of the composition of not only the population but also the members of the party organizations in east Manchuria showed that the greater part of them was Koreans, and asked me to help him on their behalf.

He said: "The main force of the revolutionary struggle in east Manchuria is the Koreans. The guerrilla war can be victorious only when we rely on the Korean residents. No matter how hard Japan may try to alienate us, the communists of our two countries will be able to prevent national prejudice. The Ad hoc committee intends to pay special attention to working with its Korean comrades, so we wish you to give us great help. I believe in you, Comrade Kim Il Sung."

Gladly I granted his request.

I said: "We are also particularly concerned about the unity of our two nations. So set your mind at rest. The gun report of the guerrilla war will end all the temporary mistrust between the Korean and Chinese peoples."

We gripped each other's hands and smiled.

Afterwards Dong Chang-rong and I often recollected that day.

Whenever I visited China Premier Zhou En-lai said, in his banquet speeches or in his talks with me, that

Korea-China friendship had developed onto a high stage through the founding of the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army at the beginning of the 1930s and through the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese armed forces against the Japanese imperialists. He spoke a lot of moving words about the deep-rooted tradition of that friendship.

Each time he said this I thought of the Mingyuegou Meeting and its heated atmosphere of Korea-China friendship, and I recollected with great emotion our intimate Chinese communist friends such as Wei Zheng-min, Dong Chang-rong, Chen Han-zhang, Wang De-tai, Zhang Wei-hua, Yang Jing-yu, Zhou Bao-zhong and Hu Jin-min who joined us in the flames of the war. A feeling of friendship is a human feeling. Therefore, it can be firm only when it is established through concrete human relations, and it seems that the feeling that has been established in such a way will not cool no matter how much time passes.

## 5.4. Preparations for a Bloody Battle

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After we had adopted the decision to wage an organized armed struggle at the Mingyuegou Meeting, I was requested to play the pivotal role in the work. "A start should be made by you, Kim Il Sung. In any work there must be a model and an example." With these words my comrades parted from me. I remained in Mingyuegou until those who had attended the meeting had all left, and then I went to Antu after parting from Dong Chang-rong. Antu was in all respects suitable for guerrilla warfare.

We decided to establish the basic forces of the organization in Antu and Wangqing, in view of the fact that in forming the armed groups priority should be given to work with the national salvation army, the Chinese anti-Japanese armed forces, formed in different parts of Manchuria after the September 18 incident, as was decided in December at the Mingyuegou Meeting. The national salvation army was massed in Antu and Wangqing.

Returning to Xinglongcun, I stayed in Ma Chun Uk's house for a while with my family and then moved to Kalbat village in Tuqidian valley in Xiaoshahe. There I concentrated on the preparations for founding the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. The circumstances in Xiaoshahe were better than in Xinglongcun because the people of Xiaoshahe were enlisted in organizations. Secret agents had no free access to the village where the underground organization had struck deep roots.

Because there were no running dogs sneaking about in Xiaoshahe, the army and police rarely ever came there for "punitive operations." Our efforts to found the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army faced difficulties from the beginning. The questions of cadres, weapons, military drill, provisions, the mass foundation and relations with the national salvation army, as well as many other questions of a military and political character, were raised and awaiting solution.

In forming the armed units we considered cadres and weapons as the most essential two elements. But we were short of them both. By cadres we mean those who were prepared militarily and politically. We needed young people who understood politics and military affairs and were ready to fight in arms for the country and people for a long time.

We had lost almost all the core elements of the Korean Revolutionary Army in a year and a half. The main force of the revolutionary army, including Kim Hyok, Kim Hyong Gwon, Choe Hyo Il, Kong Yong, Li Je U and Park Cha Sok fell in action or were thrown into prison within a year. On top of that, in January 1931 Li Jong Rak who was a company commander was arrested together with Kim Gwang Ryol, Chang So Bong and Park Byong Hwa by the police of the Japanese consulate when he went out to obtain weapons, Carrying pamphlets concerning the Korean Revolutionary Army. Kim Lee Gap, who was versed in military affairs, was imprisoned and Pack Sin Han fell in action. There was no knowing what had become of Choe Chang Gol and Kim Won U.

There were so few among the rest of the revolutionary army who had military experience that they could be counted on the fingers of both hands. But because they were conducting mass political work, they could not be included in the armed units. When I was busy forming the guerrilla units in Antu, Cha Gwang Su was the only person from the Korean Revolutionary Army who stood by me.

Those holding state power could easily find the military personnel they needed through a mobilization order or a system of obligatory military service, but we could not recruit men by such methods. The masses cannot be enlisted in the revolution by law or by force. The Provisional Government in Shanghai included in its constitution an article stating that all the citizens were under an obligation to pay taxes and undergo military service, but the people did not even know that such law had been adopted.

It is self-evident that the decrees and directives of a government in exile which exercised state power in one corner of a concession in a foreign country, without national sovereignty, were ineffective.

In the national liberation revolution in colonies it is impossible to make people take up arms by means such as a mobilization order or a system of obligatory military service. In the revolution the appeal of the leader of the revolution or farsighted people replaces the law, and the political and moral awareness and militant enthusiasm of each man decides his voluntary entry into the army.

The masses take up arms for their liberation of their own accord without the request or direction of anyone else. It is an act natural to the people who regard independence as their lifeblood and are ready to devote their lives to it.

Based on this principle, we began to search for people to be enlisted in the guerrilla unit in Antu and the surrounding area. In the paramilitary organizations such as the Red Guards, the Children's Vanguard, the worker pickets and the local shock brigades there were many sturdy young people who wanted to join the army. Paramilitary organizations grew fast and young people were awakened ideologically beyond recognition in the stormy harvest and spring struggles.

But it was impossible to enlist into the guerrilla unit anyone who requested to be enlisted in it without our considering his preparedness. The young and middle-aged men of east Manchuria were not yet prepared militarily. To ensure a guerrilla reserve it was necessary to intensify the political and military training of the young people in the paramilitary organizations such as the Red Guards and Children's Vanguard.

But I had no suitable drill instructors. I alone could not conduct military drill for all the young people in the Antu area. Though I had attended Whasung Military Academy for some time, I was not qualified to command a new type of army, a guerrilla army. Cha Gwang Su, who was fresh from school, knew less about military affairs than I did. As Li Jong Rak was in prison, I had no one to whom I could look for help. If I had had the like of Li Jong Rak, I could have devoted all my time to political work, entrusting military affairs entirely to him, but being unable to do so, I was anxious.

Whenever I had difficulties I felt the shortage of comrades.

While we were experiencing these difficulties, we were visited by Park Hun, a famous graduate of the Huangpu Military Academy. Chiang Kaisek was the commandant of the military academy and Zhou Enlai was in charge of political affairs there. The academy was attended by many young Koreans. The Chinese people called the Guangzhou revolt the "three days' soviet," and a leading part in it was played by the cadres of that military academy. Park Hun and An Bung took part in the Guangzhou revolt and, after its failure, fled to Manchuria from China proper. Park Hun was of sturdy constitution and free and open in his speech and behavior; he was every inch a soldier. He spoke Chinese more often than Korean and wore Chinese dress more than Korean. He became my military adviser.

After the collaboration of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party had broken down because of Chiang Kaisek's betrayal of the revolution in the April 12 incident, and the first revolutionary war had ended in failure, Yang Lim, Choi Yong Kun, O Song Ryun (Chon Gwang), Chang Ji Rak, Park Hun and many of those who took part in the Chinese revolution after graduating from the Huangpu Military Academy, the Guangzhou Military Academy and the Yunnan Military Training School came to Manchuria from the southern area of China to avoid the reprisals of the Chiang Kaisek clique.

Frankly speaking, I expected much from Park Hun when I heard the name of the Huangpu Military Academy. Park Hun had the special skill of shooting with pistols in both hands in battle. His marksmanship was remarkable. He shot like a devil. Another of his special skills was in giving commands. He had a splendid voice capable of easily commanding an army ten or twenty thousand strong without using a megaphone. When he shouted commands on the tableland of Tuqidian the whole village heard him. Intrigued by his commanding voice, all the young people of Antu looked on him with fascination.

"His voice is so stentorian that even the Japanese Emperor in Tokyo can hear it. Where did such a man come from?" said Cha Gwang Su in admiration, when he saw Park Hun conducting military training for the Red Guards. Cha Gwang Su took a great liking to him. The two men were close friends though there was a lot of theoretical argument between them.

Because Park Hun imparted such good training in Antu, the unit we formed was later famed as a "student unit" in Wangqing. The members of our guerrilla unit were respected by the people for their good order and discipline, good manners and good appearance throughout the whole of the anti-Japanese war. Yang Jing-yu, too, always admired our revolutionary army for its discipline and cultured manners. At such times I always thought of Park Hun and his words of command resounding across the tableland in Tuqidian.

His next conspicuous quality as a drill instructor was his rigid demands on his trainees. The trainees acquired military knowledge quickly due to his rigid demands. But at times he punished the members of the unit. When trainees failed to perform the drill as he required, or violated discipline, he hurled abuse at them as he glowered at them, kicked them or made them stand aside as a punishment. I said to him that

punishment was unacceptable in a revolutionary army, but to no avail.

One day as I returned home with Park Hun, whose voice had become husky after conducting drill, I asked him, "You have something of the warlords about you. Where did you get it?" At this he looked at me with a smile and said, "Our drill instructor was a German and a martinet. It might be the legacy I acquired from him. Anyway, the rod makes a good soldier of a man."

He retained many traces of his German military education. In his lectures he spent a great deal of time talking about the Prussian army. He talked much about the bravery of the British soldier, the promptness of the French soldier, the exactitude of the German soldier and the stubbornness of the Russian soldier. Whenever he talked about them, he called on the trainees to become versatile soldiers with all these qualities.

Most of the military training he conducted was not suited to the special type of guerrilla warfare we planned. He explained to the trainees about the Napoleonic column formation and the British line formation and made a tremendous effort to make such formations with 20 or so trainees.

At the training I once said to him quietly during a break, "Comrade Park, what about replacing the drill in the British line formation you just conducted with a short explanation? If we were to fight a battle such as Waterloo, it would be another matter. But we are intending to wage a guerrilla war in the mountains against an enemy armed with cannons and machine guns. So what is the use of learning outmoded tactics?"

"But in order to wage a war one must have at least some military knowledge, I believe," he said.

"Of course, it is important to acquire a general knowledge of the military experience of other countries, but it is necessary to select and teach what is of immediate use. You would do better not to teach them all you learned at the military academy."

By saying this to Park Hun I meant that he should guard against dogmatism.

When I gave Park Hun charge of ten or so red guardsmen and told him to make them practice their shooting, he had targets set up on the level ground and told them repeatedly to shoot at the lower part of the center of the enemy when he appeared.

I said to Park Hun, "It will not do to conduct drill that way. We must put aside what does not suit the actual situation and first teach what will be useful in a guerrilla war. Specifically, we must give priority to training in mountain warfare. Let us change what does not suit our condition and, by pooling our wisdom, work out fresh tactics that are not found in the manuals."

He listened to me attentively and acceded to my suggestion.

From then on we conducted drill with the emphasis on what would be useful in a guerrilla war. We began with imparting a practical military knowledge as to foot drill, the use of arms, camouflage, signaling, bayonet drill, reconnaissance, mountain walking, the handling of a club, capturing arms and the discrimination between friends and foe at night. Park Hun at first taught things in a happy-go-lucky fashion, but finally he drew up a teaching schedule and conducted drill according to a plan.

Looking back on those days later, Park Hun said, "At the Huangpu Military Academy I acquired the military knowledge accumulated by the five great military powers of the world. It was comprehensive knowledge crystallizing the tactics used in all ages and by all countries. I took pride in having gained such a knowledge at the famous Huangpu Military Academy, an edifice of military education in modern China.

If I disseminate that knowledge in east Manchuria, people will greet me with wild applause, I thought. But I was proved wrong. I was given the cold shoulder instead of wild applause. The young people regarded my lectures as imparting common sense, but not as having any vital and essential significance. I realized that the military knowledge I had acquired over several years was useless for guerrilla warfare, although it was universal, and was disgusted with myself for regarding it as a code of universal significance. I realized the need to create a new military theory for a guerrilla war. So I rid myself of dogmatism and acquired a new way of thinking suited to the Korean revolution."

Another conspicuous drill instructor in the Antu area was Kim Il Ryong. He had no knowledge of modern warfare to speak of, as Park Hun did, but persistently trained the men by relying on the practical experience of war he had acquired in the Independence Army.

With the training in the Red Guards, Children's Vanguard, Children's Expeditionary Corps and other paramilitary organizations being intensified and their ranks built up, dozens of reliable young people who were prepared politically and militarily were rallied around us. We selected those who were working in the various counties along the River Tuman and the young people tempered and seasoned in the harvest and spring struggles and called them together in Antu. Many young people came to us from different parts of Manchuria, including Antu and Dunhua.

We selected 18 of them as core elements, including Cha Gwang Su, Kim Il Ryong, Park Hun, Kim Chol (Kim Chol Hui) and Li Yong Bae and formed them into a guerrilla group. At the same time we saw to it that similar armed groups were formed in the Yanji, Wangqing, Helong and Hunchun areas. As a result, armed groups comprising between 10 and 20 men came into being in succession in each county. This was the line adopted at the Mingyuegou Meeting, that of forming small armed groups, obtaining weapons and accumulating experience through stealthy activities, increasing the ranks and forming large armed groups in each county when the situation was right. The formation of these guerrilla groups was attended with a bloody struggle to acquire weapons. The struggle was beset with great difficulties.

The Japanese aggressor army steadily increased the fighting ability of their ground, sea and air forces by supplying them with modern arms and other equipment mass-produced in their own country, whereas we

had no home front to provide weapons nor money to buy rifles. What we needed was not cannons and tanks but, for the time being, rifles, pistols, grenades and other light arms. If our country had had factories producing weapons, we could have acquired them with the help of the workers. But our country did not have such factories. Unfortunately, in arming ourselves we did not benefit from the industry of our country. That was why the grim slogan "Let's take the enemy's weapons and arm ourselves!" was adopted.

On returning to Antu I dug up from the ground the two pistols which my father had entrusted to my mother. I said to my comrades, as I held up the two pistols: "Look, these are the pistols my father left for me. My father did not serve in the Righteous Volunteers or in the Independence Army, but he had these pistols with him until the day of his death. Why? Because he considered the armed struggle to be the highest form of struggle to achieve national independence.

My father's desire was to launch an armed struggle. When he left me these two pistols, I made a firm resolve to do what he desired in his place. The time has come. Let us start our march for independence with these two pistols to help us. Now we have two pistols, but think that one day they will have multiplied to two hundred, two thousand and then to twenty thousand. With 2,000 rifles, we will be fully able to liberate the country. Let us multiply these two pistols into two thousand and then twenty thousand rifles."

I felt a lump in my throat at the thought that my father had died an early death without realizing his aspiration, and I could speak no more.

When the acquisition of arms was placed on the list of priorities, Park Hun told me that he had heard that a son of a rich family in Fusong had given dozens of rifles to me and asked me what I had done with them. Who he meant by the son of a rich family in Fusong was Zhang Wei-hua. When we were active in Wujiazi, he had visited us, bringing with him 40 rifles of the private soldiers at his house. We handed them out to the men of the Korean Revolutionary Army.

Park Hun, on hearing of this, said that it was a great pity, and that the only solution was to get money. He proposed to raise money by appealing to the peasants in the villages we had made revolutionary.

We did not agree. If we had raised funds by appealing to the rich people, it was another matter. But depriving the poor workers and peasants of their money was not a good way to buy weapons. The easy way to obtain weapons was to raise money, but they should also be taken from the enemy, at the risk of one's life.

We chose the difficult way. I thought that we might buy weapons but I did not encourage this. To ask the people for money was the way of the Independence Army, not our way. Even if we had raised money, it would not have helped us much. Once Comrade Choe Hyon had bought a machine gun for 1,500 yuan from some mountain rebels. One machine gun cost thirty oxen at market prices in those days when an ox was priced at about 50 yuan. We could not ignore such a figure.



After much discussion we went to Naidaoshan and dug up some rifles buried there by men of the Independence Army. In other counties, too, weapons which had been used by the Independence Army were collected in a similar fashion. The Independence Army under the command of Hong Bom Do had buried many rifles and a lot of ammunition in the Dakanzi area after the Battle of Qingshanli and retreated across the border separating the Soviet Union and Manchuria.

Informed of this through its secret agents, the Japanese garrison carried away a lot of rifles and ammunition, loading them on to dozens of lorries. Our comrades in Wangqing sent people to Dakanzi after the Mingyuegou Meeting to recover about 50,000 cartridges from the place where the Japanese garrison had been digging. Having acquired some rifles, we went over to taking weapons away from the enemy with their use.

The house of landlord Shuang Bing-jun was chosen as the target of our first attack. He had a guard of about 40 men. Its captain was Li Do Son who later became the notorious captain of the Sinsondae Band which was routed by Comrade Choe Hyon's unit. The guardroom was both inside and outside the earthen wall which surrounded the landlord's house.

We formed an assault team with the members of the guerrilla group and Red Guards and took over ten rifles in a raid on the landlord's house in Xiaoshahe after preliminary scouting. The struggle to obtain arms was waged vigorously in a mass movement all along the River Tuman. The revolutionary masses, irrespective of age and sex, with members of the guerrilla group, the Red Guards, the Children's Vanguard and the local shock brigands in the van, waged a brave battle against the Japanese aggressor army, the Japanese and Manchukuo police, the pro-Japanese landlords and the reactionary bureaucrats to take their weapons from them under the slogan "Arms are our lifeblood. Arms for arms!"

At the time the phrase "Yochang puyomin" was in vogue. It means: Off with your gun, not your head! When one shouted "Yochang puyomin," pointing a gun at a customhouse, guardhouse, police station or landlord's house, the timid officials, reactionary landlords and police offered their weapons, trembling. The phrase "Yochang puyomin" was used widely and spread across the areas by the revolutionary organizations in east Manchuria.

Oh Jung Hwa's father O Tae Hui and his uncle, too, took weapons from policemen and guardsmen, threatening them with a bogus gun made of a table's leg and shouting "Yochang puyomin!" at them; these weapons they sent to the Red Guards. News of this spread to Antu. On hearing the story, we admired the old men's wit and boldness.

When I met old man O Tae Hui later in Wangqing, I asked him, "How did you come up with such a good idea?" The old man said with a smile, "At night a table's leg looks like a gun. We have no rifle or grenade. So I used a bogus gun made of a table's leg. At my wits end, I hit on the idea. There is the saying 'A thirsty man digs a well,' isn't there?"

He was right. Then we threw ourselves boldly into the fight to take weapons like thirsty men digging a

well. It was an arduous struggle requiring the highest degree of creativity and wisdom.

The revolutionaries and revolutionary people of east Manchuria took weapons by cleverly disguising themselves as military police, men of the national salvation army, officials of the Japanese consulate, rich men or merchants, as the situation required. In some places women attacked soldiers and policemen with their laundry paddles or clubs and seized their weapons.

The struggle to obtain arms was a prelude to an all-people war of resistance. All the revolutionary organizations and the entire people roused themselves to the struggle and enlisted in it. As the revolution required arms, the masses came out in the struggle to obtain them without hesitation. In the course of this they were awakened ideologically, and they came to realize how great their strength was.

Our slogan that one should obtain weapons for oneself proved its great vitality everywhere. Needless to say, in the course of struggle we lost many revolutionary comrades. Each rifle we obtained was imbued with the warm blood and the ardent patriotism of our revolutionary comrades.

At the same time we launched the struggle to make weapons for ourselves under the slogan of self-reliance.

At first we made spears and swords at smithies. Then we made pistols and bombs. The most elaborate and useful pistol we made was the "pijikkae pistol" which was manufactured by the members of the AJYL in Nangou, Wangqing County. People in North Hamgyong Province called a match a "pijikkae," like the Russians. They made powder from matches and put it in the cartridge chamber. Hence the name of the pistol they made. They also made the barrels of rifles with sheet steel.

Famous among the arsenals of east Manchuria were the Suribawigul Arsenal in Xinchengde Hill in Jingu, Helong County, the Nangou Arsenal in Wangqing County and the Chugagol Arsenal in Nanyang village in Yilangou, Yanji County.

The Suribawigul Arsenal made bombs with powder obtained by the revolutionary organization in a mine in Badaogou, Yanji County. At first they made noise bombs. They exploded with a thundering sound, but their killing capacity was slight. Next they made chili bombs, an improved version. They were better than the noise bombs but they merely emitted a disgusting smell and were not very effective.

Later comrades in Helong made some effective bombs with iron shrapnel instead of chili powder. These were the famous Yanji bombs. After the appearance of the Yanji bombs we summoned Park Yong Sun from Helong and held a two-day bomb-making course in Dafangzi in Xiaowangqing to disseminate bomb-making techniques to different parts of east Manchuria. The short course was attended by people from the arsenals and the commanders of guerrilla units in different counties.

On the first day of the short course I gave a lecture on the manufacture of gunpowder. The arsenals of the guerrilla units were using powder which was obtained secretly from mines to make bombs.

This method of acquisition was always dangerous because the enemy exercised rigid control over powder. We succeeded in manufacturing powder with the powder materials that were readily available in private houses. The short course taught the skill of powder-making to those attending it so that it could be widely introduced in different areas.

Park Yong Sun lectured on the manufacture, use, keeping and handling of bombs. The story of how they made bombs for themselves in Helong aroused the admiration of the people attending the short course. Park Yong Sun and Son Won Gum who managed the Suribawigul Arsenal were particularly talented. Later the arsenal became a reliable weapons-producing and repair base for the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and made a great contribution to the anti-Japanese war.

If a writer were to collect episodes about the unexcelled spirit of self-sacrifice, boldness, wit and creativity our people displayed in their struggle for arms and give a vivid portrayal of them, it would make an epic story. A simple people who had been worked hard as cheap labor for tens of thousand years, plunged in the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy and were suffering the sorrow of a stateless nation shedding tears of blood, deeming it to be their fate, finally embarked on the path of the noble liberation struggle to forge their own destiny.

Whenever I saw the weapons the local organizations acquired or manufactured I noted with pride that our determination to clear the way for the Korean revolution by believing in the strength of our people and depending on it was quite right.

We paid special attention to laying a mass foundation for the anti-Japanese armed struggle while pushing ahead with the preparations for building active revolutionary armed forces. It was an essential demand of our developing revolution to awaken and ceaselessly temper the masses in the practical struggle and prepare them thoroughly for the anti-Japanese war. Their voluntary enlistment across the country in the anti-Japanese war was a guarantee for ultimate victory in the war.

The unprecedented bad harvest and ensuing famine in 1930 created the conditions for us to launch a new mass struggle following the harvest struggle in east Manchuria. We saw to it that a new struggle was launched against the Japanese imperialists and the pro-Japanese landlords as a continuation of the heightened fighting spirit shown in the harvest struggle. The spring struggle which began with the struggle to borrow cereal from the landlords rapidly developed into a struggle to confiscate the cereal of the Japanese imperialists and pro-Japanese landlords and a violent struggle to eliminate the lackeys of the Japanese imperialists.

The work to make the people of east Manchuria revolutionary in the flames of the spring struggle developed to a new high. The Korean communists persistently enlightened and educated the masses by going among them in spite of the intensified offensive of the counterrevolution against our revolution. The mass organizations kept the door to the masses wide open and steadily tempered them in a practical struggle.

But the work was not smooth sailing everywhere. In one case several revolutionaries laid down their lives to make a village revolutionary. At times revolutionaries had to tolerate intolerable insults and the mistrust of the people, without revealing their identity. Such was my experience in Fuerhe village.

Fuerhe is an important village occupying a key position on the road from Antu to Dunhua. Free travel between Dunhua and south Manchuria was impossible without passing this village. Without making the village revolutionary it would have been impossible to ensure the safety of Xiaoshahe, Dashahe, Liushuhe and other nearby villages.

The organization sent several able political workers there, but all of them, one after another, met with failure. Those who went there to ensure that the organization took root there were all arrested and lost their lives, but no one could come up with a solution. Kim Jong Ryong was angry, qualifying Fuerhe as a reactionary village, and said that spies or some white organization seemed to be there, but it was impossible to discover them. Whenever the village was mentioned, I could not dismiss my doubts.

In Fuerhe there was an organization member called Song, but he alone could not discover the reactionary elements or make the village revolutionary. Someone had to go to the village at the risk of his life and reshape the village into a revolutionary one from a reactionary one by removing certain people and forming organizations.

So I volunteered to go to Fuerhe.

I summoned Comrade Song to Xiaoshahe and made prior arrangements with him. I said to him, "When you return to the village, spread a rumor that you have sent for a young farmhand as you are short of hands. Then I can act as a farmhand at your house."

Comrade Song said, staring at me with his eyes goggling, "The village is very reactionary. How can you go on such a venture? It would be nonsense for you to act the farmhand," and he shook his head. The organization, too, disapproved of my going to Fuerhe.

Comrade Song and I rode in an ox-drawn sleigh to Fuerhe village, in spite of the disapproval of my comrades.

I slipped into the "reactionary den," assuming the appearance of an uncouth simpleton with long hair and a dirty face.

Several hours later, when Comrade Song and I were at supper, some mounted policemen unexpectedly galloped into the village, raising clouds of dust behind them. The authorities in Antu had already dispatched police to the village. I did not know how they were informed of my arrival.

When the children playing outside shouted that some mounted policemen were coming, I went out to the

yard and began to split firewood with an axe. The situation was similar to that I had experienced at the house of the unknown woman in Jiaohe.

The mounted policemen pointed at me and asked who I was.

Comrade Song said that I was his farmhand.

One of the mounted policemen said, tilting his head to one side dubiously, "A head of the communist party has come to this village to give guidance, I have heard." They had come rushing, expecting to find a gentleman arrayed in good Western clothes, and they seemed disappointed at having had a wasted journey, seeing me in a shabby overcoat with my face smeared with soot.

I wondered whether an alien element communicating secretly with the enemy was in our ranks, for only a few responsible people knew that I had slipped into the village.

When the mounted policemen had left, I found Song looking terribly pale, perspiration standing in beads on his forehead.

Getting up early in the morning the next day, I fetched water, chopped firewood, swept the courtyard and boiled cattle feed. Every day Song and I went up a mountain on his ox-drawn sleigh. On the mountain I examined documents, collected firewood and discussed matters, while giving Song assignments.

The rumor went round the village that I was good at my work. The people in Fuerhe took me for a meek farmhand. When the well iced over, the village women waved to me to come and break the ice. I did what they asked with good grace. I did so because if the village people gave me more work to do, I would look more like a farmhand. If I did what they asked of me creditably, it would have been harder for secret agents to recognize the revolutionary in me.

One day a wedding was held in the house opposite Song's. That day the village people came and asked me to pound some steamed rice to make rice cakes. As I was a "farmhand," they seemed to think that I would be good at it.

My grandfather who was a farmer all his life used to say that only when one is able to plough, chop fodder and pound rice can one be called a real farmer. But I had never before pounded steamed rice into rice cakes. Our situation at home did not allow us to live in luxury eating rice cakes. I feared that if I complied with their request I might give myself away. But it did not seem becoming of a farmhand to refuse their request. So at first I hesitated and said that I could not help them because I was doing domestic chores. People came repeatedly and pressed me with requests, so finally I had to agree.

When I appeared in the courtyard of the house where the wedding was to be held, the master and mistress of the house were delighted. Taking a mallet from the hand of their slender, middle-aged neighbor, the mistress gave it to me, saying, "Look here, the quality of today's rice cakes depends on your skill. Prove

your worth." The way the mistress bustled about bringing me steamed rice in a wooden dish was strange and ludicrous. The village people stood around to see the "farmhand's" skill. It was a spectacle for people in the countryside to see how rice was pounded into rice cakes.

Grasping the mallet firmly, I thought: "Whatever will be, will be. Let me wield the mallet to the best of my ability. Pounding rice is work for a man, isn't it? A farmhand cannot do everything, can he? At worst I will be looked down upon as a poor hand." But just then Song, who had evidently read my thoughts, saved me. Pretending to put on airs, he reproached me, saying, "Hey, you! How can you pound rice with your arm? How many times have I told you to take good care of your arm?" Looking round at the people, he said, "He hurt his arm yesterday while collecting firewood. He cannot pound rice. But I will pound the rice for my neighbor's happy event."

That day the village women, as they served rice cakes to the guests, treated me like a farmhand. They handed out rice cakes on a dish to others, while handing me some with their hands. Yet I did not consider the village people to be bad because of this insult. I rather thought it helped me in my work.

So it was not easy to make the village of Fuerhe revolutionary. The process of making Wujiazi village revolutionary had been attended by many difficulties, but it was easier than that of Fuerhe. But while staying in the village for about one month and a half, I formed organizations and induced the youth core elements to get rid of the secret agents.

When I told this story to my comrades on returning to Xiaoshahe, they held their sides with laughing. I said to them, "Revolutionaries can gain a foothold anywhere. So far we have failed to do so because we made the revolution in a gentlemanly fashion without going among the masses, like drops of oil floating on water."

I once went to Fuerhe at the head of a unit after forming the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Riding to the village on horseback I, the commander of the guerrilla unit, stopped there and held a mass meeting at which I delivered a speech. Seeing me, the people were extremely surprised.

When she saw me riding my horse again after my speech, one woman who had waved me over to crush the ice exclaimed in surprise, "Dear me! Isn't that the young farmhand who was once in our village?"

He's become the commander of the guerrilla army!"

The difficulties in our way were overcome in this way. But the most difficult problem still remained unsolved. The work with the Chinese national salvation army caused much bloodshed for the Korean communists.

## 5.5. The Birth of a New Armed Forces

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The spring of 1932 was turbulent with events that shook the world. After occupying Manchuria the Japanese imperialists rigged up the puppet Kingdom of Manchukuo through the reinstatement of Pu Yi, the last Qing Emperor who had been dethroned by the nationalist revolution led by Sun Yat-sen. The Japanese government-patronized mass media and the Chinese and Manchurian pro-Japanese publications chanted their praise of the kingdom, clamoring about the "concord of five nations" and the building of a "paradise of righteous government," whereas the progressive people of Asia and the rest of the world strongly denounced it.



*Photo: Kim Il Sung in 1932.*

The world's attention was focused on the activities of the fact-finding commission from the League of Nations which had just arrived in Japan on a mission to investigate the cause of the outbreak of the September 18 incident and the responsibility for the incident.

The commission headed by Lytton, an adviser to the British Privy Council, and consisting of delegates from such great powers as the United States, Germany, France and Italy was received in audience by the Emperor of Japan and met the Japanese Prime Minister, the Minister of the Army and the Minister of Foreign Affairs; it proceeded to China to hold talks with Chiang Kaisek and Zhang Xue-liang, and then appeared in Manchuria where it met Lieutenant-General Honjo, the commander of the Kwangtung Army, and inspected the area where the September 18 incident had occurred. Japan and China vied with each other in welcoming and entertaining the Lytton commission in order to win its support.

The conjecture that Japan might withdraw her troops from Manchuria if the commission disclosed the true facts and the League of Nations exerted its influence, was widespread not only in political, public and news circles but also among primary school pupils and old men in the rural villages, who had become interested in politics.

But we who were in the Antu area preparing for the armed struggle did not listen to the rumors and

conjectures; we were applying ourselves to military training, with the Women's Association of Xiaoshahe bringing our lunch in large wooden vessels to the tableland near Tuqidian every day.

In the middle of March we organized in Antu a short training course for the leaders of the small guerrilla units in several of the counties of east Manchuria. Nearly 20 leaders gathered in Tuqidian, Xiaoshahe.

The training course lasted for two days' theoretical lectures on the first day and drill on the second day. I gave a lecture on the lines and policies of the Korean revolution in the political class and on the regulations and code of conduct for the guerrillas. Military drill was mostly supervised by Park Hun. We started with the basics of formation drill and the disassembly and assembly of weapons, and then dealt with such tactical matters as raids and ambushes.

Antu became the headquarters of the Korean communists who were forming the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Political workers and messengers from several counties along the River Tuman often came to Xiaoshahe to make contact with us. The news of our activities to form the guerrilla army in Antu spread from mouth to mouth as far as the homeland. On hearing the news, young patriots in their early twenties from Korea and various parts of Manchuria flocked to Antu, at the risk of their lives, to volunteer for the guerrilla army.

At this time Pyon Dal Hwan and 8 young volunteers were arrested and imprisoned by the Japanese military police on their way to Antu from Wujiazi. Pyon Dae U came to see me after liberation to express his sorrow that his son had been unable to join the army and had wasted several years behind bars. Many people came, particularly from Yanji County in Jiandao. The enemy's ruling organs and repressive machines were concentrated in the Yanji area and its network of secret agents was developed.

The Jiandao task force under the command of Colonel Iketa, which consisted of the 75th Regiment, 38th Brigade and Ranam 19th Division, and was reinforced with artillery, engineers and a signal corps, crossed the Tuman and marched into Yanji and other parts of Jiandao for a "mop-up" operation in east Manchuria. In this situation the underground organizations in the area sent to Antu many young people who had volunteered for the army.

On hearing the news, even people without any recommendation from such organizations came to us in large numbers. Chen Han-zhang came from Dunhua, bringing with him a young Chinese man, Hu Jin-min (Hu Ze-min). Hu had been a teacher at a normal school in Helong. Sometimes young people came in dozens at a time. But the Chinese national salvation army units often captured them on their way to us and killed them in groups.

At that time there were various Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units in the northeastern region of China, such as the Northeast Self Defense Army, the Anti-Jirin Army, the Anti-Japanese National Salvation Army, the Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army, the Mountain Rebels, the Broad Sword Society, the Red Spear Society and so on. These nationalist armed units comprised patriotic soldiers who had broken away from the former Northeast Army to march under the banner of anti-Japanese national



salvation after Japan's occupation of Manchuria, as well as Chinese government officials and peasants. These units together were known as the national salvation army.

Well-known among these units in Manchuria were those led by Wang De-lin, Tang Ju-wu, Wang Feng-ge, Su Bing-wen, Ma Zhanshan, Ding Chao and Li Du.

The largest one in east Manchuria was Wang De-lin's unit. Wang had in his younger days been an insurgent, as "a heroic man in the green forest," in the forests around Muling and Suifenhe, holding no principles or views, before being assigned with his followers to the Jirin army under the command of Zhang Zuo-xiang. There he became an officer in the regular army. He had served as the commander of the 3rd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 3rd Brigade of the former Jirin army before the September 18 incident. People called his unit the "Former 3rd Battalion."

After Japan's occupation of Manchuria his senior officer, Brigade Commander Ji Xing, had surrendered and met the commander of the Kwangtung Army. After pledging his allegiance to the Empire of Japan, he was appointed Jirin garrison commander. Indignant at the betrayal by his senior officer, Wang immediately revolted and proclaimed the anti-Japanese national salvation struggle. He took 500 of his soldiers to the mountains and, after organizing the national salvation army, appointed Wu Yi-cheng as the forward area commander and started his resistance against the Japanese imperialist aggressor army.

Wang De-lin's faithful subordinates Wu Yi-cheng, Shi Zhongheng, Chai Shi-rong and Kong Xian-yong, operating in the Luozigou area, contained the enemy in Jiandao and, in later years, established blood-sealed ties with our guerrilla army.

In the mountainous areas of south Manchuria the Self-Defence Army led by Tang Ju-wu was operating, and in Heilongjiang Province, Ma Zhan-shan's unit was resisting against the Japanese army which was advancing northwards. The unit of Commander Yu under the command of Wu Yi-cheng crowded into the backwoods around Antu. This unit was extremely reckless.

They all regarded the Korean communists as stooges of the Japanese imperialists and the Korean people as having guided the Japanese army of aggression into Manchuria. They were prejudiced against the Korean people partly because the Japanese imperialists continued to drive a wedge between the Chinese and Korean peoples, and partly because the bad impression the Chinese people had received of the Korean people from the May 30 Uprising and the Wanbaoshan incident was still vivid in their memory.

The die-hard upper stratum of the national salvation army lacked political judgment and insight with which to understand that both the Korean and Chinese nations were suffering the same disaster and misfortune because of the Japanese imperialist aggressors, that the Korean people could not be the cat's paws of the Japanese just as the Chinese people could not, and that the Korean people could not be the enemy of the Chinese people just as the Chinese people could not be the enemy of the Korean people.

They were blindly hostile to communism because they came mostly from the propertied class. They

concocted their own equation that the Korean people were communists, communists were factionalists, and factionalists were the running dogs of the Japanese imperialists and, based on this equation, persecuted and ruthlessly killed young Korean people.

In the cities and lowlands the Japanese troops of aggression were running wild, and in the rural and mountainous areas which had not yet been occupied by the Japanese army tens of thousands of Chinese nationalist soldiers occupied vantage points to bottle us up. Their hostile acts were a serious obstacle threatening the very existence of our young guerrilla army.

Since the Japanese imperialists, the Chinese mountain rebels and the Korean Independence Army were all opposed to the Korean communists, we had seemed to have the world against us. Without improving our relations with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units, it was impossible for our guerrilla army to survive and operate as a legitimate force. And without making itself legitimate it was impossible for it to increase its ranks and operate in daylight.

As our organized unit was not legitimate, we were as good as confined in a back room. In such circumstances it was impossible to see the light. We merely lamented, saying, "How can we fight the Japanese by fumbling with Mauser rifles in civilian clothes in the back rooms of others' houses?" Worse still, we could hide only in Korean settlements; we could not go to other places and had to move about in groups surreptitiously and only by night. That was why we called the guerrilla army a secret guerrilla army in its early days.

In those days we had to keep away from not only the Japanese army but also the remnants of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units and the army of Manchuria; we also had to guard against some of the Korean nationalists and reactionary elements. As we were fired at and persecuted in public on the ground that we were communists, we really had a headache. The same was the situation in Yanji, Helong, Wangqing, and Hunchun.

Nevertheless, we could not stay only at the houses of communists. As they were living in poverty, they would become even worse off if we stayed in dozens at their houses, eating their grain; this, too, was a problem.

If things were to improve and if we were to fight in high spirits, it was imperative for us to make the guerrilla army legitimate so that we could march in broad daylight, singing, welcomed by the masses and conducting propaganda. It was painful for us not to be able to do so.

Whenever we got together, we discussed over and over again how we should make our guerrilla army legitimate and how we should improve our relations with the Chinese nationalist army. The most serious issue was whether it was right to join hands with the nationalists of China. Several comrades doubted the validity of an alliance with them, considering that it would mean giving up our class principles and compromising with them, given the fact that their upper strata came from the propertied class and that their army represented the interests of landlords, capitalists and bureaucrats. These comrades insisted

that, even though we might improve our relations with them on a temporary basis, we could never enter into an alliance with them, and that we should overcome their hostile acts by force of arms.

This was an extremely dangerous opinion. We maintained that we should not only improve our relations with them but also form a united front with them because we firmly believed that these units, in spite of their various limitations, could become our strategic ally in the anti-Japanese war as we shared common fighting objectives and a similar situation. The question on an allied front of two armed forces with conflicting ideologies and ideals was extremely controversial when it was raised for the first time in those days.

Forming a common front with those units was also a serious question facing the Communist Party of China. From the early days its east Manchuria Ad hoc committee had been interested in Wang De-lin's unit and sent seven or eight excellent communists there to conduct work with the unit. We sent Lee Gwang and some other Korean communists to the national salvation army units. On several occasions I received through liaison officers reports on the painstaking efforts of Lee Gwang, who had been sent to Tong Shan-hao's unit.

As their hostile acts became more and more outrageous, our comrades said that the allied front was an idle fancy and that we should return fire and avenge the people who had been killed by them. I made a lot of effort to restrain them. Making them our enemy and paying them back was inconsistent with our great anti-Japanese cause and moral duty and was imprudent enough to invite the destruction of our young guerrilla army.

The communists and guerrillas not only in Jiandao but also in the whole of Manchuria racked their brains over the Chinese nationalist armed units. The guerrilla units in the various counties at that time were small in size; there were only a few dozen guerrillas in each county. They were in danger of being annihilated if captured by the Chinese nationalist units, so they could not expand their ranks even if they wanted to.

In the light of this I wondered if it would not be a good idea for our guerrillas to join Commander Yu's unit and operate as a special detachment of it for a period. I presumed that if we joined Commander Yu's unit, we would be safe under the flag of the Chinese national salvation army and could obtain some weapons and, that if we had a proper influence on them, we could make the soldiers communists and reliable allies. I put this idea to my comrades to be debated.

We had a day-long meeting on this question at Kim Jong Ryon's house in Xiaoshahe, where the headquarters of the party organization was situated. It is now called the Xiaoshahe Meeting. The atmosphere at the meeting was very heated. We debated from morning till late at night until our throats were sore on the question of whether it was possible and favorable for us to operate as a special detachment of the Chinese national salvation army. Not only the heavy smokers but also those who were non-smokers puffed hand-rolled cigarettes continually. I still remember how my eyes smarted in the oppressive atmosphere. I was a non-smoker.

Finally my idea gained the support of my comrades. The meeting decided to dispatch a delegate to Commander Yu's unit to negotiate with the Chinese national salvation army unit, and I was singled out as the most suitable person for the job. To be more precise, I volunteered, rather than being chosen by my comrades.

None of us had any experience of military diplomacy. So the question of who should go on the mission was taken very seriously. None of us was sure whether or not the Chinese would agree, whether or not they would baffle us by making preposterous proposals at the negotiations or whether or not they would shoot our delegate if the worst came to the worst. We were all of the opinion that someone who was prepared for all these eventualities should go.

But none of us was right for the task. An elderly man was needed to deal with Commander Yu and we had Park Hun, Kim Il Ryong and Hu Jin-min as such. Kim Il Ryong was more than 10 years older than me, but he did not speak Chinese well. The rest of us were between eighteen and twenty years old and had, like Cao Ya-fan, recently left school.

I suggested that I should go, but they objected. They said that I, their commander, must not risk myself when Commander Yu might kill me because I was a communist, and that any of the Chinese Comrades, Chen Han-zhang, Cao Ya-fan or Hu Jin-min who was diplomatic should be sent.

When I asked them why Commander Yu would kill me, they said, "How do you know he won't kill you? If they curse you as a 'gaolibangzi' (a Chinese derogatory term for the Koreans) and shoot you when you are there, that'll be the end of you. They kill anyone, so why shouldn't they kill you? They say that the Chinese are more vigilant against young Koreans nowadays after the incident of the Guan Corps in Wangqing. So you must not go."

The secret guerrilla army in Wangqing led by Comrade Lee Gwang had disarmed a national salvation army unit called the Guan Corps. This was known as the Guan Corps incident. This incident further aggravated our relations with the Chinese units and created a more unfavorable situation for the activities of our guerrilla army. A messenger from Wangqing reported that, after the incident, the Chinese soldiers in his area had captured several of our guerrillas as retaliation and killed them. It was around this time that Comrade Kim Chaek had been arrested by the Chinese mountain rebels in north Manchuria and had only narrowly escaped execution.

Nevertheless, I insisted on my going to negotiate. I did not insist because I would be more skilful than others in dealing with them or because I had any particular means to force Commander Yu to yield. It was a brutal fact that the existence of our guerrilla army depended on negotiating successfully with Commander Yu, that the success of our activities depended on improving our relations with the national salvation army, and that without making them our allies, it would be impossible for us to go outdoors, let alone launch a guerrilla war in east Manchuria. I thought that unless we overcame the crisis and started the armed struggle I, as a Korean man, would have no reason to live.

I persuaded my comrades by saying that a man who was afraid of death could not fight for the revolution, that I could speak fluent Chinese, that I had experienced many trials in the days of the youth movement, that I would be perfectly able to deal with Commander Yu and that, therefore, I must go. Then I left with Park Hun, Chen Hanzhang, Hu Jin-min and another young Chinese man to negotiate with Commander Yu, without any guarantee for our personal safety.

The headquarters of Commander Yu's unit was situated in Liangjiangkou. We promised to say that we were from Jirin, not from Antu, when asked by the unit's soldiers where we were from. It was not to our advantage to name the place in east Manchuria where our guerrilla army was stationed.

On our way to Dashahe we came across Commander Yu's unit. Hundreds of soldiers were marching in a stately manner, carrying a standard on which was written "Commander Yu," as in the Three Warring Kingdoms. As they had already defeated the Japanese army at Nanhutou and even captured some machine guns, their reputation was running high. "Why don't we try to avoid them?" Hu asked me, with an uneasy look.

"No. Let's carry on," I said, walking on. The other four kept in step with mine, walking at my side. The moment they saw us, the soldiers shouted, "Gaolibangzi, come on!" They tried to arrest us there and then. I asked them in Chinese why they were arresting us who were fighting against the Japanese as they were. They asked in return if we were not Koreans. I answered proudly that I was a Korean and, pointing at Chen and Hu, said that they were Chinese.

"We are going to see your commander to discuss something urgent with him. Take us to your commander," I said with dignity.

They cowered and told us to follow them. After we had followed them for a short distance, a man in the uniform of an officer of the former Northeast Army ordered the men to take lunch, and detained us in a farmhouse. To my surprise Liu Ben-cao, a teacher of mine at Jirin Yuwen Middle School, entered the house. He had taught Chinese at Yuwen Middle School for a while and later at Wenguang Middle School and Dunhua Middle School. He had been on friendly terms with Mr. Shang Yue and knew Chen Hanzhang well. As he had been good-natured and had a wide knowledge, and moreover introduced many excellent books and enjoyed reading to the students the good poems he had written, we had admired him and respected him highly. As soon as we recognized him, Chen and I hailed him. In that adverse situation, we were delighted to see him.

Without concealing his delight and surprise, he asked us one question after another, "Why are you here, Kim Sung Ju? What have you come here for? Where were you going and why are you being detained?"

After I had given him a short explanation, he ordered the men in a loud voice, "Be polite to these people. I will take my lunch here with them. Serve us a good lunch." Later I learned that he had given up teaching when the Japanese army invaded Manchuria, and had joined Commander Yu's unit. He was chief of staff of that unit.

While having lunch with us, Liu said that he had put on the military uniform because he could not bear to see the country being ruined, but it was extremely difficult for him to fight alongside ignorant soldiers. He then asked us to work with him. We agreed and asked him to help us to see Commander Yu. He replied that the commander was on his way to the Antu county town from Liangjiangkou and that we could see him if we followed him.

"Sir, we would like to organize an armed unit of Koreans," I said. "As you know we Koreans hate the Japanese imperialists more bitterly than the Chinese do. So why are the Chinese nationalist soldiers against the Koreans' fighting the Japanese? Why do they persecute Koreans and kill them?"

"I know! I tell them not to do it, but they won't listen to me. These ignoramuses do not even know what kind of people communists are. What is wrong with the communists fighting against the Japanese imperialists?"

Liu Ben-cai was indignant, too. I was inwardly pleased that now we seemed to have found a way out. I sent Park Hun immediately to Xiaoshahe to inform the comrades there that we were safe and that it seemed possible that we would make the guerrilla army legitimate as the chief of staff of Commander Yu's unit was giving us his full backing.

After lunch we followed Liu Ben-cai to the Antu county town. Liu had a horse of his own. We told him to ride on the horse, but he replied, "How can I ride on a horse while you are walking? Let's talk while walking together."

He walked with us all the way to the county town. Most of the soldiers were wearing arm-bands with "Bu pa si bu rao min", written on them, meaning that they should not be afraid of death nor should they harm the people. Unlike the nasty attitude of the soldiers, their maxim was very sound and militant. The maxim gave me a ray of hope that my interview with Commander Yu would be a success.

Thanks to the good offices of Mr. Liu, that day we met Commander Yu without difficulty. He received us with courtesy and accorded us hospitality probably for the sake of the dignity of the chief of staff, or probably out of his desire to take us into his unit, for he had made secret inquiries about us and learned that we, having been educated at middle school, were capable of making speeches, writing declarations and handling weapons, in addition to being in the prime of our youth.

As I had guessed, Commander Yu asked us to join his unit. He asked me to work as chief of the propaganda squad under the headquarters. I was extremely embarrassed, for my intention was to form our own army and make it legitimate. If I declined, it would surely incur Commander Yu's displeasure and place Liu Ben-cai in an awkward situation.

I thought; things are developing in a strange way, but fortune might smile on me if I win his confidence. I accepted his offer saying, "Thank you, commander, I will do as you have asked."

Commander Yu was delighted. He ordered his subordinate to write a notice of my appointment immediately. Thus I became chief of the propaganda squad of the headquarters. Hu Jin-min was appointed an assistant staff officer and Chen Han-zhang, a secretary. This was a ridiculous development, and not something we had desired, but it was a step up the ladder we had to climb. To tell the truth, these absurd appointments proved valuable in making the guerrilla army legitimate.

In my mind I cried, "Bravo!" comparing our situation in which we had been confined in the back rooms of others' houses to the present situation in which we had penetrated deep into the heart of Commander Yu's unit.

That evening an unexpected event occurred. The soldiers of the unit had arrested 70 or 80 young Korean men on their way from Yanji to Fuerhe and brought them to the county town. I saw them at a distance with indignation and shock, and then hurried to Mr. Liu and said: "Here's a pretty state of affairs, sir. Your soldiers have again arrested dozens of Koreans. What sort of pro-Japanese can there be among them? There is no pro-Japanese. We should deal with any cat's paw after an examination, shouldn't we?"

He said, "Go and handle the matter, Sung Ju. We trust you."

"I can't do it alone, sir. Please come with me. You were a good orator, weren't you? If you make a speech, even a stooge of the Japanese will be moved. We should teach them to fight against the Japanese. What's the good of killing people who are not pro-Japanese?" "You are good at speaking, so there's no need for me to speak. You go alone." He flatly refused, waving his arm.

As he said, I had made speeches on many occasions in my school days. Roving around such places as Jirin, Dunhua, Antu, Fusong and Changehun, I had delivered many speeches denouncing the wild scheme of the Japanese imperialists to invade Manchuria and calling for the unity of the Korean and Chinese peoples. Mr. Liu knew this well.

"If I speak in Korean how will the officers of your unit understand what I am saying? They may think that I am conducting propaganda against them."

Again he waved his hand and urged me to go.

"At most you will make communist propaganda. That's all right. I will vouch for you, so please speak without any worry.

He knew that I was associated with the communist party and involved in the communist movement.

"Communist propaganda should be conducted whenever necessary. It isn't bad to conduct it, is it?"

If we had not been on intimate terms with each other, I would not have dared say this to Mr. Liu. If they

regarded me as a communist and pro-Japanese and tried to kill me, I could do nothing. But no such Ahing1~appened because of our special relationship. He and I had been Open with each other since our days at Yuwen Middle School. When I had been attending school in Jirin, he had looked after me.

As I was talking to Liu Ben-caoy, Commander Yu entered the office. Looking outside, he remarked that his men seemed to have arrested some communists and, shaking his head, went on to say that he wondered when the communist party had produced so many members in Manchuria.

Then Liu Ben-caoy, winking at me, said, "You, the propaganda chief, go out quickly and talk with them. Not all Koreans can be communists and not all communists can be the cat's paws of the Japanese imperialists."

Commander Yu grew angry at his words and yelled, "What? Are the communists not the stooges of the Japanese? They have brought the Japanese to this land to rob us of our land by their revolt."

Commander Yu's prejudice against the Korean people was stronger and blinder than we had expected. His misunderstanding of communism was no less deep-rooted than his prejudice. I decided to make every effort to persuade him. With determination, I dared to ask him:

"Excuse me, sir, but how do you know that communists are bad? Did you learn it from books or did you hear it from others? If not, why do you call them evil?"

"Damn the books! I learned it from what other people told me. Anyone who has a mouth says that communists are bad. That is why I believe they are bad."

I felt aghast at his words, yet relieved, for I thought I would be perfectly able to dispel his misunderstanding, which was not based on personal experience but on hearsay. "How can you carry out a great undertaking if you believe what other people say blindly apart from your own experience?"

As Chen Han-zhang and Hu Jin-min were communists and his chief of staff was supporting us, Commander Yu was surrounded. Thinking this a golden opportunity, I continued:

"What is the use of killing precious youngsters at will? What about giving them spears, even if not guns right away, and using them as a shock force? In that way we can test them to see if they fight the Japanese bravely. If they fight well, can we expect anything more from them? It is too much to kill them for no reason.

After thinking for a while, he said, "That's right. Go and deal with them."

I went to the arrested young men and secretly circulated a slip of paper among them. The slip said: "As there is no material evidence, never say you are communists; tell them you picked up by chance the handbill reading, 'Appeal to the Anti-Japanese Soldiers' they have found on you.'" The young men did



not know from whom the slip came.

When I appeared they shot angry glances at me. They seemed to suspect that I was a henchman of Commander Yu. Seeing their hostile glances I asked, “Has any of you ever heard the name Kim Sung Ju?”

This question dispelled the tension and they began to murmur. Some answered yes and some no.

“I am Kim Sung Ju. I am now working as chief of the propaganda squad in Commander Yu's unit. The commander has just given me the order to ask you whether you would like to join his unit and fight with him. Those who are willing to do so, please speak up.”

All the young men answered in chorus, “We will!”

I informed Commander Yu of what the young men had said; then I asked him to admit them to his unit and get them fight the Japanese. He agreed readily with my proposal. In this way the young men's fate and future was decided as we desired, and we were in a better position to achieve an allied front against the Japanese.

When we thus were on the threshold of making our guerrilla army legitimate, a Korean adviser to Commander Yu who was pulling the wires behind the scenes raised a fuss. A veteran nationalist belonging to the group of Kim Jwa Jin, he had been farming in Nanhutou before joining the national salvation army after the September 18 incident. As he was clever and had a wide knowledge, he enjoyed the deep trust of Commander Yu. It was he who had been instigating Commander Yu to persecute the communists. He claimed that admitting those 70 or 80 people without examination was rash, and that there might be pro-Japanese elements among them. Without forestalling him, our activities might be confronted with another great difficulty.

One day I asked Commander Yu casually, “I have heard that there is a Korean in your unit. Why do you hide him from me?”

He wondered why I had not yet met him, and ordered one of his men to bring him to me. I found the man to be very tall and sturdy. I introduced myself, and then said, “I am glad to see you. As you are old and probably experienced, please help us young novices as much as you can.”

He introduced himself to me. He said he had heard that a young Korean man who spoke fluent Chinese had come to the headquarters and was assisting Commander Yu as the chief of the propaganda squad, and that he, as a Korean, had been very glad at the news. Because he was speaking about the nation, presenting himself as a Korean, I took the opportunity to scold him:

“If so, you should enlist many people who are willing to fight against the Japanese. Why are you killing so many of them? Is it right to kill them because their ideology is different from yours? It is pitiful for Koreans not to be able to live in their homeland and it is all the more pitiful for them to be killed by the

national salvation army in Manchuria. You ought to ensure that they unite, irrespective of their ideology, be they communists or nationalists, and fight against the Japanese; what is the good of ostracizing and killing them’?”

He said I was right and gave me a meaningful look. Thus the second barrier was removed.

Commander Yu smiled as he saw our conversation ending in a friendly atmosphere. I asked the commander if he would trust me and allow me to be relieved of the command of the propaganda squad by Hu Jin-min and to form and lead a unit of Koreans. Liu Ben-cao supported me, saying that my proposal was reasonable. Commander Yu asked me how we would obtain weapons for the proposed unit.

I replied, “Never mind the weapons. We will not ask you for them. We will arm the unit by capturing weapons from the enemy.” The commander was extremely satisfied with my answer. “Then you may form a unit. But what if you turn your guns against us?”

“Don’t worry about that, we will never be guilty of such a betrayal. Should we turn our guns against you, your large army will be able to destroy us greenhorns, won’t it?” Waving his hand and laughing boisterously, he asked me if I had taken his joke seriously. Afraid that he might get angry if I began by asking him for his permission to break away from the national salvation army, I asked him as the commander to name the unit. Liu Ben-cao who was standing beside us said, “So, call it a special detachment. What about a special detachment of Koreans?” Commander Yu and I agreed with Liu’s suggestion.

The preparations for making the secret guerrilla army legitimate came to a successful conclusion with the birth of the special detachment. We enlisted in this detachment secret guerrillas from Antu and the 70-80 young men who had been detained by Commander Yu’s unit, making the guerrilla army legitimate.

I left the commander's room, taking the hands of Chen Hanzhang and Hu Jin-min in mine. We shouted “We’ve won!” “Success!” and we walked round the walled town all that night. Hu offered me a cigarette, saying that it would be a good experience to get drunk on alcohol or on cigarette smoke if there was no alcohol on that happy day.

I put a cigarette between my lips for the first time in my life and inhaled the smoke but, choking, I coughed for a good while. We all laughed. Hu even said, jokingly, “How can you become the commander of the guerrilla army when you cannot even inhale cigarette smoke?”

I returned to Xiaoshahe, and when I told them about the success of the negotiations, the comrades, who had been staying in a back room, carried me on their shoulders, crowding out of the room. The three cheers they raised reverberated throughout the village.

Kim Il Ryong, a celebrated singer, sang Arirang. It was strange to see him, a steel-like man, singing such a sorrowful song on that festive day when he should have sung a merry, lively waltz or a vigorous march.

Kim Chol (alias Kim Chol Hui) asked him, shaking him by the arm, “Brother Il Ryong, why are you singing such a song on this happy day?”

"I don't know. Arirang just came out of my mouth. Yet, we have passed through many crises, haven't we?"

Kim Il Ryong finished singing and glanced at Kim Chol, with tears in his eyes. What he said made me muse over the trials we had overcome to greet that day. Kim Il Ryong himself was the epitome of all these trials. He had lived through the nationalist movement as an Independence Army soldier, and also through the communist movement. He had lived in Korea, Manchuria and in the Maritime Province of Siberia. His very life was a continuation of suffering, lamentation and tears. Arirang was a musical interpretation of his life. At a historic juncture when he could laugh off all his sorrows and jump from setback to offensive, he sang the song to sum up his tortuous past and announce a fresh start in a jubilant mood.

If we had not met Liu Ben-cao on our way, what would have happened to us and to the destiny of the guerrilla army? With this thought I express my silent gratitude to him, who has now passed away.

Liu Ben-cao was happier than anyone else at the success of our negotiations with Commander Yu. When I left the town, he followed me a long way from the military camp and said in excitement that now we were friends, friendly forces, we should destroy the Japanese imperialist aggressors together. When I heard of his death, I mourned, remembering the eventful days at Yuwen Middle School and in the walled town of Antu where we had held the negotiations.

Thanks to the successful negotiations with Commander Yu, we were able to make our guerrilla army legitimate and have an ally in the war of resistance against the Japanese imperialists. The success also gave us the belief that in the great, patriotic cause we would be able to form a united front with the nationalists of another country who had a different ideology and different ideals.

This belief, I think, has had a great influence on my political career of more than half a century since then. Whenever I encountered officials who were prejudiced or hesitant in dealing with the matter of winning over the nationalists with a different ideology and different ideals and people with checkered records from the propertied classes, I would tell them about the experience I had gained in the negotiations with Commander Yu and persuaded them to be magnanimous.

Back in Xiaoshahe, I sent detailed information of our negotiations with Commander Yu and the resultant formation of the special detachment of Koreans to Lee Gwang who had been struggling with the problem of working with the national salvation army unit in the Wangqing area, and gave him the assignment of forming without delay another special detachment in Wangqing, in view of our experience in Antu.

Lee Gwang had been working underground until then. I sent one of my companies to him so that he could form a special detachment there and emerge from underground to conduct legitimate operations.

The special detachments were formed of Koreans. Of Korean units, only my unit and Lee Gwang's unit conducted legitimate activities in relation with the national salvation army. The naming of the special detachment at that time was, so to speak, a tactical measure to ensure the legitimate activities of our guerrilla army, improve our relations with the Chinese nationalist units and form an anti-Japanese allied front with them.

After forming the special detachment we pushed ahead with preparations for expanding and reorganizing it into the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army as soon as possible. The organizational structure was established after a wide-ranging discussion. Some comrades were very apprehensive of the small number of people of working-class origin in the guerrilla army.

An investigation into those 100 men applying to join showed that most of them were students or peasants. Alarmed at this fact, some of my comrades said that if the army was composed mainly of such people, it would mean violating Marxist-Leninist principles for forming a revolutionary army, and that it might be a factor leading to the degeneration of the revolutionary army.

I explained to them that, although the general principle of Marxist-Leninist military science regarded the industrial working class as the main component of a revolutionary army, there was no need to apply this principle mechanically. Although the industrial working class was relatively small in our country, with peasants accounting for the overwhelming majority of the population, I said, we could not postpone the formation of the guerrilla army until the number of workers had increased.

I told them that the peasants and students in our country had as high a revolutionary spirit and as strong a national spirit as the working class, that it would be good if people from different backgrounds fought with the ideology of the working class, and that the preponderance of peasants and students in the revolutionary army would not cause the army to degenerate.

In establishing a command system we did not regard the existing formula as absolute. We defined the organizational structure in such a way as to increase the combat strength to the maximum and to keep the number of commanding officers to the minimum to suit the characteristics of guerrilla warfare. In short, we made the command system as simple as possible. We did not maintain a supply department or a supply officer. We ensured that everyone was able to cook, launder, fight and, if necessary, conduct political activities.

How much useful information we would have received if we had such a book as *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz at that time! In those days we had no more than the basic military knowledge that the triangular system of military organization had been created by Napoleon. We knew of Clausewitz only by name. I obtained his work *On War* for the first time during the Second World War. His principle that the command system should be simplified so as to increase combat strength sounded reasonable to me.

Uniforms for the army were made from cloth dyed green in water and boiled oak-tree bark. A five-

pointed piece of red cloth inscribed with the company number was worn on the left breast of the tunic. We were to wear caps with a red star insignia and white leggings. Our hearts swelled as we prepared the design of the uniform, the finishing touch to the formation of the guerrilla army.

The members of the Women's Association began to make the uniforms according to our design. My mother, even though she was suffering from her recurrent illness, cut the cloth or handled a sewing machine with all her heart with the other members of the Women's Association.

In the second half of April 1932, we held a meeting to finalize the preparations for the formation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army in Antu. The meeting discussed the date and place of the inauguration of the guerrilla army along with the final screening of the applicants, defined the area of its immediate activities and adopted general measures related with the activities of the guerrilla army.

After the meeting the recruits assembled at Liujiafenfang (Polchatun), at the entrance to Sandaobaihe and then proceeded to Xiaoshahe. The recruits numbered more than 100; those whose names I still remember are Cha Gwang Su, Park Hun, Kim Il Ryong (from Xiaoshahe), Cho Dok Hwa (from Xiaoshahe), "pockmark" (a nickname, from Xiaoshahe), Cho Myong Hwa (from Xiaoshahe), Li Myong Su (from Xiaoshahe), Kim Chol (alias Kim Chol Hui, from Xinglongcun), Kim Bong Gu (from Xinglongcun), Li Yong Bae (from Xinglongcun), a Kwak (from Xinglongcun), Li Bong Gu (from Sanrenfang), Pang In Hyon (from Sanrenfang), Kim Jong Hwan, Li Hak Yong (from Korea), Kim Dong Jin (from Korea), Park Myong Son (from Yanji), An Tae Bom (from Yanji) and Han Chang Hun (from south Manchuria).

On the morning of April 25, 1932, we held the founding ceremony of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army on the tableland at Tuqidian. The guerrillas, dressed in their new uniforms and with their guns on their shoulders, lined up in unit order in the clearing on the tableland surrounded by larch trees, and the people from Xiaoshahe and Xinglongcun were buzzing, as they stood in a group at one edge of the clearing.

When looking at the fresh, sturdy soldiers, my mind was flooded with surging memories. How many miles our comrades had walked, how many meetings they had held, how many speeches they had delivered, how many rugged mountains they had trekked, and how many comrades had laid down their lives in the course of forming this armed force! The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was a priceless creation of our revolution, born of superhuman efforts, a bloody struggle and sacrifice.

Feeling an irresistible urge to summon all the comrades and people who had sacrificed themselves for this day to this tableland at Tuqidian, I made a speech, with strong emotion bursting out of my heart. As I proclaimed the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, the soldiers cheered at the top of their voices and the people applauded them enthusiastically.

On May Day, the militant holiday of the working class of the whole world, the AJPGA entered the county town of Antu with the red flag flying in the van and marched in parade, while blowing trumpets and beating drums. Kim Il Ryong, who had been appointed an officer of the guerrilla army, led the

chorus of the march that day. Not only the citizens but also the officers and men of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units crowded out to the streets and extended a welcome to us with their thumbs up, applauding us to congratulate us.

When we returned to Tuqidian after the parade, Cha Gwang Su and Kim Il Ryong hurried to my house and fetched my bed-ridden mother. Her face did not look well, with wrinkles between her eyebrows and with gray hairs on her head; but her eyes were smiling a quiet smile. She walked to Li Yong Bae and stroked his rifle, cartridge belt and five-pointed star. Then she proceeded to Kim Chol, Cho Dok Hwa, Kim Il Ryong, Pang In I-lyon and Cha Gwang Su, stroking this or that rifle and patting one man's shoulder, and then another's. Before long, her eyes were moist. She said:

"I am proud of you. Now we have our own army! That's what we needed. You must destroy the Japanese and win back the country without fail."

Her voice was thick. Forgetting her devotion to us, she was apparently thinking of the painstaking efforts of my father and other patriotic fighters who had passed away, praying for the liberation of the motherland.

Later guerrilla units were formed in Yanji, Wangqing, Hunchun, Helong and other parts of east Manchuria. Guerrilla units were also formed in north and south Manchuria by such staunch Korean communists as Kim Chaek, Choi Yong Kun, Li Hong Gwang and Li Dong Gwang, and began to fight the enemy.

The spring of 1932 advanced with the rumbling of the gunfire of the great war against the Japanese imperialists.

## 6.1. To South Manchuria

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Following the legitimization of the guerrilla units and the formal founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, our comrades discussed how it should start its activities. After parading in the walled town we returned to Xiaoshahe, and billeted the troops on the villagers in groups of three or four. We let them rest for a few days and held discussions to decide upon the direction of the guerrilla army's activities. The process of these discussions was attended by a hot dispute, as had been the case in Kalun and Mingyuegou. Everyone had his own opinion.

Not only was everyone's view with regard to guerrilla warfare different but also their assertions and expositions of tactics for it varied. Our collective consisted of over 100 young people with varying standards of learning and different backgrounds who had previously belonged to different organizations. Therefore, it was natural that their intentions and beliefs should be varied.

Their beliefs can largely be divided into three categories.

The first category was the theory of small groups. The advocates of this theory insisted that many small and mobile armed groups should be formed and the enemy defeated through a war of attrition instead of following the stereotyped method of forming such units as the company, battalion, regiment and division. They were of the opinion that if the strength of the guerrilla army was divided into small groups of three or five and tens and hundreds of groups conducted operations in many places in accordance with the unified strategy of the general staff, it would be quite possible to bring the Japanese imperialists to their knees.

The advocates of this theory claimed that guerrilla warfare with small armed groups as the basic unit might mark the creation of a new form of the national liberation struggle in colonial countries. Many advocates of the small group theory were to be found among the young people from Dunhua and Yanji in particular. The young people in these two places were most influenced by Li Li-san's Left adventurism line. The evil aftereffects of this were still evident in their way of thinking.

Cha Gwang Su harshly criticized this theory of small armed groups as modern Francisism. I was of the same opinion as Cha Gwang Su. The essence of the theory of small armed groups was that groups of several people would roam around avoiding a full-scale armed confrontation by large units because the military strength of the Japanese imperialists was enormous, and throw bombs at enemy leaders, set fire to their ruling installations and deal heavy blows to pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation, as Ra Sok Ju and Kang U Gyu had done.

The theory of small armed groups was a type of terrorism disguised as guerrilla warfare. If we did as they maintained, we would virtually be abandoning guerrilla warfare in large units. This would represent a

retreat. We could not tolerate a retreat.

Before and after the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, two noteworthy incidents took place in Japan and China perpetrated by our country's patriots. One of them was the heroic deed of martyr Li Bong Chang who threw a bomb at the Japanese Emperor's carriage outside the Sakurada Gate of the royal palace in Tokyo; another was the incident involving patriot Yun Bong Gil's throwing of a bomb in Hongkou Park in Shanghai on April 29 that year.

Li Bong Chang failed to achieve his aim of assassinating the Emperor because the bomb did not hit the mark. However, Yun Bong Gil succeeded in killing General Shirakawa, commander of Japanese forces in Shanghai, Murai, consul general in Shanghai, and Kawahashi, the leader of the Japanese residents. He also inflicted severe injuries upon many key military and political figures who had gathered in the park to celebrate the Emperor's birthday, such as the resident minister to China, the commander of the 9th division and an admiral. By doing so he caused a great sensation at home and abroad.

On January 9, 1932, the day after Li Bong Chang was arrested for throwing a bomb at the Emperor's procession, Guominribao, organ of the Kuomintang in China, carried in special type an article entitled "Korean Li Bong Chang Attempts to Assassinate Japanese Emperor, but Sadly Fails." Many other newspapers gave wide publicity to the heroic deed of Li Bong Chang. The report made such an impact that Japanese soldiers and policemen in the field even raided the office of the newspaper Guominribao and destroyed it. All the newspapers that had expressed their regret for the failure were closed.

All the Korean and Chinese peoples highly praised the brave deed of Yun Bong Gil. After the incident in Hongkou Park prominent figures from Chinese public circles asked for an interview with Kim Gu who had organized and instigated the incident. Even the bosses of the Chinese Kuomintang-led reactionary government who were capitulating to Japan's aggression, promised to cooperate economically with the Koreans in China, moved by the great spirit of resistance and heroism of the Korean nation.

Both Li Bong Chang and Yun Bong Gil were subordinates of Kim Gu and members of the Group of Korean Patriots which was superintended by him. This group's basic method in the anti-Japanese struggle was terror.

Following the heroic deeds of Li Bong Chang and Yun Bong Gil, an incident occurred in Dalian in which some members of the Patriotic Group sent by Kim Gu were arrested on the charge of attempting to assassinate the commander of the Kwangtung Army. They had intended to assassinate the commander of the Kwangtung Army, the president of the Manchurian Railway Company and the newly appointed chief of foreign affairs, taking advantage of the moment when key figures in Japanese military and political circles were coming to the station for the arrival in Dalian from Fengtian of the Lytton-led fact-finding commission of the League of Nations. Kim Gu even wanted to send his subordinates to finish off the governor-general in Korea.

Terrorism dazzled many Korean youth who were burning with hatred for the enemy at a time when Ahn



Jung Gun who had shot Ito Hirobumi to death was praised as a national hero and when all our compatriots dispersed on the American continent, in the Maritime Province of Siberia and in Manchuria, not to mention the people at home, were inspired by the heroic deeds of Li Bong Chang and Yun Bong Gil. So it was not at all strange that at this time the theory of small armed groups should come to the fore and be brought up for discussion when we were discussing the direction of the activities of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. The advocates of the theory of small armed groups were emphatic in asserting that the stronghold of Japanese imperialist rule would be shaken if such heroic deeds as that of Yun Bong Gil took place in succession in all parts of Korea, Japan and China.

The second category was made up of those who recommended that we should go over to a full-scale armed offensive immediately. While such people as Kim Il Ryong were interested in the theory of small armed groups, Park Hun, Kim Chol (Kim Chol Hui) and the like supported the theory of a prompt armed confrontation. I could to some extent understand it when Park Hun, who had seen tens of thousands of the soldiers of the regular army and rioters thronging a big city, insisted on starting an immediate full-scale armed attack, not satisfied with the theory of small armed groups. However, when Kim Chol, who was married, and living in his wife's parents' home, spoke with fervor, which was unusual for that mild man, claiming that we should operate immediately on a large scale, I found it strange.

All those who insisted upon going over to full-scale armed attacks had some grounds for their argument. Through the September 18 incident Japan had easily achieved her aim of occupying Manchuria and seized Shanghai and many other strategic points in China proper. A new puppet state called Manchukuo was established in the three eastern provinces. What was her next target? It was China proper and the Soviet Union. It was as clear as daylight that, although the Japanese army was slowing down its speed of attack as it watched the trend in the situation, it would invade China and the Soviet Union on some pretext or other. Therefore, starting full-scale military operations with the existing armed units would mean attacking from behind the Japanese imperialists who were deep in the mire of war. For us guerrillas to adopt a positive attacking posture was the law of history, so went their argument.

Kim Il Ryong rejected this extreme assertion and quoted the brief proverb "Cut one's coat according to one's cloth." This theory was thoughtless and subjective and did not take into consideration the preparedness of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army.

Needless to say, the line of the armed struggle we had advanced in Kalun was one which envisaged a full-scale armed confrontation with the Japanese imperialists. Without doubt the main aspect of the anti-Japanese armed struggle would be an organized and full-scale armed confrontation. However, it would be tantamount to committing suicide for a guerrilla army which had only just made a start to follow such a road from the beginning without making any preparations.

There was another category besides these two. It was the theory of prudence which put forward the principle that one would be ever-victorious if one knew the enemy and oneself and that one would always be defeated if one did not know either the enemy or oneself. This is what the advocates of the theory of prudence said:

"Our enemy is strong. How are we? We are no more than a young bud in both numbers and quality. Without doubt in the future we shall be enormously powerful. However, now we must steadily foster our strength quantitatively and qualitatively at the same time as conducting secret activities. Because our struggle will assume a protracted nature, we must accumulate our strength and beat the enemy at a stroke, taking advantage of a time when they are weak."

This view was censured as very lukewarm and vague, as no one could guess when such a time would come.

This time in Xiaoshahe was not the first time we had had such an argument. We had had a similar argument when we were forming the Revolutionary Army in Guyushu; We had also had such an argument when we confirmed the line of the armed struggle in Kalun and also when we adopted in Mingyuegou the resolution on waging an organized guerrilla war. Therefore, those who had not been leading an organizational life with us for long could not understand our intention fully. The fact that various opinions were expressed in the revolutionary ranks with regard to an important line was a good example of the incipient nature of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army.

Our unit comprised of people who had various occupations and different standards of learning, and who came from various places and organizations. Some of the young people were regularly reading such publications as Dong-A Ilbo and Choson Ilbo as well as the lecture texts for secondary schools. Others had been dreaming about transforming society after reading such novels as A Boy Wanderer by Chiang Guang-ci or Ascendance by Choe So Hae before joining the guerrilla army. Still others had no schooling at all.

However, they had been training themselves politically for several years in such revolutionary organizations as the Red Guards and the Children's Vanguard. Then they got rifles and joined the armed ranks. Therefore, it was inevitable that there were differences in the levels of their understanding of things and phenomena.

This situation encouraged us to pay special attention to organizational and political work to ensure in our unit singleness of idea, identity of action and unity of practice. We decided that, as the first process in this, we should adopt, before anything else, the measures needed to ensure identity in the understanding of the tactical principles of the guerrilla army and of our major strategic lines and that, unless we went through this process, the newly-born Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army might at the outset be in danger of meeting with disaster.

Walking around the village with Cha Gwang Su, I said the following to those who did not fully understand our tactical intention well.

"The theory of small armed groups will repeat the same method as that of An Jung Gun. It is an illusion that the Japanese imperialists can be brought to submission through terror. Although Ito Hirobumi was killed, Japan's rule remains as ever; it has even established Manchukuo and is now stretching out its

tentacles to China proper."

There may be cases in which the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army needs to undertake small group activities, but the small group should not be the basic combat unit.

"The claim that we should immediately go over to full-scale armed attacks is also unrealistic. It is absurd to try to fight, with a unit of a little over 100 men, against the large Japanese army that is hundreds of thousands strong, meeting it head on. Thinking it possible to defeat a large army of hundreds of thousands by a charge of some 100 soldiers is very unrealistic. Comrades, don't underestimate the enemy, please.

"So, what should we do then? Let us wage a guerrilla war with the company as the basic unit for the time being. If we operate with a small group as a unit, we can do nothing big. If our unit increases in size in the future, we shall be able to operate by a larger unit, but for now it is best to conduct our operations with the company as a unit. You also know that we are not in a position to form large units immediately. The anti-Japanese war will not be a short war which will be over after a few battles. Therefore we must, after starting with a small force, continually accumulate and expand our military forces in the course of the war, and when the time comes, we should win the final victory through a decisive battle combined with a nationwide armed uprising.

We should constantly ensure our strategic and tactical predominance over the enemy and defeat the Japanese imperialists through an unceasing war of attrition. To this end we must, equipped with small arms and moving secretly, disperse the concentrated enemy soldiers and destroy the dispersed enemy troops one by one, avoid large enemy forces and swallow up small enemy forces.

This is guerrilla warfare and here lies the advantage of guerrilla warfare. You advocates of the theory of prudence who maintain that we should not fight but only build up our forces furtively and defeat the enemy at a stroke after waiting for a favorable opportunity to do so, do you think that such a time will come of its own accord without a struggle and sacrifice, without bloodshed? You must remember that no one will present us with the opportunity to win our independence. We must win the opportunity by ourselves through a struggle." Thus I convinced the men of the wisdom of our decision.

Needless to say, not all the men understood me immediately. Some young people did not withdraw their opinions but stubbornly stood by them. I thought that only a practical example would bring our heated argument to a close and decide on which side truth was. Thinking thus, I devoted my time to studying to decide the direction of the guerrilla army's activities.

Our unit, which had started on the ambitious course of the anti-Japanese war, was confronted with the following tasks at that time. Firstly, we had to strengthen the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army in the course of a practical struggle. Secondly, we had to expand and strengthen our unit quickly in terms of its quality and quantity. Thirdly, we had to lay a solid mass foundation for the revolutionary army to rely on, and rally all sections of the masses around it.

We discovered a way to resolve these matters in an expedition to south Manchuria and set this to be our main strategy for the year 1932.

The armed unit which we formed in Antu had specific features that made it different from those formed in other counties and districts. Whereas the guerrilla units in other counties were formed of people from the given counties, the guerrilla unit in Antu comprised vanguard elements selected from various counties in east and south Manchuria as well as farsighted people from the homeland. If the guerrilla units in other areas regarded it as a principle to carry out their operations by settling in their respective areas, our unit considered it to be its principle to operate in the area of Mt. Paekdu and in all the areas along the Rivers Yalu and Tuman instead of confining the theatre of its activities to one or two places.

From the geographical point of view, Antu was very favorable for guerrilla warfare, but we could not remain only there. Our newly-created guerrilla unit had to advance into a vast area and, exposed to the elements, grow and take root among the people. While it was true that we had to guard against the practice of hastily leaning towards a struggle alone, we could not allow either the practice of idling away our time in one place, thinking only of preserving our forces.

An important reason why we chose the expedition as the initial step of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army lay precisely in this.

The main, immediate aim of the expedition to south Manchuria was to establish contact with the units of the Independence Army active along the River Yalu. The unit of the Independence Army under Commander Yang Se Bong was stationed in the area of Tonghua in south Manchuria, and we intended to form a united front with them. The Independence Army force under the command of Yang Se Bong amounted to hundreds. The unit was known as the Korean Revolutionary Army.

At the time when the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was founded in Antu, Yang Se Bong, in cooperation with Tang Ju-wu's self-defense army, was successfully defeating the Japanese army and the Manchukuo army. This news reached even the valley of Xiaoshahe, to our delight.

Park Hun wondered if Yang Se Bong would agree to collaborate with communists because he was a nationalist from Kukmin-bu with a deep-seated anti-communist idea. But, I said that we should make every possible effort to achieve a united front with the unit of the Independence Army. I told him that, now that we had formed an allied front with the national salvation army of China, there was no reason for us people of one and the same blood not to combine our efforts when we had a common ambition to fight against the Japanese.

I considered that collaboration with Yang Se Bong would prove successful also because I attached importance to our past friendly feelings and our personal relations; as someone who had been on extremely friendly terms with my father, Yang Se Bong loved me very much. In my childhood I heard that Kim Si U and Yang Se Bong became sworn brothers with my father in Huadian and even had their photograph taken with him. Commander Yang and my father were very close.

Had it not been for this relationship he would not have written a letter of introduction for me, a letter addressed to Whasung Military Academy, and would not have visited Yuwen Middle School and slipped money into my hand whenever he came to Jirin. In those days I was saving every penny, unable even to eat a Chinese pancake stuffed with sugar when everyone else was buying them, because of my difficulties in paying my school fees. So, I used the money which he gave me only when absolutely necessary.

After the Wangqingmen incident Yang Se Bong and I became estranged because of my disillusionment over the Kukmin-bu as a whole. However, I was no less grateful to him. It was not by chance that, at the time when I was undecided what to do after founding the guerrilla army, the first thought that came to my mind was that I must visit Yang Se Bong. It is true that in doing so I wanted to form a united front with him. However, no less was my desire to take the necessary advice and encouragement from him who had acquired combat experience over many years.

Commander Yang Se Bong was a veteran of many battles when compared with us who were excited at making an expedition without having gone through even a single battle. In the presence of those who were engaged in the national movement we had time and again expressed our resolve not to fight in the way the Independence Army did. This meant that we would not repeat the blunders of those who had not relied on the strength of the people, but it did not mean that we would ignore their military experience and technique.

When we witnessed the white terrorism committed by Kukminbu at Wangqingmen, we resolved with bitter tears not to deal with the old people of the Independence Army any more. But we decided not to consider their past faults when we shared the common noble work of liberating the country. If we took the past into account we would never be able to collaborate with them.

Besides Yang Se Bong's unit, in south Manchuria there were anti-Japanese armed units led by such Korean communists as Li Hong Gwang and Li Dong Gwang. The guerrilla unit which Li Hong Gwang formed in May 1932 was called the Panshi Worker-Peasant Volunteers. Later this unit was reformed into the South Manchurian Guerrilla Unit of the 32nd Army of the Chinese Worker-Peasant Red Army, and into the First Army of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army.

Li Hong Gwang became famous partly because he commanded his unit skillfully by displaying remarkable resourcefulness and art of command, and also because such enemy publications as the newspaper of the Kwangtung Army and the newspaper of Manchukuo reported him wrongly to be a "woman general." That Li Hong Gwang came to be called a "woman general" was associated with a comic story which caused everyone to smile. When he returned to his base after an assault on Dongxing, Li Hong Gwang had a woman guerrilla under his command interrogate the prisoners of war. Before interrogating the captives the woman guerrilla introduced herself by saying, "I'm Li Hong Gwang." Then she demanded that they state the disposition of the policemen and their plan for "punitive operations." When the prisoners of war returned to their unit they spread the rumor, "Li Hong Gwang is a beautiful lady of about 20." This is how the rumor started among the Japanese soldiers that Li Hong Gwang was a woman general.

While Li Hong Gwang was someone who fully displayed his wit and courage as a warrior through the armed struggle, Li Dong Gwang was an able political worker who displayed extraordinary ability in the building of the party and in the political awakening and organization of the masses. His name was known widely in east Manchuria from the latter half of the 1920s.

It was Kim Jun, So Chol and Song Mu Son who told me about Li Dong Gwang. When he was attending Dongxing Middle School in Longjing Li Dong Gwang began to distinguish himself as a leader of the student movement. The news of the escape from prison of Li Dong Gwang, who had been arrested in Longjing in connection with the first incident involving the Jiandao Communist Party, reached even Jirin.

In the summer of 1930, I happened to meet So Chol in Harbin. In the course of our conversation he unexpectedly told me that Li Dong Gwang knew of me. He had told So Chol that he had seen me when Mr. Ahn Chang Ho was delivering a lecture in Jirin and then, later, when a meeting of the representatives of the peasants in the Panshi area was held in Wulihezi. So I asked So Chol to tell Li Dong Gwang, when he met him, about our strategy for the struggle and that some time we should meet each other, exchange greetings and fight hand in hand in the same trench.

Afterwards Li Dong Gwang worked as secretary of the south Manchuria Ad hoc committee and as head of the organizational affairs department of the south-east Manchuria provincial committee. However, at the time when we were making preparations for our expedition to south Manchuria, he was working as secretary of a district committee in Panshi County. As in east Manchuria, so in south Manchuria, too, the Korean communists formed the backbone of the anti-Japanese armed force.

We intended to establish contact with them, too, when we went to south Manchuria. I regarded it very good for the development of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army if the young units met one another, swapped experiences and jointly sought measures for the struggle. In the whole course of the anti-Japanese armed struggle we conducted our operations in close contact with the guerrilla units in south Manchuria. In the course of this I formed unbreakable relations with Li Hong Gwang, Li Dong Gwang and Yang Jing-yu.

Many of our organizations were in the area of south Manchuria, such as Liuhe, Xingjing and Panshi. When we were operating in central Manchuria we had sent to these areas many fine workers of the YCLK and AJYL to form organizations. We had also sent there Choe Chang Gol and Kim Won U. However, those organizations that were born thanks to their efforts had been destroyed after the September 18 incident.

If we went to south Manchuria, a favorable phase could be created in restoring the organizations there and instilling vigor into the hearts of the daunted revolutionaries. Some historians suggest that all our activities were conducted smoothly and quickly without any obstacles and vicissitudes following the foundation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. However, a revolution is not so simple.

We had had to experience enormous psychological distress and many twists and turns until we chose our expedition to south Manchuria to be the first action of the new-born guerrilla army and put it into effect.

At Kim Jong Ryong's house where the headquarters of the district party committee had been set up, we held in May 1932 a meeting of the party and YCLK leading core elements operative in the various counties of east Manchuria and discussed the problems of conducting an expedition into south Manchuria and establishing a base. Our plan for an expedition into south Manchuria enjoyed the unanimous support and approval of those attending the meeting. Even some young people who, divided into two or three groups within the same unit, had been engaged in an extremely heated argument, willingly accepted our policy of conducting an expedition.

One day when we were enthusiastically making preparations for our expedition, Cha Gwang Su who had been appointed the unit's chief of staff, appeared before me looking serious and said:

"Comrade Commander, as we intend to start on an expedition, what about leaving Xiaoshahe as soon as possible, in a few days? There is a main road in the neighborhood, and the enemy's convoys frequently pass along it, and this is not good for us. Our food situation is also very difficult. There are only some 40 farmhouses here, but more than 100 of us are eating their food. So how can the villagers of Xiaoshahe bear it, although they are very kind?" The people of that area had joined a spring uprising because they had been suffering from hunger. Therefore, his appeal concerning the food situation fully convinced me.

But I could not agree to leaving Xiaoshahe soon simply because the main road was frequented by the enemy's convoys.

So to Cha Gwang Su, in response to his proposal that we should disappear secretly from Antu, I said:

"Comrade Chief of Staff, since we have risen in arms, what about trying a battle?"

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes, now that we have formed a unit, we should start our battle. When the enemy troops are passing very near us, there is no reason for us to sit with folded arms. When we shall have to leave, we will leave, but let us fire a shot in Antu. We cannot talk about training the men without a battle. If we succeed, I think we will be able to procure the materials we need for our expedition."

Cha Gwang Su readily consented to my proposal. That very day he went to the road with Park Hun to scout the terrain. The aim of his scouting was to select a suitable spot for an ambush. They proposed that we should keep watch at an important position on the road in Xiaoyingziling and attack a passing convoy. Their proposal accorded with my plan. I regarded an ambush to be the most suitable and universal form of combat for a guerrilla army.

Xiaoyingziling was situated midway between Antu and Mingyuegou. It was between Dadianzi and

Dashahe. It was a little over ten miles from Xiaoshahe as the crow flies. Although the mountains were not steep, it was a very good spot for an ambush because there was a winding cart track through a ravine. By using this road, the enemy was supplying munitions for its armed forces in the Antu area.

A provincial organization informed us that a puppet Manchukuo army convoy of carts carrying weapons and supplies had left Mingyuegou for Antu. I took those men who were scheduled to go to south Manchuria and, after reaching Xiaoyingziling by a rapid night march, placed them on both sides of the road in ambush.

An ambush at night is not a good idea. At night when it is impossible to distinguish friend from foe an assault is more effective than an ambush. Throughout the whole period of the anti-Japanese war we laid only a few night ambushes. We, who had just started on a new road, were unaware of this principle at that time. Fortunately, the moon was full and bright so our forces would not get confused and fight among themselves.

The enemy's convoy appeared in Xiaoyingziling towards midnight. Our men in the first position who were 100 meters ahead of us signaled the appearance of the enemy. The convoy was composed of 12 horse sleighs in all.

I was so tense and excited that I could feel my heart beating. I realized then that anything one encounters for the first time causes one great shock, apprehension and misgivings. I looked at Park Hun who was lying next to me, and saw that he, too, looked extremely tense. With him who had graduated from Huangpu Military Academy and had had a taste of gunfire being like that, it was not difficult to guess how the other men were feeling.

The first small unit of the ambush let the column of carts pass. When the head of the column reached about half the length of the distance along which the second small units were laying in ambush, I stood up on a rock and fired my pistol. With that piercing sound a battle cry was raised.

We could distinguish easily between friend and foe because we had bound white cloths round our arms. However, the men of the enemy's transportation unit who had been taken by surprise, fired at random, unable to tell friend from foe. Some ten or so of the escorts desperately replied to our fire from behind the carts. The longer the battle lasted, the more dangerous it was for us.

After about ten minutes' firing we charged and wound up the battle. The enemy surrendered after suffering more than ten casualties. The number of captives was also about ten. All of them were soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army; one of them was a Japanese noncommissioned officer.

I made a brief anti-Japanese speech to the enemy soldiers who had surrendered to us. That night we returned to Mutiaotun carrying our trophies in ten carts. Our trophies consisted of 17 rifles, one pistol, a large amount of flour which was enough to feed 100 people, for about a month, cloth and combat boots and so on. It was very impressive as first trophies.



Until after midnight we sat in a circle around a bonfire in the yard and ate a clear soup with wheat flakes in it made from the flour. It was a plain dinner party arranged in celebration of victory in our first battle. Even as I ate the soup I could not calm my beating heart. The food tasted good, but my mood was still better. Even now when 60 years have passed since then, I can still vividly remember my joy over victory in my first battle and the great excitement which I felt that night.

Cha Gwang Su who had been looking into the bonfire weeping behind his glasses, grasped my hand tightly all of a sudden and said in a choking voice: "I say, Sung Ju, now that I have experienced battle, it is nothing special." Such was the chief of staffs impression of his first battle.

My impression was the same. A battle is nothing extraordinary. Anyone can fight if only he has a gun and courage. The enemy is not so strong as we have so far regarded them to be. Look! They have surrendered to us. So, let us prepare with confidence for a bigger battle. We can win.

"How good it would be if Kim Hyok were here at a time like this. If he were alive, he would already have recited an impromptu poem. What a pity he has gone so early. Kim Hyok, Sin Han, Lee Gap, Je U, Gong Yong. . .where have they all gone!"

Cha Gwang Su was muttering to himself thus as if complaining about something as he wiped away the tears streaming down his cheeks. He was thinking about those who had left our ranks early without seeing the birth of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. I was also thinking of those who had fallen in battle while working to lay the foundation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. I could not ease the pain in my heart as the faces of my comrades-in-arms who had died without seeing this day came to my mind. If they were all still alive, how strong our ranks would be.

With his glasses in one hand and gesturing, Cha Gwang Su made a speech in front of the bonfire. "Comrades, we have taken the first step. We have achieved the first victory. Who has done this? It is we who are sitting here."

He stretched out his arms and made a gesture, as if he was lifting the men up in his arms. He said: "Once we have taken up a gun, that gun must be fired. And once the gun has been fired, we must win. Am I not right? This evening we have annihilated a convoy of carts. It is no more than a small incident, but it is the start of our cause. The water of a small stream has left a steep mountain valley and started to flow towards the ocean." It was the first time that I saw Cha Gwang Su so excited.

That night he made a really good speech. It was much more vivid and appealing than I can convey in writing by referring to my memory. I regret that I cannot repeat the speech as it was.

He said: "Comrades, how good fighting is. It gives us guns, provisions, clothes and shoes.... This evening I have learned a great and profound lesson. Now, let us distribute the rifles we have captured. Let us shoot more enemy troops with these rifles. Then we will obtain more rifles and provisions. We will also obtain machine guns and artillery. Let us fill our rice sacks with the captured food. Let us march

vigorously, eating that food. Let us make the Japanese imperialists supply us with weapons and provisions as we have done today, until the day when they are completely annihilated. This is the way for us to exist and struggle, isn't it?"

I was the first to applaud his speech. The whole audience responded to his speech with warm applause.

Then someone stood up and sang a song. I am not sure whether it was Cho Dok Hwa or Park Hun. Anyhow, the song overflowed with inspiration.

Thus, we took our first confident step.

## 6.2. The Last Image

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One day when our unit was busy preparing for its expeditionary campaign my younger brother Chol Ju came to Xiaoshahe to see me. The news of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army's raid on a puppet Manchukuo army convoy led by a Japanese noncommissioned officer at Xiaoyongziling had spread widely, going beyond the bounds of Antu and as far as Dunhua and Yanji, and everywhere our victory was the topic of conversation. The revolutionary organizations in Songjiang, Dadianzi and Liushuhezi went so far as to send people to Xiaoshahe to discover the truth about the Xiaoyongziling battle.

At first I merely surmised that my brother had come on a similar errand and met him in a matter-of-fact way. But contrary to my expectation, he asked nothing about the Xiaoyongziling ambush. He spent the whole day in silence watching the foot drill of the guerrilla men and then making straw sandals in company with the men chosen for the expeditionary campaign in the room next to the headquarters. Straw sandals were one of the items stipulated by the headquarters as equipment for the campaign.

I changed my mind and decided that my brother must have come to Xiaoshahe to help in the preparations for our campaign. At nearly suppertime, when I came back to the headquarters after meeting the head of the peasant organization in the Village, Chol Ju told me he was going home. I told him he should have supper with me before going. But he refused and insisted on going. He looked as though he wanted to say something to me, but never did.

Then he nervously studied my face with a somewhat curious expression. My sixth sense told me that my brother had not come to Xiaoshahe to help in the preparations for the expedition and that he had some cause to come to see me. If he had some cause, it must have been something which had happened to my mother or to himself. So I did not go inside the headquarters but walked with my brother as far as the entrance to the village to see him off, asking him point-blank:

"Has something happened in Tuqidian?"

By Tuqidian I meant my home. Somehow I was afraid to say "at home."

"No, nothing has happened," he said, forcing a smile. A clever actor and irresistibly humorous, my brother could easily crack a smile to deceive me. But his smile then was doleful and his mouth became twisted at one corner. Avoiding my eyes, he stared over my shoulder at the distant sky.

"If there is anything amiss, you should tell me directly. If you leave without telling me, I shall be anxious, shan't I? Don't keep it to yourself. Come clean right away." Chol Ju heaved a deep sigh before reluctantly opening his mouth: "It appears that mother's illness has become critical. She hasn't even eaten a spoonful of food for two days."

His words struck me like a bolt out of the blue. I felt faint inside on hearing that my mother was not eating anything. I knew she had been ill for a long time. When we were living in Badaogou, I had scarcely seen her ill in bed. But after my father had passed away in Fusong and I had left for Jirin to go to secondary school, my mother would often be ill. Chol Ju would sometimes tell me of her infirmity in his letters. At first when I received such letters, I was afraid that she had contracted Siuitu-bing, a local disease. Many of the people in the Fusong area suffered from it.

When someone caught it, his hands became crooked, his finger joints grew thick and his throat gave him trouble, so that he was disabled. Moreover, it was said, he would die before reaching 30 years of age. This local disease was one of the reasons why, after my father's death, O Dong Jin came to Fusong and advised my mother to move out to Jirin, so that our family should not be harmed. When I came home for the holidays I found my mother ill not from the disease but from fatigue. It upset me to think that her life of overworking, living in destitution, had at last come to tell upon her health. But I was relieved to learn that it was not the horrible Shuitubing. After coming to Antu she suffered from heartburn. In those days heartburn was called a "lump."

My mother would complain that she felt as if something big were pushing upwards in her chest. Looking back now, I think it might have been stomach cancer. The doctors diagnosed it as a "lump in the stomach," but were unable to find a remedy. No medicines were effective. When she felt a movement in her chest, she would lie down in her bed and skip her meals or take a few spoonfuls of thin gruel for a meal. That was the only cure. My friends went to a lot of trouble to find a cure for my mother's illness.

All my friends who were engaged in the work of the Young Communist League would send medicines to her. When they came across an advertisement for a medicine in a newspaper and thought it might be good for my mother's ailment, they bought it no matter how expensive it was and sent it to her by parcel post. Such postal packages came from Jirin, Shenyang, Harbin and Longjing. Traditional herb doctors in the Antu area, too, spared no efforts to treat my mother. The herb doctors in Dashahe treated her free of charge.

From the bloodshot eyes and dismal expression of Chol Ju I guessed that my mother's illness was in its last stage. When I asked if there was any grain in the house, he answered that it was almost all gone. The next day I bought a large mal of foxtail millet at Xiaoshahe with money my comrades had given me and set out for Tuqidian. I reckoned one ma/ of food grain would last the family of three (mother, Chol Ju and Yong Ju) for a month and that in that time we would have returned from south Manchuria. A large ma/of grain was about 15 kilogram's.

For our family struggling along on gruel in those days 15 kilogram's of grain was a great deal, enough for a feast. But that one ma/of grain hardly satisfied me. The straps cut painfully into my shoulders, but I did not feel the weight of my load of grain. It seemed as light as a feather compared with the love my mother had shown for me.

My father had once told me the story of Li Rin Yong, the commander of the Honorable Righteous Force

of the 13 Provinces. The story of this man's appointment as the commander was dramatic and instructive. When the heads of the Righteous Volunteers units in the eastern regions called on Li Rin Yong to ask him to lead their units, he was tending his sick old father who was near death. Declining their request, he said: someone else can command the Righteous Volunteers, but I cannot see my parents again once they have passed away. How can I leave my home and my old father when he is at death's door?

I do not want to be an undutiful son. But on the fourth day he accepted their request. The Righteous Volunteers hastened to rally under his command from all parts of the country. Their number reached 8,000. Some time later the units of Ho Wi and Li Gang Nyon joined them, so that the strength of the Honorable Righteous Force swelled from 8,000 to 10,000. They were further reinforced by 3,000 troops of the old national army of the Li dynasty armed with rifles. The heads of the Righteous Volunteers units from all regions of the country hailed Li Rin Yong as the commander of the Honorable Righteous Force of the 13 Provinces, and under his command they advanced to Seoul.

The ultimate goal of the Righteous Volunteers was to storm into Seoul and crush the Japanese residency-general and abrogate the Protectorate Treaty. According to this plan of operations, the Righteous Volunteers units were closing in on Seoul when Li Rin Yong received word that his father had passed away. He handed over the command to another man and went off to his home. His departure, along with the defeat of Ho Wi's troops sent out as the advance force, demoralized the men and led sadly to the collapse of the whole army.

When I was involved in the student movement in Jirin, I had an argument with members of the Ryugil Association of Korean Students on the subject of Li Rin Yong's decision to leave for home on hearing of his father's death. Many of them accused him of being a spineless commander. They argued furiously that, because he, the commander of 10,000 volunteers, went home just because of his father's death when he had before him the great task of leading his army to Seoul, he could not be called a man and a patriot.

But not everybody criticized Li Rin Yong. Some expressed their approval of his act. They said it was right, proper and natural that a man should return home and go into mourning when his father died, and even praised him as a dutiful son. At the present time a dutiful son means a man who is both faithful to his country and devoted to his parents, but in those days he who was devoted only to his parents was considered a dutiful son. I refuted them by saying that Li Rin Yong's behavior should not be taken as a model of genuine filial piety. I argued:

"Only a man who loves both his country and his family can be called a truly dutiful son. If he merely thinks much of his family and shows little concern for the national calamity, how can such a man be called a dutiful son? Now it is high time we were correcting our Confucian sense of value on filial piety. If Li Rin Yong had, after fulfilling his duty to the country and achieving his aim, visited his father's grave and, pouring a cup of wine and burning incense, bowed before it, his name would have been honored more by posterity."

This came as a great shock to the people who were steeped in the old way of thinking, their minds soaked

in the feudal moral view and Confucian idea on filial piety. The members of the Ryugil Association of Korean Students, divided into two groups, argued hotly for and against what I had said.

Although it is a simple and clear question beyond any dispute for the members of our League of Socialist Working Youth and Children's Union today, it was quite a controversial problem that was difficult to decide between who was correct and who was not at the time. It took decades and a bitter, dearly-bought experience for the entire people of the country to realize and come to believe firmly that loving both their country and their family was genuine filial piety.

As I returned to my house in the Tuquidian valley carrying the food grain on my back, I recollected this episode about Li Rin Yong. For some reason I was reflecting that the behavior of the commander of the Honorable Righteous Force might have been right. It was strange that I should have discovered some justice in the conduct of a man we had all decried so vehemently as a spineless commander, that I should feel inward sympathy, and express some understanding for him.

It is difficult, even impossible, for a man to lose sight of his family on the ground that he is making the revolution. The revolution is for the benefit of man, so how could revolutionaries ignore their families and remain indifferent to the fate of their parents and wives and children? We have always regarded the welfare of our families and the destiny of our country as one and the same. When the country is in distress, families cannot remain in peace, and when the families are overshadowed by misfortunes, the country will also be afflicted. This is our theory. Because we were convinced of this we were able to take the step, unheard-of in the history of warfare, of sending a regiment behind enemy lines to rescue the family of a soldier. This was motivated by the sense of duty and moral obligation which only the communists of Korea could display.

At first I, too, tried to be faithful to this moral duty. After shifting my theatre of activity to east Manchuria upon my release from prison, I often visited my house, taking medicines which I thought would be good for treating my sick mother, while moving about in the areas around Dunhua and Antu. But this offended my mother. As my visits became more frequent, my mother called me to her side one day and said in admonition:

"If you are to make the revolution, you should devote yourself to the revolution, and if you are to keep house, then you should devote yourself to housekeeping. Choose one or the other. In my view you should devote yourself to the revolution without worrying about household affairs since Chol Ju is at home and we can make a living by ourselves."

After that my visits home became less frequent. After the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army I seldom went home. I regret that now. Even though mother might have admonished me, I should have fulfilled my filial duty, I reflected in anguish. It was not an easy thing to be faithful to one's family and to one's country at the same time. As I approached Tuquidian, my pace became irresistibly faster. But my heart grew heavier with each moment. I felt distracted at the thought that I would be seeing my mother critically ill. In a pool reeds Were swaying in the wind.

The area had been called a reed field village because of its abundance of reeds. But since a few years before when Kim Byong Il's family at the lower end of the village started making earthenware for sale, this sparsely-populated out-of-the-way village had changed beyond recognition and acquired the name of Tuquidian (earthenware shop). I crossed the wooden bridge and headed towards the upper end of the village. The sight of the familiar straw-thatched house met my eyes. The untrimmed bush-clover fence was leaning to one side and the straw thatch was unkempt, so the house looked deserted. This was my home that had been untended by a male hand for years. No sooner had I pushed open the brushwood gate and entered the yard than the door of the house opened.

"Mother!" I called, running up to my mother who sat leaning against the door post, smiling. "I thought the footsteps sounded familiar," she said, beside herself with joy, as she fingered the straps of the grain sack I had put down on the earthen verandah. I had been afraid that she would scold me for coming home. But to my relief she said nothing to reprove me for coming.

Mother and I exchanged compliments for a while. As we talked, I studied her complexion, her voice and her carriage, trying to discover the state of her health. Outwardly she had changed little from the previous winter, but she was much weaker than before. Her ample bosom had grown smaller, her neck was thinner and her hair at her temples was noticeably grayer. I could not help feeling sad at the thought that time had left its lamentable marks so early on my mother's appearance. That night I talked with my mother until after midnight.

Our conversation wandered on endlessly: what place had the Japanese army reached? What would be the guerrilla army's course of action in the future? How could we join hands with Mr. Yang Se Bong? What was to be done at the guerrilla base? Mother kept leading our conversation to political topics. When mention was made of the family's livelihood or her health condition, she would hastily close the subject and shift the conversation to other topics. When I noticed how my mother tried to conceal the state of her health from me, I decided that her illness must be serious. My intuition told me that my mother's days were numbered. This made me shudder, sending chills down my spine. I gulped back my tears.

The next day, after an early breakfast, I climbed up the mountain with my brother Chol Ju. I was going to collect firewood. Looking round the house, I had seen only one or two bundles of fuel. I would feel easier in my mind if I gathered some firewood, if nothing more, now that I was back at home, was my thought. I had wished to collect enough firewood to last a few months, but the circumstances did not allow me to do so. The mountain was not deep, so there were no dead trees. I had to content myself with cutting some shrubs. "Chol Ju, isn't there something better than this?" I asked.

"Let's collect anything that comes our way. If mother finds out, she will be angry," my brother answered, hitching up his hemp trousers.

He appeared to be an innocent boy, but he was already quite clever. While using his sickle, he was always looking down restlessly towards the village. It seemed he was worried that mother would discover that we had slipped out of the house to collect firewood unnoticed by her. He was also aware

that mother would be angry if I bothered about trivial household matters. Taking hold of the branches of some shrubs, I worked my sickle swiftly until my hands were raw. Towards sunset we put the firewood on our A-frames and went down to the village. When we rounded the bend from where we could look out over the reed fields, I saw my mother standing at the edge of the yard.

As I was climbing down the mountain, a stick in my hand, my mind was weighed down by a depressing thought. I felt my heart breaking to think that I would be going off on an expeditionary campaign leaving my seriously-ill mother behind. The way ahead for me looked dark. We had decided we would be back from the campaign in a month or two, but no one could tell what would be my fate and where our unit would be going. I was thinking: what if I continue with the underground struggle for a few years more? Is it not right for me to do so and call at my home once every few months to discuss household affairs and console my mother? Is that not my filial duty to my mother who has lived in hardship all her life and experienced unusually bitter mental afflictions?

If I leave Antu now, only a short time after my grandmother's departure, how will my sick mother be able to bear up, feeling lonely and support less? Yet, for all that, I surely cannot allow my own family circumstances to prompt me to revoke the plan for the south Manchurian campaign that has been decided upon as the guerrilla army's line of action for a year, can I? "Why, you are worried we may lack firewood here, is that it?" asked my mother grimly, as she stood by the fence waiting for us.

Instead of answering, I looked at her with a smile, wiping the perspiration from my face. "You are behaving strangely. You didn't behave like this when we were in Fusong, and I didn't see you do this sort of thing in Xinglongcun, but recently you have become concerned about the housekeeping," she said in a thick voice.

"I feel refreshed when I smell the scent of grass after a long time," I said and walked into the yard with an innocent look, pretending not to have heard what she said. That evening we, the four members of our family, sat together round the table for the first time after a long separation. There was a plate of broiled fish called *poduichi*. They tasted good. When I asked how they had got them, mother said that my youngest brother who had been extremely concerned about the lack of side dishes to serve at the table should I come had caught them and hung them under the eaves to dry. Each of the fish was as thick as a finger. I was so moved that I could not eat all of them, so I left a few.

After my youngest brother had fallen asleep mother, who had been leaning against the wall, sat up straight and said to me in a grave tone:

"You seem to have changed a little from before. I never thought you would carry a sack of cereal here on your back to support your mother. I suppose you are anxious about your sick mother. I am grateful to you for your great filial devotion, but I am not of the type to be comforted by that. In Fusong I would cross rugged hills, holding your hand, in order to expand the Women's Association. Do you think I did so to get this sort of consolation today? You have a greater cause to attend to. Don't you think you should carry out your father's will? You know there are many Koreans who are suffering in a worse state than me.



Don't worry about me, but hurry along your own way."

She trembled with a strong emotion as she said this. When I raised my head, I saw her biting her lip, unable to continue. My mother's view of life reflected in every word she spoke shook my soul violently like a storm and went straight to my heart. It was a precious moment for me. After recovering her breath for a few moments, she resumed:

"I can say the same about your gathering firewood. You might well do it if you were a man with nothing else to do.... Forget your mother and your brothers and never trouble yourself on account of the family's affairs. If you acquit yourself well of your revolutionary work away from home, my illness may pass. So you should leave at Once with your unit. That's my desire."

I answered her promptly:

"I will always bear your wish in mind. Tonight I'll sleep here and tomorrow I'll go to Xiaoshahe and start immediately with the unit for south Manchuria to see Mr. Yang Se Bong."

Tears gushed from my eyes and I turned my face to the wall. My mother must also have felt heartbroken, as she pulled to her the sewing box which was lying in a corner of the room and started sewing buttons on my uniform jacket. Suddenly for some reason I recalled what had happened during my father's funeral. My mother did not put on mourning dress or go to the burial ground. She put us three brothers in mourning dress and sent us to the funeral. Dozens of people, including O Dong Jin, Chang Chol Ho, Yang Se Bong and other members of the Independence Army, followed the coffin with my uncle, but my mother did not even go to the burial ground.

The Tano festival came round soon after my father's death and we persistently asked mother to visit his grave. She asked us what was the use of her going there, and sent us by ourselves. She made a package of offerings for us to take to the grave. She taught us minutely how to burn incense, how to pour wine and how to bow. That she refused to join us in going to the grave, I surmise, was so that her sons would not see her tears.

She would visit the grave alone. Only once did she break her resolve, when Lee Gwan Rin, who had been unable to attend my father's funeral, came to Fusong and visited his grave. My mother went to the grave with her and, when she saw her wailing sadly before the grave until she was fit to faint, asked her soothingly to weep no more. My mother was warmhearted but tearless. She was very stouthearted, something rare in a woman. My mother's amazingly strong character has left a lasting impression on my mind.

Because she was a woman of such a type my mother, despite her lonely life in her sickbed, could without hesitation urge her son to go on his way and, as if she were giving him the rod, admonish him sternly, enough to prick him body and soul, which would remain an injunction for him all his life. I think my mother was a mother above the common run of humanity. Precisely for the same reason I used to

consider the late Mrs. Chang Gil Bu, mother of Ma Dong Hui, to be an uncommon mother. She met me after liberation. But she did not weep.

All the other women wept when they met me, but that mother did not. When I told her to live in Pyongyang where many old comrades-in-arms of her late son were living, she said she was going in search of the foes who had informed against her son and went back home before anyone knew.

Being unable to sleep, I went outside. I was pacing in front of the crooked bush-clover fence enjoying the cool air when Chol Ju opened the door quietly and came out onto the earthen verandah. We sat on the bundles of firewood and talked. He said he had been absorbed in the work of the Young Communist League and failed to take good care of mother, but that from then on he would behave more wisely so that I should not worry about home. I myself, to speak the truth, had wanted to ask this same favor of him, but fortunately he mentioned it first.

In the morning we prepared and ate some ground-bean mash. After the meal I went to see Kim Jong Ryong, our neighbor behind our house. I wanted to discuss the future of my brothers with him. I told him frankly that, although I had to depart for south Manchuria without delay, I was reluctant to leave Tuqidian because my worries about my family weighed heavily on my mind. Kim said that I should go, leaving all my household cares to him, and that he would look to everything, take care of my brothers and attend well to my sick mother, so that I did not need to worry. I returned home and got ready to leave. As I was fastening my shoelaces, my mother took out four five-yuan notes from under the wicker trunk and handed them to me.

"Away from home, you will have many occasions when you are in need of money. So keep this. A man must have money in his pocket in case of emergency. Your father would often say that in the closing period of the Qing dynasty in China Sun Yat-sen, who was locked up in a foreign embassy, gave some money to the cleaning man and escaped with his help."

I accepted the money, but my hands trembled. I could not put it into my pocket, at a loss what to do with it. I was well aware of how much trouble the 20 yuan had cost my mother. The 20 yuan she had earned and saved penny by penny by working her fingers to the bone doing washing and sewing for pay! At that time one could buy a cow for some 50 yuan, so that much money was enough to buy a medium-sized cow or cereal to last our family of three for a whole year.

I stepped down from the earthen verandah, tottering as if I had lost my balance under the weight of that money, and bowed my head in farewell to her, "Good-bye, mother! Peace be with you." I was thinking at that moment that my parting words should be no different from those at other times so as not to cause my mother to cry. So I pronounced the words as casually as possible and in my usual way.

"Be off quickly, for it's a journey you must make," she said nodding, a smile on her sickly face. As I turned away, I heard the door shut behind my back. I walked forward, but I could not leave the village. I began to walk around my house. The 20 yuan was still in my hand. I went round, and round, and round

yet again.... As I walked my mind was torn between a thousand and one thoughts which had gripped me like a vice all night long. When will I step into this yard again? Am I trying to go on my way with any prospect of winning? What is in store for me on the path ahead? Is there any hope of my mother's illness taking a turn for the better? As I went round the house despondently with these thoughts, my mother threw the door open and scolded me severely:

"What are you worrying about that you are still here? How can a man who has turned out with a determination to win back his country cope with the great cause when he has such a weak heart and so many worries about his home? You should be thinking of your uncles who are in prison rather than worrying about household affairs. You must think of your lost country and its people. It is already nearly twenty-two years since the Japanese burglars seized our country. If you are a true man of Korea, you should set yourself a high aim and stride ahead, shouldn't you? If in the future you ever think to come home, anxious about your mother, don't turn up before this door. I won't meet a son of that sort."

Her words struck my heart like thunder. My mother looked totally exhausted after uttering these words, resting her head against the door post. She was staring at me with eyes expressing a mixture of affection, passion and anger. Her appearance reminded me of her image on the day when I arrived at Badaogou after walking a distance of 1,000 ri (250 miles).

Then she told me to leave at once for Linjiang and pushed me off without allowing me even to stay for one night. At that time I first saw as her son the stout and noble image of my mother alive with a sense of justice and radiant with ardor. She looked as though she would be burnt to a cinder in the flames of her fiery sense of justice and ardor. Until then I had believed I knew my mother, who had born and brought me up, well. But my mother with her noble spirit and soul was now looking down at me from a height beyond my reach. Her image at that time was more of a teacher than of a mother. I felt so happy that my heart seemed to burst with pride in my mother who was so excellent and so kindhearted.

"Good-bye, mother!" I took off my cap and made a deep bow to her. Then I strode off. After crossing the wooden bridge down the village street, I looked back. My mother in white clothes, supporting herself against the door post, stood watching me. That was the last time I saw my mother. Where in that weak body was her noble and indomitable soul lurking, the soul that had shaken the heart of her son so violently? If my excellent mother had not been suffering from an illness, how light I should have felt in my heart as I was walking down the road? I bit my lip to keep myself from weeping.

That was not an ordinary parting a person experiences thousands of times in his life, but the last parting which has remained a heartrending memory to me and which would never occur again. I never saw my mother after that.

A few months later the sad news of my mother's death arrived, and the first thing I felt in my heart was sharp regret at my failure to speak more affectionately to her at our last parting. But it could not be helped because my mother did not wish for a pathetic parting. Even now, in spite of my advanced age, I cannot forget that scene. People will have similar experiences several times in their life.

Each time the slightest difference in their behavior will bring about a remarkably different result in their fates and their ultimate destinies will be poles apart. If at that time my mother had betrayed her anxiety about household affairs or had uttered a single word which could unbend my resolute mind, what impact would it have made on the heart of her son who was ready to spread his wings and fly up into the sky?

From the day when I left the hill of Xiaoshahe at the head of the ranks of the newly-formed Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, I traveled the path of bloody battles, the path of severe frost, the path of starvation beyond human imagination, together with my comrades-in-arms for decades. After that, I passed half a century of creation and construction under the banner of socialism.

Each time I ran up against an ordeal which tested my faith as a revolutionary on the rugged and thorny path I was following in the cause of my homeland and its people, I would renew my resolve by recalling the words my mother had said to me as she pushed me off to south Manchuria, and the last image of my mother dressed in white seeing me off, before seeking recourse to an ideology or philosophical proposition.

## 6.3. Joy and Sorrow

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When the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was moving to south Manchuria, Commander Yu also dispatched a 200-strong detachment under the command of Liu Ben-cao to the Tonghua area. Commander Yu was sending his chief of staff Liu Ben-cao, his right-hand man, to south Manchuria for the purpose of cooperating with the self-defense army led by Tang Ju-wu and obtaining weapons from him, the shortage of weapons being a serious problem for Commander Yu. The self-defence army in south Manchuria, whose headquarters was in Liaoning Province, was better equipped than Commander Yu's army.

On hearing about our expedition, Liu Ben-cao had visited Xiaoshahe. Saying that he had received an order to march to south Manchuria, he asked me to go together since we were moving in the same direction. He added that he would help me to get in touch with Tang Ju-wu and that we would probably be able to obtain weapons from him.

I accepted Liu's proposal with pleasure. Frankly, we were badly in need of weapons. The joint operation with his detachment on our march to south Manchuria could avoid any clash with Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese army units on our way and guarantee our safety. Tang Ju-wu had been the commander of the 1st regiment of the eastern frontier defense force. He had organized the Liaoning people's self-defense army in their professed cause of anti-Japanese national salvation after the September 18 incident.

He had approximately 10,000 troops under his command. Being stationed in the Tonghua area and operating mainly in south Manchuria, his army was fighting, against heavy odds, with the Japanese Kwangtung Army stationed in Shenyang. In the course of this it organized combined operations with the Korean Revolutionary Army which was under Kukmin-bu.

The Liaoning people's self-defense army, in its early days, had enjoyed high morale and achieved fairly good battle results. But when the tide turned in favor of Japan and when he found himself in manifold difficulties, Tang Ju-wu began to vacillate.

In spite of the fact-finding investigation on the September 18 incident by the Lytton commission to Manchuria from the League of Nations, the Japanese army continued its invasion into wider area, experiencing little restraint from the commission. The Japanese imperialists occupied Jinzhou early in January 1932, and on January 28 the same year provoked the Shanghai incident in a conspiratorial and brigand way.

Seizing upon the violence done to five Japanese monks in Hongkou, Shanghai, they destroyed Chinese factories and shops and killed some Chinese policemen; they further launched a large-scale armed attack on Shanghai by mobilizing marines. Japan provoked the Shanghai incident in order to make the city a bridgehead for her aggression on the mainland of China. The Japanese military leadership miscalculated that, if they occupied Shanghai in a blitz attack, they would be able to follow up their success and seize

the whole territory of China at a stroke.

The soldiers and people of Shanghai launched a heroic counterattack and dealt a heavy blow to the Japanese invaders. Nevertheless, their resistance failed because of the treachery of the reactionary government of the Kuomintang led by Chiang Kaisek and Wang Jing-wei, and the Shanghai incident ended in the concluding of the humiliating, counterrevolutionary Songhu Agreement.

The failure of the resistance in Shanghai dampened the spirit of the patriotic soldiers and people, particularly the Chinese national salvation army and self-defense army who were eager to fight against the Japanese.

As the Shanghai incident and the signing of the Songhu Agreement showed, the reactionary, traitorous policy of the Kuomintang government was the greatest obstacle in the way of the Chinese anti-Japanese national salvation forces. The reactionary Kuomintang clique not only refused to assist the Shanghai people to resist, but hindered their resistance, regarding it as criminal. Chiang Jieshi and Wang Jing-wei intentionally suspended the sending of supplies to the 19th route army and seized the financial aid sent to Shanghai from various parts of China, while ordering their naval forces secretly to supply the Japanese army with foodstuffs, including vegetables. This was a shameful act of treachery.

The Kuomintang reactionaries not only avoided fighting the Japanese invaders but also prevented the people from resisting the enemy. Their guns were always leveled at the people who were fighting against the Japanese invaders. People who spoke in favor of resistance against Japan fell victims to terrorism or died on the gallows.

Chiang Kaisek went so far as to say that if China was conquered by imperialists, the people could survive, though as slaves, but that if she was ruined at the hands of communists, they would not survive even as slaves. This shows that Chiang Kaisek and his reactionary clique feared and guarded against the people's revolution more than the imperialist forces of aggression, and that they themselves had been faithful vassals and stooges of the imperialists.

Chiang Kaisek's treachery had a bad ideological influence on the upper levels of the Chinese national salvation army and self-defense army which had been related to the Kuomintang in one way or the other and which were representing the interests of the former warlords, bureaucrats and politicians.

The ever-expanding sphere of Japanese military operations also badly affected the morale of the national salvation army. In its report the Lytton commission proposed that Manchuria be placed under an international condominium, not Japan's monopoly control, but Japan ignored this and continued her military action. The Japanese armed forces pressed upon Shanhaiguan and north Manchuria. They gradually occupied the vast area of north Manchuria and concentrated their forces in the Rehe area.

Prior to their campaign in north Manchuria, the Japanese imperialists had set the intelligence services of the Kwangtung Army in motion in order to break up the Northeast Army politically and disrupt its

brigades by bribing them or plotting against them so as to make them suspect one another and fight for power. When attacking Ma Zhan-shan, they drew Su Bing-wen to their side; and, after defeating Ma Zhan-shan, they crushed Su Bing-wen; in this way they destroyed piecemeal the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese army units in north Manchuria.

The disintegration of these units in north Manchuria affected Wang De-lin in east Manchuria and Tang Ju-wu in south Manchuria. Even though he had raised the banner of anti-Japanese national salvation under the influence of the people's revolutionary advance, Tang Ju-wu was acting cautiously, tending to swim with the tide.

Several of the commanders of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese army units such as Ding Chao, Li Du and Xing Zhan-qing Were under the illusion that they could solve all their problems by relying on the League of Nations, and refrained from active resistance to Japan. They even said, "Zhang Xue-liang does not resist the Japanese army because he wants to wipe out the communist rebels. We can drive out the Japanese army only when we have wiped out the communist bandits. The communists invited the Japanese."

In the spring of the year when we were moving to south Manchuria Zhou Bao-zhong was taken captive by the Chinese self-defense army. At that time he asked the commanding officers of the army why they called their unit the self-defense army.

They answered, "Self-defence means defending oneself. How can we fight against the Japanese when it is difficult to preserve our own strength? If the Japanese do not attack us, we do not attack them. That is self-defense." That was the way of thinking and political view of the self-defense army. Tang, who had been wavering without confidence in himself, neglected the control of his unit. It was a timely measure for Commander Yu to send Liu Ben-cao to the headquarters of the national salvation army.

Our guerrilla army left Xiaoshahe on the afternoon of the 3rd of June intending to march a short distance on the first day. Guided by the head of the Peasants Union in Shahe (Xi Xiaoshahe), we crossed the River Erdaojiang and proceeded to the village of Liujiafenfang. We had planned to stay there overnight to conduct political activities. The village had been known by this name from the time when a man with the surname Liu had set up a flour mill there.

After supper we lighted a campfire in the wide yard in front of the mill. At the news of the arrival of the guerrilla army, even the people from neighboring villages came to Liujiafenfang. The organization heads of the village collected straw mats from several houses and brought dead trees and rafters for the people from the neighboring villages to sit on. The people gathered in the yard numbered several hundreds. We huddled around the campfire and talked to them until midnight. They asked us many questions. I have conducted organizational and political work among the people all my life, but I cannot remember being showered with such a heavy barrage of questions as I was at that time. I talked to the people until I was hoarse.

The first question they asked me was what type of army our guerrilla army was and what the difference

between it and the Independence Army was. They knew that an Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army had been founded in Xiaoshahe a month before. It seemed a simple, straightforward question, but it indicated their expectations of the new-born army and their uncertainty about its strength.

If both the AJPGA and the Independence Army were fighting for the liberation of Korea, what was the need to complicate things by forming a separate guerrilla army? Does the newly-formed guerrilla army stand a fair chance of defeating the Japanese army when the Independence Army has failed? If so, what is the guarantee? I think these were essentially what the people of Liujiafenfang wanted to know, the people who were exhausted with looking after the Independence Army and were filled with crushing despair when they witnessed its failure.

I tried to speak in as simple and concise language as possible. I said, "The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army is not an extraordinary army. True to its name, it is an army of the people fighting against the Japanese imperialists. It is formed of the sons of workers and peasants like you as well as other young people, students and intellectuals. Its mission is to get rid of Japanese colonial rule and realize the independence and social emancipation of the Korean nation. It is an army of a new type which differs from the Righteous Volunteers and the Independence Army. Its guiding ideology is communism, whereas the guiding ideology of the Independence Army is bourgeois nationalism. To put it in simple terms, communism is the idea of building a society where everyone, irrespective of rank and wealth, leads a free and equitable life.

The idea of the Independence Army is to build a society in which rich people are the masters; the ideal of the AJPGA is to build a society in which the toiling people are the masters. The Independence Army has regarded common people such as you as its supporters and sympathizers; we regard you as the masters in carrying out the anti-Japanese revolution. The Independence Army has expected a great deal from outside forces and tried to liberate the country by drawing on their strength; we are going to liberate the country with greater confidence in ourselves and by our own efforts.

While it is true that the Independence Army, following the Righteous Volunteers struggle, has borne the brunt of the bloody fight against the Japanese aggressors in Manchuria and the northern area of the homeland for the last ten or so years, its strength has waned to the point where its very existence is now threatened. That is why we have formed a new army. We have formed the AJPGA with the determination to accomplish the noble cause of national liberation, which the Independence Army has failed to do."

When I finished the speech, a young man from the village asked me how many thousands of soldiers there were in our army. I told him that the number did not amount to thousands but to a few hundreds, for it was still young, and that sooner or later it would amount to tens of thousands. He asked me what procedures he should follow to join the AJPGA.

I answered that there was no special procedure or formality, and that any young person who was determined to fight and was physically strong enough could join it. I emphasized that one could join it either by being recommended by one's revolutionary organization or by reporting to the army to volunteer in person. Several young men surrounded me and asked me whether I would receive them there and then



if they volunteered. What luck!

"Yes, I will," I said. "But you'll have to do without guns for the time being. You must obtain guns for yourselves on the battlefield. If you still wish to join, we will accept you right now."

They agreed, and we recruited them. This batch of young men was a surprise gift from the village of Liujiafenfang to our young guerrilla army. We were beside ourselves with joy. Just imagine how we rejoiced over the recruiting of nearly 10 young men, at a time when we sometimes had to sacrifice two or three comrades to gain one revolutionary comrade. We revolutionaries who tread a thorny path, allaying our hunger by licking a snowball and sleeping in the open, can feel pleasure that the bourgeoisie and philistines can never feel.

It is the spiritual fullness we experience when we gain new comrades-in-arms. When new comrades joined us, ready to lay down their lives, and when we helped them put on their uniforms and shoulder their guns, we felt an ennobling and thrilling joy that could never be experienced in the mundane world. We believed the joy to be unique to us. That night we put on an entertainment in honor of our new comrades. Cha Gwang Su and I sang a song.

That piece of good luck came to us because the AJPGA had been the focus of public attention after the September 18 incident. Since Japan swallowed up Manchuria and the Korean people could not live in peace there, either, young Korean people in general were determined to fight a do-or-die battle with the enemy.

We sat up talking until the small hours, and spread straw mats around the campfire towards daybreak to sleep in the open for the first time since the founding of the AJPGA. The villagers chided us, saying that it would be a disgrace for them if they let the guerrillas sleep outdoors in a Korean settlement, but we slept in the open, declining with thanks to be billeted on them as the organization heads had arranged. We declined their kind offer out of our moral sense of duty, that we must not encroach on the people's interests, but I think we preferred a bivouac to a warm room out of a romantic feeling as revolutionaries.

On our way back from south Manchuria we slept overnight again at this village. There was an old potato cellar by the house of an old Chinese man named Lu Xiu-wen. We covered the walls of the cellar with corn straw, built a fire and slept there.

Seeing that we had eaten in the open and were going to sleep outdoors, the old man had told me that at least the commander, if not the whole unit, should sleep in his house. "It would be a different matter if you, Mr. Kim, and I were strangers to each other, but we have known each other since the days in Jiuantu, haven't we?" the old man said in persuasion.

I declined, and he said how sorry he was that I was so obstinate. True, he and I were old acquaintances. When my family had been living in a room at Ma Chun Uk's inn in Jiuantu, I had seen him now and then. The lively and passionate temper he had shown in those days had left a strong impression on me. Asking

us how he could sleep under a quilt with a light heart when the soldiers on their way back from an anti-Japanese campaign were sleeping in the open, he kept us company until late at night.

He was responsive to the trend of the times, as were most of the villagers in Liujiafenfang. He knew that the Japanese army after the September 18 incident had invented a puppet state called Manchukuo, made Changchun its capital, renaming it Xinjing, and put Pu Yi on the throne. I still remember what he told me about An Jung Gun. He said the great man he respected most of all the martyrs of Korea was An Jung Gun.

"An Jung Gun is a great man of the East," he said. "Even Generalissimo Yuan Shi-kai composed a poem in praise of his heroic deed."

His words impressed me very much. An Jung Gun's shooting of Ito Hirobumi made him a legendary hero among the Chinese people of Manchuria. Some public-spirited Chinese people hung his portrait on the walls of their houses and worshipped him as a god.

As the old man was speaking with so much affection for An Jung Gun, I asked him casually: "You are not a Korean, so how do you know so much about An Jung Gun?"

"There is no one in Manchuria who doesn't know of him. One man even proposed to build a bronze statue of martyr An at Harbin Railway Station. I still say to my children that they should become such a revolutionary as Sun Yat-sen and such a great man as An Jung Gun. Commander Kim, now that you have formed an army, why not slay such bigwigs as the commander of the Kwangtung Army?"

I could not help but smiling at his naive suggestion.

"What is the use of killing a man like him? As a new Ito Hirobumi appeared after Ito Hirobumi was slain, so a new Honjo will emerge if we kill Honjo. Terrorism cannot serve a great cause."

"How, then, are you going to fight?"

"They say that the Kwangtung Army numbers 100,000, and I will fight them all." The old man was moved deeply by my answer; he gripped my hands and would not let go of them.

"Wonderful, Commander Kim! You are another An Jung Gun."

With a smile on my face, I said:

"Thank you, but I am not worthy of your compliment. I am not as great as An Jung Gun; but I will not live as an enslaved Korean."

When our unit was leaving the village the next day Lu Xiu-wen, sorry to be parting with us, followed us a

long way to see us off. Whenever I think of Liujiafenfang, I recollect with emotion my talk with the old man.

After leaving Liujiafenfang, we bivouacked overnight near Erdaobaihe. Then on our march along a highway we encountered a scouting party from a Japanese army unit moving from Fusong in the direction of Antu. As usual we had posted a scouting party of three or four ahead of the main body on our march. The two hostile parties began to exchange fire.

Frankly speaking, I was confused, for it was our first encounter with the Japanese enemy since the founding of the AJPGA and, furthermore, an encounter with the Japanese army which boasted of its victories in battle. During the Xiaoyingziling battle we had had a detailed plan for attacking our enemy in an ambush, so we had been able to destroy them by surprise, but things were different here.

Here the enemy was not the slovenly puppet Manchukuo army, but the shrewd, well-trained Japanese army with vast fighting experience. By contrast, we were beginners who had fought only one battle. We did not know how to handle the encounter. In view of the purpose of our campaign and the basic principles of guerrilla warfare, it was advisable to avoid, as far as possible, an unprofitable engagement which might have an unfavorable influence on our long-distance expedition. An ancient book on the art of war said that one should avoid a strong enemy and attack a weak enemy.

What was to be done? The whole unit turned to me with a tense look. They were waiting for my decision. It flashed across my mind that occupying the vantage ground before the main force of the enemy could close in on us was the best way of seizing the initiative in battle; I quickly moved my unit up to the northern ridge of the hill where the skirmish was going on and some of the unit to the south of the road. We mowed them down in a fusillade from both sides.

Soon a column of fully-equipped enemy soldiers appeared on the road. We estimated the enemy as being well over company strength. On learning that his scouts had been destroyed, the enemy was trying to encircle us.

Having ordered the men not to fire until I gave a signal shot, I watched the battlefield, waiting for the enemy to come within the range of our fire. We had not much ammunition. When I let off a signal shot, the whole unit opened fire. As I listened to the gunshots coming from all sides, I tried to imagine the men's mental state. Each gun report revealed their excitement and high morale as well as their extreme nervousness.

The enemy quickly dispersed in battle order and, relying on his numerical superiority, made a fierce attack on our position from both sides, in spite of having suffered heavy casualties.

our main force posted north and south of the road to our two flanks. As soon as they had taken up their position they destroyed the flanking enemy with prompt and accurate fire. However, the main force of the enemy continued to close in upon us. We held our position stubbornly, even rolling rocks down the ridge,

but the enemy continued his charge.

During a lull in the enemy's attack, I gave the order for a counterattack. While the bugle call resounded, all the guerrillas fell upon the enemy, pursuing and destroying those who retreated. Only a few of the enemy's company escaped. Kim Il Ryong never stopped shouting the war-cry, "Another has fallen!" at the enemy soldiers.

We lost several men. After burying our dead comrades on the nameless hill, we held a funeral ceremony before their graves. As I looked at the sobbing soldiers, with their caps in their hands, I made a farewell address in a trembling voice. I can't remember what I said. I only remember that when I raised my head after my speech I saw the men's shoulders heaving up and down violently and that a shudder passed over me when I saw that our column was shorter than when we were leaving Liujiafenfang.

After a while I ordered the men to resume the march. All the comrades lined up along the road, but Cha Gwang Su was lying prostrate on a grave. He could not leave the graves no one would keep, the rough graves in which his dead comrades had been buried without coffins. I rushed up to the ridge and shouted to him, shaking him by the shoulder: "Gwang Su, what's this? Won't you stand up?" I shouted so loudly and so violently that he rose abruptly to his feet. I whispered to him: "The men are watching us. Where has your indomitable spirit gone?"

He wiped away his tears and walked silently to the front of the column.

Later I long regretted my behavior that day. When I received the sad news four months after the battle on the border between Antu and Fusong Counties that Cha Gwang Su had been killed in battle, I was immediately reminded of what had happened that day. Why had I spoken to him in that way? Could I not have told him to rise in a kinder tone of voice? After losing those comrades-in-arms I myself didn't feel like eating or sleeping for several days. They were core elements and the backbone of our army who had shared joy and sorrow with me since the days of the DIU.

There would be no battle without sacrifice. The revolution always requires sacrifice. A loss of one kind or another is inevitable even in the peaceful effort to transform nature, so how can one avoid sacrifice in the armed struggle in which victory is won by employing all the weapons and other means available? However, we regarded the sacrifice in that battle as too cruel and too unfair. Granting that merciless sacrifice was inevitable in a revolution, how could we tolerate such an indiscriminate loss to our army which had just taken its first step - these were my feelings at that time.

One might say that the loss of less than 10 men was not a heavy loss numerically. Such a loss might seem next to nothing in a modern war which takes a toll of tens of thousands of lives in a single battle. But we did not count the loss of our comrades numerically. For us numbers were not a criterion for estimating the value of a man.

Each of the fighters who had trodden the path of the struggle with us was a priceless being to which

nothing in the world could be compared. We believed that we would not barter one of our guerrillas for 100 enemy soldiers. The enemy could recruit tens of thousands of soldiers in a single day by enforcing state laws and military mobilization orders and hurl them onto the battlefield, but we had no such physical or legal power.

Even if we had it at our disposal, each one of our revolutionary comrades was worth his weight in gold. It needs Painstaking efforts to gain comrades who have the same idea and Purpose with us or to recruit comrades-in-arms who will share life and death with us and to rally them in an organized force.

Therefore, throughout the whole period of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle I did not take pride in a victory in a battle in which we killed 100 enemy soldiers if one of us was killed.

Historians speak highly of the battle on the Antu-Fusong border as a successful battle in which we destroyed an enemy company by an adroit counterattack. Of course, it was undoubtedly victory. The battle was significant not only because the young AJPGA destroyed a company of a regular army but also because we smashed the myth of the Japanese army's invincibility for the first time in our guerrilla war. This battle gave us the conviction that the Japanese army, though formidable, was neither matchless nor indestructible nor unretreating, and that we would be perfectly able to defeat the powerful Japanese army with a small force if we skillfully applied tactics suited to the characteristics of guerrilla warfare.

Nevertheless we paid very dearly in this battle, losing nearly 10 of the first sons of the DIU.

When leaving the battlefield over which gun smoke lingered, I thought, as I looked back at the hill where my dead comrades lay buried, "We have lost nearly 10 of our comrades-in-arms in annihilating a company of the enemy; so, how much sacrifice do we have to make to defeat more than 100,000 Japanese invaders in Korea and Manchuria?"

After the first battle, we all realized that we would suffer much and pay dearly in the future course of the guerrilla war. The war against Japan we fought for more than ten years after the battle on the Fusong-Antu border was accompanied with suffering, difficulties and sacrifice which can never be measured by man's conventional concept of war.

## 6.4. Joint Operations with Yang Se Bong?

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On the route of march of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army from Antu to Tonghua, there were many steep mountains and deep valleys similar to those in the northern border area of Korea. The Changbai Mountains stretch from Antu to Fusong and the Longgang Mountains, where there are such steep ridges as Sanchaziling and Sandaolaoyeling, lie between Fusong and Tonghua.

We continued our arduous march across these mountains for about a month. In the daytime we marched along mountain paths, avoiding roads within the sphere of the enemy's observation. At night we billeted on villages inhabited by Koreans, where we conducted ceaseless political work and combat training. We stayed in Fusong for a few days to work with the revolutionary organizations there. There I met Zhang Wei-hua. He expressed his regret that our stay was short, and entreated me to stay in Fusong for two or three days more, even if only for the sake of our old friendship in our school days. I was not loath to do so. In Fusong hundreds of things had happened to me.

But we set out after two or four days' stay there as scheduled. However dear the memory of the past was to me and however strong his kind feeling was, I had to part with him to meet Commander Yang Se Bong, though I was sorry to do so. The distance from Fusong to Tonghua was said to be about 125 miles. The further we went, the steeper the mountains seemed and the more difficult the march became. The men were all exhausted from the long forced march across unfamiliar ridges and valleys. They fell ill one after another. I, too, was quite exhausted by the continued march.

When the unit was near Tonghua, Cha Gwang Su unexpectedly hurried up to me and suggested that we rest at Erdaogang for a few days before going on to Tonghua.

"We have marched for 125 miles, having refrained from staying longer in Fusong with a bad grace. Why do you propose a rest with Tonghua so near at hand? You are not like Cha Gwang Su." I asked. I was unable to agree to his proposal, though I guessed why he had made it. Cha Gwang Su removed his spectacles and began to clean them with his handkerchief before making a reply, as he usually did when he was going to insist on his opinion.

"The men are all utterly exhausted. You, too. You may deny it but you cannot deceive me. The sick men walk, supported by others. When we look so miserable, how can we meet Commander Yang Se Bong?" he said. "Yang Se Bong is not so narrow-minded that he will fail to understand."



Rhee Wha Rang: *Photo: Yang Se Bong, \*\*, was a noted nationalist army commander. Yang's military achievements were no less significant than those of Hong Bom Doh and Kin Jwa Jin, and yet, he is not well known.*

*Yang was born into a poor farming family in 1894 in North Pyongahn Province. When his father died in 1912, he moved his family to Manchuria and worked as a hired farm hand to support his mother and siblings. In 1922, he joined Jung Chang Ha's army and waged endless attacks on Japanese, pro-Japanese Koreans and Chinese puppets until he was shot in a trap set by Park Chang Hae, a Korean traitor.*

*Today, Yang is a national hero in both Koreas.*

"A commander with an appreciative eye may understand, but what about the eyes of his several hundred men? It would be bad if we were pointed at and whispered about as a rabble, wouldn't it? I fear that our long march over hundreds of miles might come to nothing." No one could refute Cha Gwang Su's argument.

I, too, thought there was some truth in what Cha Gwang Su had said. It was fully possible that if we cut a poor figure in Tonghua, the Independence Army men would make light of the People's Guerrilla Army. If so, our long-arranged plan for a joint operation might fail. It did not seem bad to do as Cha Gwang Su had suggested, so that we could march into Tonghua in orderly array, full of vigor.

I ordered the unit to stop and camp in Erdaogang and sent an orderly to Commander Yang to notify him that the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army which had left Antu to conduct a joint operation with the Independence Army had arrived and was resting near Tonghua. We were billeted on the village of Erdaogang waiting for the orderly to return and resting after our long journey.

The headquarters was at a miller's. The old miller and his wife looked after me with all their hearts. When he saw me giving a dozen of my men a political lesson on the rules of conduct necessary in working with the Independence Army, the miller reproached me for ignoring the sincere intention of the people.

He said, "An ancient sage said 'if one speaks too much, one will lose vigor. If one rejoices too much, one will hurt feelings. If one often grows angry, one will impair one's will.' It is a rule for good health handed down from olden times to think little, worry little, work little, speak little and laugh little. If you speak much, worry much and think much, how can you preserve your health and prevent sickness? Moreover, you soldiers are going to liberate the country, aren't you?"

The old man explained to me dozens of rules of health and repeatedly stressed the need to take good care of my health in consideration of the future, since a great cause could not be achieved in a day. So I had to

stop my political lecture and entrust Cha Gwang Su with it. Listening to the old man, we learned that he was a worshipper of Ho Jun and that the rules of health he had explained to us were from the Handbook on Korean Medicine.

There was no knowing how and where he acquired the knowledge, but he was well versed in the regimen. When we left Erdaogang, the old man handed Cha Gwang Su several packages of dried berries from the Chinese matrimony vine compounded with lotus pips and honey which he had kept in oil paper, and he said that he would be obliged if they were used to promote my health.

I politely declined his offer, for it was tonic compounded for the promotion of his own health.

"Sir, thank you for your concern, but I cannot take it. We young people will live without suffering from infirmity and anemia. You have failed to enjoy your life because of the various hardships you have experienced all your life. Please take the medicine and live long so as to witness the day of Korea's independence."

He was somewhat offended at this and forced the medicine on us, saying, "My days are numbered. Tonics are no good to me. You are vanguards in the fight to win Korea's independence. If we are old trees, you are young, green trees."

We left Erdaogang soon after the orderly came back from Tonghua and conveyed the news that Commander Yang had received my letter and would welcome the entry of our unit into Tonghua, and that he had told his subordinates to make good preparations to welcome the guerrillas. The men of the guerrilla army had their hair cut and pressed their trousers during their stay in Erdaogang and, by order of their commanding officers, proceeded in an orderly manner to Tonghua, marching in step and singing revolutionary songs.

When the unit marched out onto the road, I entrusted Kim Il Ryong with leading the column and had a discussion with Cha Gwang Su about the plan for negotiating with Yang Se Bong. I devoted my whole mind to the work we were to conduct with the Independence Army. Although the old man of the water mill had told me that it was the rules of health to think, worry, speak and laugh little, I could not observe such rigid rules. We had to think, care and discuss more than anyone else since what we did was a process to create everything from scratch and an original creative process of blazing a trail.

I was particularly concerned about what attitude Yang Se Bong would take towards negotiations with the AJPGA. Cha Gwang Su was doubtful about the results of the negotiations from the beginning, but I was optimistic.

When the streets of Tonghua came in view, a pleasant anecdote about Yang Se Bong suddenly occurred to me. It was an anecdote my father had told me and my mother when he, lying on his sickbed, recalled some like-minded people one by one.



On the eve of the March First Popular Uprising a project to turn dry fields into paddy fields was launched under the auspices of a mutual assistance team involving some poor peasants in Yang Se Bong's village. Yang Se Bong's family joined this team. As he knew from common sense that paddy fields were more productive, he welcomed the project. But the old people at the upper level of the team stubbornly opposed the project on the plea that they were not sure about paddy farming. With spring sowing approaching the old people argued heatedly every day with the young people.

The young people could not break the stubbornness of the old people. When the sowing season came that year, the team planted millet and barley in the dry field which the young people had wanted to turn into a paddy field. The old people heaved a sigh of relief, thinking it good that the farming of the team was proceeding without a hitch as before, without being interfered with by the young people.

But Yang Se Bong, the leader of the young people, waited for an opportunity to carry out a plan he had conceived. One night in the rice-transplanting season when frogs were croaking everywhere he Went out to the field with an ox and, unnoticed, ploughed several plots that were green with millet and barley to make them paddy fields.

The old people were surprised to see that the millet and barley field had been turned into paddy fields filled with water in a single night and thundered, "Scoundrels! May you be struck by lightning! You are ruining the farming of the team. If this year's farming fails, you shall become beggars."



*Photo: Yang Se Bong's family joined Kim Il Sung after Liberation. Kim Il Sung is 2nd from right, front row. Seated to his left is Yang's window.*

That autumn Yang Se Bong gathered 24 sacks of rice from the plots which had previously yielded nine sacks of millet or barley. Marveling at this, the old people of the team said, "What a praiseworthy fellow Se Bong is!" From then on the number of families engaged in rice farming began to increase drastically in Yang Se Bong's village and the neighboring villages. The old people who had lorded it over the team came to obey Yang Se Bong meekly.

I wonder why the anecdote occurred to me with Tonghua near at hand. It is perhaps because I hoped that the negotiation with Yang Se Bong would be successful. Yang Se Bong came to Xingjing County, in south Manchuria having left his birthplace, Cholsan, on the eve of the March First Popular Uprising. It was there that my father first met him.

At that time he was serving as a military inspector in Tongui-bu. After the birth of Chongui-bu he was

appointed a company commander and became a leading cadre, winning the favour of Commander O Dong Jin. His company had been stationed in Fusong. So I had met him there.

Yang Se Bong was transferred to Xingjing County again after we had moved to Fusong from Badaogou, and Chang Chol Ho came to Fusong as his replacement. When Kukmin-bu came into being as a result of the merger of the three nationalist organizations the leading cadres of the Independence Army entrusted the supreme command of the army to Yang Se Bong who was upright, had great executive ability and was popular with the people. He had great influence not only in military circles but also in the Korean Revolutionary Party involving the veterans of the three organizations.

He loved me dearly as the son of his friend, always saying that Kim Hyong Jik and he were sworn brothers. Yang Se Bong helped me financially in Jirin, together with O Dong Jin, Son Jung Doh, Chang Chol Ho, Li Ung, Kim Sa Hon and Hyon Muk Gwan.

After the Wangqingmen incident our feelings towards the upper level of Kukmin-bu grew worse and I for a long time failed to meet Yang Se Bong, the brain of the military circles of the organization which turned reactionary, but I was convinced that Yang Se Bong's love of and faith in me were constant.

All these were memories conveying to me an agreeable impression of Yang Se Bong as a man and a patriot. I did not awaken memories which might cast a dark shadow over our efforts to conduct a joint operation. I tried to summon up memories which would brighten the prospects for our negotiations. This might be attributed to a defensive impulse to drive away memories that were unfavorable to our prospects for the negotiations.

Twenty counties of the eastern peripheral territory were under the control of Yu Zhi-shan, garrison commander in the eastern peripheral territory. He had once been a general, appointed commander of the 30th army by Zhang Zuo-lin, but fell into disfavour with Zhang Xueliang because he did a poor job of suppressing the revolt of the Broad Sword Society in June 1930. Yu Zhi-shan was the supreme ruler of the eastern peripheral territory, stationing the defense force of the strength of a brigade at strategic points in the area. After the September 18 incident he formed the public peace maintenance commission of the eastern peripheral territory and became its chairman, and he collaborated actively with the puppet government in Fengtian, maintaining contact with the brass hats of the Kwangtung Army.

Assured by Yu Zhi-shan of his cooperation, the Kwangtung Army did not throw large armed forces into the area and entrusted the maintenance of public peace there to the independent garrison, the Manchukuo army and police. In those days the main force of the Kwangtung Army was thrown into north Manchuria.

Taking advantage of this opportunity the Liaoning people's self-defense army led by Tang Ju-wu and the troops of the Korean Revolutionary Army under the command of Yang Se Bong surrounded Tonghua county town. The head, Okitsu Yoshiro, and other Japanese officials of the Tonghua branch office of the Japanese consulate and their families were awaiting rescue.

Although the headquarters of the Kwangtung Army was informed that the lives of the Japanese in Tonghua county town were threatened, it sent there a rescue party of about one hundred policemen and waited for help from Yu Zhi-shan's troops, for all its forces were in north Manchuria. Yu Zhi-shan's troops, divided into two groups, closed in on the allied armies of Yang Se Bong and Tang Ju-wu from the north and the direction of Fengcheng.

The Kwangtung Army had its chief of staff Itagaki speak by radio, "Japanese in Tonghua, reinforcements from Fengtian will arrive tomorrow morning. Please hold out." So, simultaneously with the dispatch of the fact-finding commission of the League of Nations to Manchuria the armies fighting against Manchukuo and Japan in Fengtian Province were menacing the Japanese troops of aggression and the puppet Manchukuo troops everywhere. Morale was high in the Korean Revolutionary Army and the self-defense army holding the Tonghua county town.

The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army entered Tonghua county town on the evening of the 29th of June.

The Independence Army welcomed our party in grand style, putting up the slogans "Welcome to the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army!", "Down with Japanese imperialism!", "Let us win Korea's independence!" throughout the streets. Several hundred men of the Independence Army and citizens lining the street welcomed us with applause and waved their hands. Yang Se Bong seemed to have intended to make the entry of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army into Tonghua a turning point in the extension and development of the independence movement. Our party from Antu was divided into two groups. Conducted by the representative of the self-defense army headquarters the men of the national salvation army led by Liu Ben-cao went to the houses of Chinese people to stay, and the men of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army led by me were quartered in the houses of Koreans.

Even after having conducted the guerrillas to their quarters, the Independence Army soldiers remained with us. Their reaction to our unit was better than we had expected. They envied us, saying that at the news of the arrival of a guerrilla army from Antu they had expected paupers carrying spears and matchlocks, but ours was a gentlemanly army.

That night I visited Commander Yang Se Bong at his home. He met me gladly. I first asked about his health and his wife's health and conveyed to him my mother's compliments. "Mother often spoke about you, even after she had moved to Antu. Mother said to me, 'When your father passed away, Commander Yang and his friends held a funeral for him and recommended you to Whasung Military Academy. Don't forget his kindness."

At this Yang Se Bong said, waving his hand, "Your father and I Were sworn brothers. Don't mention it. I shall never forget the encouragement I received from your father. How is your mother? I heard she has been suffering much from stomach trouble after moving to Antu." "Yes, she seems to be fairly far gone in her sickness. Recently she lies in bed more than she works."

Thus our conversation began by our asking after each other's health. I told him about the impression I had got upon entering Tonghua.

"We were all moved to tears when we saw hundreds of your men welcoming us with cheers in the street. Our hearts were light when we saw the bright faces of the Independence Army soldiers."

"Our men are not so good at fighting, but they do not neglect to offer hospitality." "You are too modest. Before leaving Antu we heard that your troop had surrounded and easily seized Tonghua county town in cooperation with the Tang Ju-wu's Liaoning people's self-defense army."

"That is not worth boasting about. The self-defense army is tens of thousands strong. If it cannot capture a walled town, how can it justify its existence?"

Nevertheless, he gave me a detailed account of the siege of Tonghua county town. After thus talking with him that day, I stayed overnight in his house. I did not say why I had come and he did not ask. I felt a little uneasy about his not asking me the aim of our expedition, but I accepted his hospitality and renewed my hope that the negotiation would be successful.

After breakfast the next day we talked in real earnest.

Yang Se Bong broke the ice, "As you know, now Manchuria has become a hornets' nest. A multitude of hornets have risen to sting the uninvited guest called Japan. Tang Ju-wu, Li Chun-run, Xu Yuanyan, Sun Xiu-yan, Wang Feng-ge, Deng Tie-me and Wang Tongxuen? all of them are hornets in the eastern peripheral territory. How many hornets have also risen in east and north Manchuria! I think if we put up a good fight by pooling our efforts we will win. What do you think, Commander?"

What he said was in line with the aim of our expedition. He had expressed his desire for a joint operation of his own accord and had taken the initiative in proposing it, and I was grateful to him for it.

I admired his broad vision with which he viewed the independence movement from the national viewpoint and gladly accepted his proposal.

"I agree with you as to fighting in cooperation with each other. We came to you to discuss this matter. I think if the armed units of Korea form an alliance and the Chinese armed units join forces with one another, and the patriots and people of Korea and China fight in unity, we are fully capable of defeating Japanese imperialism," I said.

Yang Se Bong said with a smile, "If you agree, let's discuss the matter in earnest." "But sir, the situation requires unity, whereas our nation is, to our regret, not united. Neither are the communists united nor are the nationalists. The nationalists and communists are not united with each other. How can we fight our strong enemy Japan in this way?" I asked.

"That is entirely because the Leftists are conducting a wrong policy. Since you're also a Leftist, you must realize that. Because the Leftists pushed ahead with the struggle too vehemently, they lost the hearts of the people. They made peasants despots through a tenancy dispute and disposed of landlords on the plea of Red May or so. That's why the Chinese avoid Koreans. Those engaged in the communist movement are entirely to blame for it."

This was a remark which could be heard only from those who were disgusted with every manner of violence organized by communists. But I did not think he had spoken thus because he was hostile to the workers and peasants and sympathized with the landlords and capitalists. Before he joined the independence movement he was a poor peasant who had a hard time of it. He was a tenant farmer verging on being a debtor slave who was pestered and harassed by a landlord for the payment of a debt at the end of the year and a descendant of poor peasants who had miraculously survived the years of famine, living on barnyard grass gruel mixed with radish leaves.

I did not think that he denounced the violent struggle organized by the communists because he opposed communist ideas themselves or defended their antithesis, capitalist ideas. What he ridiculed and criticized was the form of movement and methods of struggle applied by some communists, not communist ideas themselves. But, the attitude and approach to methods could not but exert an influence on the attitude and approach to ideas. The Leftist errors committed by the early communists in the guidance of the mass movement resulted in dispelling the yearning for communism from the minds of many people who aspired after the new trend, to our regret. Through my talks with Commander Yang Se Bong I again realized the great harm caused by the errors of the old-time communists.

I admitted that some communists had rashly committed Leftist errors in the mass struggle. Nevertheless, I thought it necessary to rectify Yang Se Bong's biased view, according to which he described the whole of the mass struggle as a harmful act that destroyed national unity.

I said, "As you have said, it is a fact that the leading figures of the Communist Party of Korea committed too much of a deviation in conducting the class struggle. To tell the truth we, too, suffered much because of their reckless Leftist acts. As a result, Koreans were even thought to be the stooges of the Japanese, weren't they? However, I think it inevitable that peasants rise against landlords. As you know, having been engaged in farming for many years, how much is given to the landlord and how much to the peasants in autumn? Because peasants find it hard to eke out a living, being deprived of what they have harvested at so much effort, there are tenant disputes as they strive to survive. They can't be tarred with the same brush, can they?"

Commander Yang did not respond, either because he was displeased with my arguing for the inevitability of the mass struggle or because he took my argument to be fair. That day the troops of the Independence Army held a meeting of welcome for the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Among the men of the Independence Army there were many young people who were under the communist influence of members of the DIU and political workers sent by us from Liuhe and Xingjing. The meeting of welcome was held in grand style and an enthusiastic manner, having been arranged under the auspices of these young people. The meeting was attended by many Koreans resident in Tonghua county town.

Hosts and guests in turn made speeches and sang songs. During the meeting clear differences between the characters of the men of the guerrilla army and those of the Independence Army were revealed. The Independence Army men admired the guerrillas for their free and easy character, modesty, optimism, constancy, and vigor, as well as for the good order of their unit. They most envied the revolutionary songs our men sang and our Model 38 rifles. Some Independence Army men were puzzled and said, "Where did such a sturdy army suddenly appear from?" and others said, "I hope that we reach an agreement as to a joint operation with you."

What is the result of the talks with Commander Yang?"

Commander Yang visited the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army to inspect the soldiers I had brought. Our soldiers welcomed him warmly with applause and a military salute. But Commander Yang made an anti-communist speech, which changed the welcoming atmosphere into a hostile one.

He said, "To win the independence of Korea one must first of all refrain from acts that benefit the enemy. But the communist party is now acting in the favor of the enemy. They set workers to fight with capitalists in the factory, peasants against landlords in the countryside and, advocating sex equality, wives against their husbands within the family. They sow the seeds of discord within the nation and set up barriers of distrust between nations, advocating expropriation and the overthrow of oppressors on the slightest excuse." All our men were enraged at his speech. Cha Gwang Su turned pale and gazed at him with reproachful eyes.

I, too, disapproved of Yang Se Bong's speech which was run through with anti-communism. I wondered why he made such a speech.

"Sir, we are not doing things beneficial to the enemy. We fight for the liberation of the Korean nation and for the interests of the working people. To achieve the independence of Korea the struggle should be led by the workers, peasants and other working people. The efforts of a few patriots and heroes in the old fashion are not enough."

When I made this remark, our men began to attack Kukmin-bu unanimously: Wasn't it beneficial to the enemy for Kukmin-bu to have murdered six young patriots at Wangqingmen? How does the Kukmin-bu group dare to treat us roughly on the excuse of our so-called helping the enemy, after committing such a great crime before the nation?

Offended by this, Yang Se Bong slandered us. He went so far in his attack on us and so departed from etiquette that I was astonished. The way he reproved us, losing his reason, seemed somehow strange to me. I wondered whether what I had said hurt his self-respect and whether someone undesirous of a joint operation had spoken ill of us to him. Anyway, there must have been a reason why he was so offended.

But I talked patiently to him, saying, "Sir, why are you so offended? It will take time for you to know

what we are like, won't it? I think your men and my guerrillas should meet each other frequently to gain a mutual understanding."

Yang Se Bong did not respond to this.

I returned to my quarters with a hope and the confidence that if we persuaded him patiently we would bring him over to our side, though he was firm in his anti-communist attitude. It can be said that a lack of belief in others is a manifestation of exclusivism, while belief in others is the greatest manifestation of humanitarianism. I held that the best humanitarianism for patriots who were deprived of their country was to achieve national unity and deliver their parents, brothers, sisters and compatriots through the concerted efforts of the nation. To achieve this aim I had visited Yang Se Bong at the head of the unit which had been born just one month before.

Then on the day of the breakdown of the negotiations I was informed by a member of our organization in Tonghua that the Independence Army was plotting to disarm the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. I could not believe that Yang Se Bong had hatched the plot, but we withdrew promptly from Tonghua as a precautionary measure. Thus I parted from Liu Ben-cao, too.

The men of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army were in a gloomy frame of mind when they left Tonghua to avoid a conflict with the Independence Army, having failed to reach an agreement on a joint operation against Japan which was urgently needed. Cha Gwang Su trudged at the rear of the column in silence, looking into his memo-book in which an itinerary was written.

"Comrade Gwang Su, why are you so sulky and angry today?" I asked him with a smile, guessing his feelings.

He put the memo-book into his pocket and said in an angry voice, "Should I smile at this time? Frankly speaking, I am furious. We came 250 miles in haste, bleeding, but it came to naught."

"Why do you, the chief of staff, regard the negotiations with the Independence Army only as a failure?"

"So they were a success, not a failure? Anyway Commander Yang intended not to conduct a joint operation but to disarm us, didn't he?"

"You, the chief of staff, saw only the looks of those at the higher level, and not those in the lower echelon. How the Independence Army soldiers admired and envied our guerrilla army! I attach more importance to that than to a rumor about disarming us. What is important is not the looks of those at the upper level but the attitude of those in the lower echelon. In this I see the future joint operation."

Though I said this, I had no firm confidence in the future alliance. I only expressed my presentiment and hope.

In fact I was in mental agony. I was pained at the thought: Why is it so difficult to agree to a joint operation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the Independence Army who are of the same nationality, while cooperation between Commander Yang and Tang Ju-wu and that between Commander Yu and us who were of different nationalities were agreed upon? Is joint operation with Commander Yang impossible?

Whether the Independence Army had plotted to disarm us or not remained unknown for a long time. Although I thought the information was true because it was supplied by a member of our organization, I hoped it was groundless. Even if it was true, I had no mind to blame Commander Yang for it. A man's thinking has limitations and it takes enormous time and experience to overcome them. Therefore, when we left Tonghua then, I did not draw a hasty conclusion that cooperation with the Independence Army was impossible.

I rather hoped that some day Commander Yang would understand our real intention and the time would come when he would open the door to cooperation. Patriotism can be compared to a stream flowing into a sea called alliance with communism.

Commander Choe Yun Gu of the Independence Army who defected to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army at the head of his troops many years later wistfully recalled with me the summer of 1932. According to Commander Choe it was not Yang Se Bong but a staff officer under him who plotted to disarm the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Commander Yang wanted to agree on cooperation with the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army but the staff officer spoke ill of us behind our backs, advocating anti-communism, and together with his trusted henchmen hatched a plot to disarm us.

Choe Yun Gu's remark entirely cleared our suspicion of Commander Yang. When I heard that Commander Yang was constantly pained because of the rupture with us and that he was not involved in the plot against us, I felt relieved. It gladdened me that I could again confirm that he was a pure patriot and had an unstained sense of duty, though he is now dead. I am particularly happy when a man I have taken as good remains good even after decades and my good impression of him is not impaired.

Yang Se Bong's error was that he had failed to see the enemy's evil design. He was upright and resolute, but did not know that the staff officer under him was plotting to wreck cooperation with us. Commander Yang failed to see his ulterior design in viciously slandering us. He died regrettably because he was taken in by an enemy's trick.

It was in his latter years that Commander Yang Se Bong switched over from anti-communism to an alliance with communism. The situation in the Independence Army was then very complicated. The subversive activities of the secret agents and their corrupt henchmen became grave and the numbers of stragglers and deserters increased from day to day. On the other hand, the voices calling for cooperation with the communists grew louder.

Yang Se Bong could not ignore the communists any more. Admitting that an age of upheaval had come in



which the communists had appeared as the main force of revolution in Korea and China and were exerting a great influence, he reviewed his attitude to communism and in the course of this decided to cooperate with the communists.

Commander Yang, who had failed to decide on cooperation with us, falling prey to a misunderstanding of communism and unintentional hostility, switched over to an alliance with the communists. It was a remarkable event not only in his life but also in the history of the struggle of the Independence Army. That he abandoned anti-communism and chose the path of cooperation with the communists can be proved by the fact that he conducted a joint operation with Yang Jing-yu. He had a mind to cooperate with us as well.

The Japanese imperialists were particularly fearful that Yang Se Bong's army would join hands with us. A joint operation of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the Independence Army would mean the political and military unity of communists and nationalists in the national liberation struggle in Korea. This was a great threat to the enemy.

The Japanese military police, police and secret service hatched a plot to murder Yang Se Bong and break up the Independence Army from within. The plot was carried out by the military police in Fentian and the Fukushima Agency under the government-general in Korea. The "Tongbyondo flying corps of the secret service of the Kwangtung Army" also kept watch on and shadowed Yang Se Bong.

Over 100,000 yuan is said to have been appropriated as secret funds for the operation to murder Yang Se Bong. Secret agents in Xingjing, including Park Chang Hae, were enlisted in the operation.

After having worked out a scheme to lure Commander Yang, the enemy dispatched the traitor Wang, who had cooperated with the Independence Army and maintained contact with it at ordinary times. One day Wang visited Yang Se Bong and said that the Chinese anti-Japanese army wanted to meet him to discuss helping the Independence Army. Foolishly believing him, Yang Se Bong went with him to Dalazi where he was told the anti-Japanese army was waiting for him.

Suddenly on the way Wang produced his pistol and shouted, "I'm not the Wang Ming-fan of old. Surrender to the Japanese if you want to stay alive."

When Commander Yang took out his weapon and shouted at Wang, the enemy who were lying in ambush in a sorghum field shot him to death.

As Choe Il Chon said, "Park Je Sang's advice to prefer punishment by Korea to serving the Japanese Emperor" was the spirit of the late Commander, and it struck terror into the hearts of the enemy.

I sometimes think that if he had taken the path of an alliance with communism his fate might have been different. Of course, I say this out of my lingering regret over his death. "I die and cannot fight Japan any more, but you remain alive and seek and go to Commander Kim Il Sung. That is the only way to survive."

Leaving this instruction to his subordinates, Commander Yang closed his eyes. It was a declaration of cooperation with the communists made by a patriot on his death bed, removing the barrier of anti-communism. Over 300 men of the Independence Army who had welcomed us in the streets of Tonghua came to Mt. Paekdu, led by Commander Choe Yun Gu four years later, to join the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. I met them in Huadian.

The Koreans in Huanren County buried Commander Yang's remains in a grave that was level with the ground so that the enemy would not find his body. But the Japanese troops and police found his body and dug it up, beheaded it and hung the head up in the street.

Commander Yang's bereaved family were very badly treated. Persecuted by the Japanese troops and police, they changed their surname Yang into Kim and led a secluded life in a mountain village in Huanren over 250 miles from a railway.

After liberation I sent people to south Manchuria and had Yang's bereaved family brought to the homeland. His wife Yun Jae Sun, his son, daughters and sons-in-law returned to the homeland.

"Madam, having lost your husband and having been persecuted by the Japanese troops and police, you must have had a hard time of it." When I greeted her with these words, she wept, her shoulders shaking.

"General, now that I have seen your face I feel as if all my sorrows have vanished. Being driven from place to place is no great trouble. But you must have had a hard time of it, driving out the Japanese."

"I failed to get in touch with you because I was busy fighting the enemy. Excuse me."

"General, don't mention it. We in the mountains heard news of you. When I heard news of you I inwardly reproached my husband for having died in a foreign land without following you."

"However, Commander Yang put up a good fight without yielding to his last days."

Later we sent his son Yang Ui Jun to Mangyongdae Revolutionary School. Kim Gu who visited the school on the occasion of the April Joint Conference of the Representatives of Political Parties and Social Organizations of North and South was surprised to see Commander Yang's son there.

"I never imagined that the north Korean authorities would educate the son of the Commander of the Independence Army in this school where the sons and daughters of guerrilla fighters are being educated," he said.

"This school is attended not only by sons and daughters of guerrillas but also by those of the patriotic martyrs who were engaged in the trade union and peasants' association movement in the homeland. We make no distinction between the patriots who laid down their lives for the country, whatever group they belonged to," I said.

Moved by this, Kim Gu said, “The school is the symbol of national unity.”

Yang Ui Jun became a political worker in an air force unit after leaving school, but he was killed in a plane crash after the war. I was very saddened by the news. I feared that Commander Yang's lineage might be broken. Fortunately Yang Ui Jun left a son behind him. He was named Yang Chol Su. But he was crippled with polio. The Party saw to it that he was given the same education at primary school, senior middle school and then university for 14 years as other, healthy, boys were. His comrades carried him on a wheel chair and to and from the classroom on the 17th floor of the university building every day for four years while he attended Kim Il Sung University. Our second and third generations' respect for the patriotic martyrs was thus manifested in the warm affection shown for the crippled grandson of the martyr. Yang Chol Su has become fully-fledged writer for the Republic and creates literary works in bed.

He has two sons and a daughter. They are Yang Se Bong's great-grandsons and great-granddaughter. On harvest moon day they and their parents visit their great-grandfather's tomb in the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery. They probably do not know what distressed and anguished their great-grandfather during his lifetime.

I hope that the burden of the question - anti-communism or an alliance with communism - will not weigh on these innocent children.

## 6.5. With an Ideal of Unity

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We speeded up our march towards Liuhe. Liuhe, along with Xingjing, Tonghua, Huadian and Panshi, was widely known as an important operational base of the Korean independence movement in south Manchuria. Many fighters of the new generation who aspired to communism, as well as the independence fighters of the previous generation, were operating in that region. The Sinhung Training School which was famous as the first military academy in the history of the independence movement of Korea was located in Hanihe, Liuhe County, in south Manchuria.

We had decided on Liuhe as our destination in order to conduct extensive political work for expanding the mass foundation of the AJPGA in that area. We had also intended to launch an intensive campaign to give the masses revolutionary training and expand the ranks of the guerrilla army not only in Liuhe but also in Sanyuanpu, Gushanzi, Hailong, Mengjiang and other places on our way back to Antu. This was one aspect of the strategy of our campaign in south Manchuria.

On our way we stopped at Sanyuanpu, Gushanzi, Liuhe and Hailong to work with the revolutionary organizations there.

After the September 18 incident the revolutionary organizations in these areas had been severely disrupted by the enemy's white terrorism. Most of the organizations which the communists of the new generation had formed over several years at the cost of their blood and sweat had been disrupted or disbanded. Some organizations would never be reactivated because all their members had been killed or arrested.

Hailong had suffered most because of the September 18 incident. The Japanese consulate was situated there and the enemy had struck deeper root there than in any other area. Everywhere we went, there were people who had been trying hard to re-establish contact with their organizations.

In all the places where we stopped we met members of the primary party organizations which had been expanded from the first parent party organization, as well as core members of the YCLK and the AJYL and leaders of the Peasants' Union, the Anti-Japanese Women's Association and the Children's Expeditionary Corps. We acquainted ourselves with the activities of these organizations and discussed with them the immediate revolutionary work and fighting tasks. In the course of this I learned that there were some problems that could not be overlooked with regard to the tendency and way of thinking of the members of the revolutionary organizations in these areas.

The first problem was the defeatist tendency which had become widespread as a result of the September 18 incident.

This tendency found expression first in the fact that people were thinking that things were hopeless since Manchuria had been occupied by Japan. Quite a few people were thinking that it was useless to wait for Korea's independence, or that there was no knowing when Korea would become independent, because Japan, who had defeated Qing and Russia, the largest country in the world, and occupied Manchuria, was now casting her covetous eyes on China proper, because the US and British armies, powerful as they were, would not be a match for the Japanese army, and because Japan might even occupy the whole world. The illusion about the Japanese army that had been created by its victory in the Sino-Japanese war and the Russo-Japanese war became exaggerated and widespread around this time.

Some people even thought that it was empty talk to say that the Korean nation could defeat Japanese imperialism on its own. Such an opinion might lead to a capitulationism idea that there was no need to fight for the revolution when there was no hope of success. Without overcoming this defeatism, it was impossible to rally the people and enlist the broad patriotic masses in the revolution.

We selected the commanding officers and men who had been well-qualified politically and practically, and sent them among the masses to give them public lectures and explanations on the subject of the September 18 incident and the future of the Korean revolution. The audience was interested mainly in news of our battle against the Japanese, and particularly in the size and the tactical and strategic principles of the AJPGA. I repeated the speech I had made to the people in Liujiafenfang and the audience applauded.

The most popular topic in our lectures and conversations was the story of the battle on the border between Antu and Fusong Counties. When compared to the victory of Japan in her sweeping conquest of Manchuria that resulted in the setting up of Manchukuo, our victory in the battle that destroyed a company of the enemy was insignificant. But the people listened to our account of the battle with the utmost interest. They were struck with admiration at the news that the young AJPGA which had just made a start had destroyed a company of the Japanese army on a road in broad daylight when Japan was lording it over Manchuria. They wanted to know all the details of the battle, even how the enemy had given up resistance to our counterattack and run away. They showered us with a barrage of questions. We had to repeat several times the same details in the same place.

When I reviewed the people's impressions of the result of the battle on the Antu-Fusong border, I realized once again that actions were more effective than words in convincing the people of the possibility of winning independence by the efforts of our nation, and that it was important to demonstrate the strength of the guerrilla army through actual battles. Another problem arising in the people's tendency was that some young people, with the founding of the AJPGA, regarded the armed struggle as absolute and underestimated the underground revolutionary activities. They were neglecting their organizational life, thinking that it was pointless to hold meetings and discussions and scatter leaflets every day at a time when the enemy was crushing anything with its tanks, artillery and aircraft, and that it would be more worthwhile for them to rise in arms and kill even one Japanese than to conduct underground activities.

They did not realize that the armed struggle was undertaken by a nuclei trained in an organization and

that it was impossible to form armed forces and expand their ranks without a large organizational reservoir. It could also be called an aftermath of the Left infantile disorder resulting from the September 18 incident.

It was not very difficult to bring home to them the fact that the reservoir of the AJPGA was organizations, that a revolutionary struggle was inconceivable and could not be carried out without the organizations, and that if the organizations were not active, the life of the gigantic organism called the revolution would come to an end. We tried to convince them that the Korean communists were able to form AJPGA units in various parts of Manchuria and launch the armed resistance entirely because the revolutionary masses had carried out their activities faithfully in their organizations.

Another problem with the people in south Manchuria was the tendency to respond to the terrorism of the Kukmin-bu with terrorism. In those days the Kukmin-bu reactionaries were intensifying their terrorism against the communists in south Manchuria and the progressive nationalists who were attempting to alter its principles.

The members of the YCLK and AIYL in the Liuhe area insisted on responding to the Right-wingers of Kukmin-bu who had indulged in terrorism. They would not accept our reasoning that it was harmful to react to Kukmin-bu terrorism with terrorism. They insisted that if nothing was done by force to deter them from committing terrorism, it would only encourage them to further terrorism.

I had to explain at length why terrorism in return for terrorism was not just and proper and why it was reckless and would do great harm to the revolution.

I told them to this effect: needless to say, Kukmin-bu, by killing patriots, is committing a serious crime that can never be redressed, and losing stalwart patriots at the hands of our compatriots is a tragedy for us all, a tragedy which we can do nothing to stop; for this crime Kukmin-bu will be cursed for ever by our nation and by posterity; of course, I understand why you have labeled it as a gang of murderers and resolved to take revenge; but we must think deeply why something so disgraceful happens before we take up an avenging sword; we must not assume that all the people in Kukmin-bu are evil on the ground that it has degenerated into a den of Right-wing nationalists; the problem is that the Japanese imperialists, in order to make it reactionary, have smuggled their agents into it and are plotting ceaselessly to break it up; alarmed at the emergence of a new progressive group in Kukmin-bu, they have been cunningly encouraging a split and conflict within the organization; if we destroy Kukminbu by terrorist means, only the Japanese will be happy and benefit from it; therefore, we must ferret out the Japanese agents in it and lay the enemy's plot bare while isolating its reactionary upper level; let none of us forget that unity is the guarantee of national resurrection.

At this the young people nodded. While correcting these tendencies, we gave the comrades in south Manchuria the tasks of restoring the disrupted organizations as soon as possible and rallying more people around them, of training hardcore elements and sending them to the armed force, of expanding the party organizations by recruiting young communists of worker and peasant origin who had been tested in the

practical struggle, and of improving the work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed units.

When we were staying in the areas of Sanyuanpu, Gushanzi, Liuhe and Hailong, many young people volunteered to join the army. This could be called a result of the political work we had conducted in south Manchuria.

In order to solve the difficult problems in promoting the revolutionary movement in Liuhe, we had to enhance the role of Choe Chang Gol and other members of the first party organization and the hardcore members of the YCLK who had been sent to work in this area. Therefore, we tried hard to discover the whereabouts of Choe Chang Gol with whom we had lost contact the previous year. If we met him, we could hold a serious discussion on intensifying the revolution in south Manchuria to suit the new situation in which Japan had occupied Manchuria and we had started the armed struggle. We could show him the direction for his work. Choe Chang Gol was our representative in south Manchuria, so to speak. Liuhe was the area in which Choe had operated, according to the decision of the DIU, and a place with which he was greatly associated. He had served as a soldier of the Independence Army there and had been recommended to Whasung Ulsuk School by Yang Se Bong.

After the closure of the school, he went back to his former company and, serving as adviser to the Independence Army, devoted all his energy to expanding the DIU's influence in Liuhe and in the wide area of south Manchuria. In Liuhe he took part in a raid on the branch of the Japanese consulate in Jinchuan county town.

The rapid expansion of the ranks of the DIU in Liuhe, Xingjing and other places in south Manchuria could be attributed not only to the unrelenting efforts of Kim Hyok and Cha Gwang Su but also to the titanic struggle and the efficient and seasoned working ability of Choe Chang Gol who could be called the master of that area. He went into the Independence Army, a forbidden area for the new ideology, and did not hide the fact that he was a communist while he lived among them; on the contrary, he actively awakened the progressive Independence Army soldiers to consciousness and transformed many of them into adherents of communism. He conducted work with people on so large a scale and in so daring a way that his superior officer connived at it, instead of reporting him to his seniors, even when Choe did political work for months 4 kilometers away from the area where his unit was stationed.

Liuhe had been under the strong influence of the factionalists and the conservative nationalists who were indulging in an anti-communist conspiracy. Those from the M-L group formed an organization called the Residents' Association in Panshi County in opposition to the nationalist organizations in south Manchuria. Inside the Independence Army which was on the verge of division because of the antagonism between the progressive group and the conservative group, some Left-wingers who aspired to socialism, joining hands with the Tuesday group and the Seoul-Shanghai group, were speeding up their efforts to form a national single-front organization.

Hyon Muk Gwan, Ko I Ho and other conservatives launched a wide reactionary offensive against those aspiring to communism. In this complicated situation Choe Chang Gol formed an AJYL organization in

Liuhe and expanded it rapidly.

The factionalists tried to find fault with him, saying that the ALYL in Liuhe was not a proper organization since the General Federation of Korean Youth in China was the one and only organization of the Korean youth in China. The factionalists from the M-L group infiltrated alien elements into the Liuhe AJYL to break it up from within. They recruited dozens of young men from Panshi and summoned them to Danigou to form a terrorist organization called Cudgel; then, they gave the police the false information that the Independence Army was plotting a riot in Sanyuanpu and, in cooperation with the police, attacked the cadres of the AJYL.

Choe Chang Gol checked their shameful act and rescued the hardcore members of the league from the assault.

He did not retaliate against the provocations of the factionalists by resorting to arms. By nature, he was broad-minded in his approach to people and in handling affairs. When he met me in Kalun later, he said that he was very surprised that he had not lost his reason and had refrained from opening fire when he saw AJYL members spitting blood and having their flesh torn by the cudgels of the factionalists.

Cha Gwang Su was delighted at our going to Liuhe. He did not hide his delight, looking forward as he was to seeing Choe Chang Gol. Cha Gwang Su, like Choe Chang Gol, knew Liuhe. When Choe, with a pistol at his side, had been working under the command of Yang Se Bong, Cha taught the children there. At that time they had become comrades sharing the same idea. "I am fastidious about people, but I lost my heart to Cha when I first met him. He appears boisterous, but he is a man. He has ten Karl Marxs in his head."

Once Choe Chang Gol said, jokingly, as he recalled their first encounter:

"If I were a girl," Choe continued, "I would not hesitate to marry that boisterous fellow. It seems the girls in Jirin are all blind." Cha Gwang Su smiled at his joke.

In his days in Jirin Cha Gwang Su was still a bachelor. Choe Chang Gol always said he would arrange a match for Cha and accompany him to his house on a horse on his wedding day. Whenever they met they would joke openly with each other, one claiming to be older than the other, so the other should respect his elder. Their friendship was intimate and deep enough to stir the envy and jealousy of everyone else.

It can be said their friendship was further strengthened during the days when they were expanding the ranks of the YCLK and the AJYL in the areas of Liuhe, Xingjing and Tieling. Choe Chang Gol, with Cha Gwang Su, formed the Gushanzi branch of the Young Communist League of Korea and set up enlightenment organizations called institutes of social sciences in Xingjing, Liuhe, Panshi and in several other counties in south Manchuria, with Wangqingmen as the center.

The institutes had the mission of studying and propagating Marxism-Leninism and the guiding theory of



the Korean revolution. Its mode of operation was similar to that of a correspondence course today. It summoned young people and gave them lectures for about a fortnight at the end of the farming season and enlightened its members by giving them lessons at home once every few months and by posting the necessary study materials to them for the rest of the year. The members of the institutes studied by themselves what they had learned in the lectures, referring to the materials, and held a discussion once a week; they fully digested the materials by a question and answer method through correspondence if there was a subject that was difficult to understand.

When I heard Cha Gwang Su's explanation of the activities of the institute of social sciences in Liuhe in the autumn of the year when the conference of the General Federation of the Korean Youth in South Manchuria was convened, I could only admire the original and fresh mode of its operation and I praised the three comrades (Choe Chang Gol, Cha Gwang Su and Kim Hyok) who had been running the institute as people who had done a lot of creative work. The method they had created in practice showed that, if we racked our brains, we would be fully able to educate the young people to make them pioneers of the times and trail blazers of history even in the difficult circumstances in which we were conducting an underground struggle.

As I led the column towards Sanyuanpu, looking forward to meeting Choe Chang Gol soon, I felt my heart beating no less than Cha Gwang Su. Two years had passed since we parted with one another after forming the first party organization in Kalun. In those years he had formed party organizations and expanded various mass organizations in the wide region of south Manchuria including Liuhe, Xingjing, Hailong, Qingyuan and Panshi, and commanded a unit of the Korean Revolutionary Army, busying himself with recruiting men and making the material preparations that were necessary for building a standing revolutionary armed force. In the spring of 1931 he had renamed the Jijiang command of the KRA the eastern revolutionary army and taken command of it. The liaison officer who had brought this news to me from Choe Chang Gol had told me that Choe had been having a great deal of trouble in his conflict with the reactionary group of Kukmin-bu.

Communications with Liuhe had been broken since then. I had been feeling anxious about this. I was uneasy not only because he was an inherent adventurer and optimist who would devote himself unsparingly to any task, but also because he was a communist operating under the eyes of the reactionaries, within the framework of Kukmin-bu which had begun to regard terrorism as an all-powerful means. He was on Kukmin-bu's blacklist, so to speak. Towards the end of the year when the Wangqingmen incident happened, the Kukmin-bu reactionaries had attempted to arrest six young communists, including Choe Chang Gol and Choe Duk Hyong, and execute them at Daougou. This is recorded in history as the Liuhe incident.

Since this incident the progressive forces within Kukmin-bu who had been aspiring to the new ideology had denounced the reactionary group bitterly. Choe Chang Gol, who might have been a victim, had been furious, saying that he would take revenge on the fascist leadership of Kukmin-bu.

On being informed of the incident, I had sent Park Gun Won to Liuhe with a letter which read: "A clash

with Kukmin-bu, in any form, will be utterly destructive. There should not, and cannot, be bloodshed among compatriots who are opposed to Japanese imperialism. We endured with tears in our eyes the grief of losing six of our comrades in Wangqingmen. Be cautious in everything and do not act on impulse."

After the Liuhe incident Kukmin-bu had split into two camps at an executive committee meeting and a conference of the Korean Revolutionary Party held in August, 1930. Hyon Muk Gwan, Yang Se Bong, Ko I Ho, Kim Mun Go, Yang Ha San and others persisted in their conservative policy, whereas Ko Won Am, Kim Sok Ha, Li Jin Tak, Li Ung, Hyon Ha Juk, Lee Gwan Rin and other young figures, opposing the implementation of this policy, had labeled the Korean Revolutionary Party as a fascist political party which opposed the people's views, and proposed a new, innovative principle that the party should be dissolved and that the proletariat should be made the vanguard of the class struggle so as to provide leadership for the Korean peasants in Manchuria.

Owing to their contradictory ideals, the two groups had fought to bring down and bury each other.

The Kukmin-bu group had, with the connivance of the Fengtian provincial administration, even bribed Chinese officials and the military police and enlisted them in purging the anti-Kukmin-bu group by terrorist means. They had assassinated five of their opponents, including Li Jin Tak. In retaliation the dissidents had raided Kukmin-bu headquarters and shot Kim Mun Go, the 4th company commander, to death. Later the dissidents had announced their secession and formed an anti-Kukmin-bu committee with the aim of toppling Kukmin-bu. My worries about the safety of Choe Chang Gol were founded on this political base. At a place not far from Sanyuanpu I gave the order to speed up the march. Our anxiety to see Choe as soon as possible spurred us on.

In Sanyuanpu we were struck dumb when we heard the news about him. The organization members there said that he had been killed. According to them, he had been arrested by the Right-wingers of Kukmin-bu while guiding the work of the Gushanzi branch of the YCLK and had disappeared. A young man called Park from the Gushanzi branch of the YCLK confirmed this story. He had come to us after hearing the news of the arrival of the AJPGA. He told us that the Kukmin-bu terrorists had lured Choe to Jiangjiadian in Jinchuan County and killed him, and had spread the rumor that they had executed him because he was a secret communist agent. Some said he had been killed while operating between Hailong and Qingyuan.

Anyway, it seemed that there was no doubt that he was dead. I was so furious that I could neither speak nor cry. How could he, one of the builders of the DIU who had at all times been passionate and considerate, leave us without a word of his death! This caused further overwhelming grief for us after our bitter experience on a nameless hill on the border between Antu and Fusong Counties. The death of such a loyal comrade-in-arms as Choe Chang Gol at the historic juncture when the armed struggle had started with the birth of the AJPGA and when the rumbling of its guns was heralding the advent of a new era over the vast area of Manchuria, was a heart-rending loss to our revolution.

Cha Gwang Su, sitting beside me on the grass that had withered under the scorching sun, was shedding copious tears.

I wanted to see the bereaved family of Choe Chang Gol, so I led the unit to Gushanzi. His wife, along with his son who could not yet even toddle and his younger brother, greeted us. The widow was a strong-hearted woman. She did not weep in front of us. On the contrary, she requested my permission to join the guerrilla army to fight against the Japanese imperialists with arms in hand and fulfill her husband's unfinished cause. We altered our schedule and stayed overnight with the bereaved family.

The next morning when we were leaving Gushanzi the widow accompanied us for a long way to see us off. I did not know how to console her; I held her son in my arms and stroked his cheeks. The boy, who had cut only two teeth, was the perfect image of his father. He said, "Papa!" "Papa!" as he touched my face. His mother shed tears for the first time at the sight of this. I also felt like crying and, pressing my cheek against his, I gazed quietly at Gushanzi village for a while.

"Madam, let us bring this boy up excellently so that he can succeed his father." I became too choked to say anything more.

When we had marched about two kilometers from Gushanzi, Kim Il Ryong, seeing me so depressed, proposed that we fire a volley in memory of Choe Chang Gol. He seemed to think that I might brighten up if a volley was fired for him. This was thoughtful of Kim Il Ryong, who had himself suffered manifold hardships and difficulties.

I said, "I don't want to believe the rumor that he was killed. How can we fire a volley for his death when we haven't seen his body?"

When we arrived at Liangjiangkou, after passing through Mengjiang, we received the astonishing news that about 20 Independence Army soldiers who had been hiding in the Fusong area, in cooperation with a Chinese armed unit of about 70 to 80, was plotting to raid our unit and disarm it. This plot had been hatched by the Independence Army under Kukmin-bu. They had discovered the route of the march of the AJPGA from Mengjiang in the direction of Liangjiangkou and then informed a Chinese nationalist army unit that our unit was the main force of the communist army. The Independence Army soldiers and the Chinese armed unit were waiting for us in the village we were to pass through.

Those who gave us this information were the Young Communist League members of Liangjiangkou. There were many organization members and young people there whom I knew. It was immediately upon our arrival in Liangjiangkou that they gave us this information. The guerrillas were furious, saying that we should annihilate the Kukmin-bu terrorists to avenge Choe Chang Gol's death. Even those comrades who had joined me in soothing the young people in Liuhe who were calling for taking revenge on the Kukmin-bu terrorists who had killed six of our comrades in the Huaimaoshan valley when the General Federation of the Korean Youth in South Manchuria was at conference and who had killed Choe Chang Gol, came to my headquarters and suggested that we fight a glorious battle to teach them a lesson, saying

that there was a limit to our patience. It was easy to speak about teaching them a lesson, but it was not a problem that could be solved so easily. In the first place, the balance of forces favored them.

But what mattered was not their superior numbers. The most awkward thing was that our opponent was not our enemy. It would amount to foolishness that could only be produced in the chaos of the early 1930s for two armed forces that professed the common cause of anti-Japanese national salvation to exchange fire. It was ridiculous for the AJPGA and the Independence Army to commit fratricide, and it was just as absurd that the Chinese anti-Japanese armed unit and the Korean Independence Army in cooperation would attack the AJPGA. Needless to say, there would be an outcome if we fought. But in this sort of fight neither the winner nor the loser would escape moral condemnation. No one would crown the victor with laurels or cry over the death of the loser.

If by mistake we provoked the Chinese armed unit, a great obstacle might be laid to our activities. The allied front with the Chinese national salvation army formed through painstaking efforts would be broken, and we would have to retreat to the early days when ~ had been idling away the time cleaning our weapons in the back room of someone's house. Attacking the Independence Army unit would give rise to no less serious consequences. If the communist army attacked the Independence Army, the people would turn away from us; and the anti-communists would take advantage of it to slander the Communists.

That was not what we wanted. It was unimaginable for the AJPGA and the Independence Army to fight a bloody battle, leveling their guns at each other. Nevertheless, the Independence Army was preparing for a bloody battle on the other side of the River Songhuajiang. When I recollect the summer of 1932, I am reminded of the situation at that time before anything else. I spent a sleepless night racking my brains to find out a way to deal with the awkward situation, a solution that conformed with the principle of national unity and the great cause of anti-Japanese national salvation. I think I aged ten years because of this affair.

I myself could not repress my surging indignation at, and hatred for, the Kukmin-bu army which had not even fought a proper battle against the Japanese army, our common enemy, and which did not hesitate to commit bestial, shameful acts against us. All the commanders were unanimous in saying in a black rage that we should deal with the Kukmin-bu fascists severely.

Cha Gwang Su, with his eyes flashing with fury, said, "Let us teach them a lesson so that they do not provoke us again, a good lesson, even if it means their being killed, so that they stain their hands with no more of the blood of their fellow countrymen."

Cha went on to say that the time has now come to take revenge on Kukmin-bu for the death of our comrades at their hands. All the armed forces around us were our enemy. The Korean Independence Army, the Chinese national salvation army, the mounted bandits, the Red Spear Society, the Broad Sword Society - they were all our enemy. The AJPGA was in such adversity because we did not have Liu Bencao with us to testify that our unit was a special detachment of the national salvation army. We had

succeeded in making our unit legitimate thanks to the good offices of Liu Ben-cao, but we were in danger of being attacked from all sides if we did not take such a powerful surety as Liu Ben-cao along with us.

During our campaign to Tonghua, Commander Yu's unit had withdrawn from Antu and, along with Wang De-lin's unit, retreated deep into Ningan County. Antu had become a free zone. The self-defense army units had surrendered to the Japanese army in succession without having fought a proper battle. Some of the units were already reactionary at that time, having abandoned their anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese principles, and had been dancing to the tune of advisers from the Japanese army. It was because it had become a reactionary armed unit commanded by the Japanese army that the Chinese anti-Japanese armed unit dared to think of destroying our unit, which was known as the main force of the communist army.

Blinded by the anti-communist propaganda of Kukmin-bu, the remnants of the Independence Army who were ignorant of our real intention were trying, in conspiracy with the reactionary elements of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units, to challenge us. I thought the matter over and over again. Although they were a Right-wing military clique who had become bandits, we could not allow ourselves to retaliate or punish them by military means because they were our fellow countrymen and had been fighting to save the country. We had to dissuade them from their challenge by political means. Thus did we regard the anti-Japanese united front as absolute. So Park Hun and several other comrades under his command left for Erdaobaihe where the Independence Army soldiers were stationed.

"Comrade Park Hun, today your mouth, not your gun, is your weapon. You must persuade the Independence Army soldiers by Words, not bullets. You are an eloquent man of a pleasing character. So you will be perfectly able to dissuade them from committing fratricide. You must on no account resort to arms. Bear this in mind.

A gunshot now would mean the end of our united front with the nationalists. What do you think? Do you think you can do it, though it not seem a task that is suited to your character?" I asked. Park Hun scratched his head, smiling.

"It's a difficult task, but I will try."

After Park Hun left on his mission, I walked up and down the bank of the River Songhuajiang for a long time. I prayed silently that there should be no gunshot that night. Would Park Hun succeed in dissuading the Independence Army soldiers? I asked myself anxiously.

Of course, he was an able man, an able agitator. But the furious temper of the man who, if angry, would behave like a bear, paying no heed to the consequences, worried me. I knew his weakness, but I sent him on the mission to the camp of the Independence Army without hesitation because there was no abler man than he in my unit. Cha Gwang Su was his equal in this matter. Judging purely from the situation, Cha Gwang Su was the right man to meet the challenge. But he had been shaken by the news of the death of

Choe Chang Gol.

I kept looking in the direction of Erdaobaihe, wishing Park Hun success. Fortunately, nothing tragic happened that night, no unhappy incident, to my relief. The Independence Army soldiers were moved by our comrades' earnest appeal for the unity of the patriotic forces. They confessed that they had been unhappy with the policy of their headquarters and had been dubious and hesitated over what to do. They resolved that they would hand over their weapons to the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and fight in cooperation with them.

The high-ranking officers of the Independence Army refused to join us, but the rank-and-file soldiers felt the need to cooperate with us and joined hands with us. This was the beginning of their merger with us.

In this way we got over another crisis without difficulty. It was fortunate that we, young people in our twenties, could display such magnanimity and perseverance for the purpose of great national unity at a time when our hatred and spite for Kukmin-bu was surging after we had broken with Yang Se Bong and heard of the death of Choe Chang Gol. If we, thirsting for revenge, had destroyed Kukmin-bu or had an armed conflict with the Independence Army soldiers, we could not have faced the younger generation with a clear conscience as we do today, and we could not have witnessed the historic event of about 300 soldiers of Commander Yang Se Bong coming over in the dead of winter to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, under the banner of cooperation.

No feeling in the world is greater, more ennobling and more sacred than patriotism. The spirit of national unity can be called the lifeblood and essence of patriotism. The Korean communists, since the first day they set sail for national liberation, have invariably been holding the idea of national unity dear at all times and in all places, and have not been sparing in their efforts to make the idea the reality.

## 6.6. Together with the National Salvation Army

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When we were staying in Liuhe, I dispatched a liaison officer to the Panshi area to establish contact with Li Hong Gwang and Li Dong Gwang. At the time when we were returning from our south Manchurian expedition, they were waging a guerrilla war. The Armed Red Guard (another name for it was the dog-hunting troop) which they had formed after the September 18 incident in order to fight against the stooges of the "defending-people society" and other pro-Japanese organizations was reformed into the Panshi Worker-Peasant Volunteers in September 1932.

This volunteer unit was made up of young Koreans who had been tested and trained through mass struggles of different forms such as seizing food from the enemy, punishing stooges and capturing weapons, as well as through anti-Japanese uprisings. Since the summer of 1932 Li Hong Gwang and Li Dong Gwang had struggled to establish anti-Japanese guerrilla zones. They displayed great ability Particularly in the struggle to punish stooges, and were much talked about.

I wanted to meet them, not to pay a courtesy call on them, the masters of south Manchuria, and exchange greetings, but to discuss our views. Above all, I hoped we would swap fighting experience. My next concern was what view and attitude they had concerning the prospects for the Korean revolution. I wanted to inform them of my views and attitude on the immediate tasks facing the Korean communists and to hear their opinions.

What was most important was to discuss with them practical matters on how the Korean communists who had launched an armed struggle scattered across Manchuria should keep in contact, how they should effect coordination and how they should realize cooperation, concerted action and joint operations. I also wanted to discuss such matters with Kim Chaek, Choi Yong Kun, Li Hak Man, Li Gi Dong and Ho Hyong Sik in north Manchuria. The guerrilla units in south and north Manchuria flanked us. How to cooperate with them was an important factor that would greatly affect the development of the armed struggle as a whole.

The liaison officer who had been to Panshi returned to the unit when we were staying in Mengjiang after leaving Hailong. He reported to me that he had failed to meet Li Hong Gwang and Li Dong Gwang because they were away from their unit, conducting political work in the villages, and that he had left my letter with the underground organization there.

So I put off my meeting with them and concentrated on military and political activities in Mengjiang. The major objective of our operations in this area was to obtain weapons and expand our ranks. To this end, we had to launch military and diplomatic activities along with active political work.

Mengjiang was favourable in several aspects for us in achieving our aim. Many of the officials in

Mengjiang were my schoolmates from Yuwen Middle School. They had been scholarly men who had buried themselves exclusively in studying without conducting any political activities, either Leftist or Rightist, but they now held the reins in Mengjiang. After leaving middle school they had worked in the County office of the Kuomintang and, when Japan invaded Manchuria, joined the self-defense army holding high-ranking posts.

There was staying in Mengjiang even the representative of the headquarters of the self-defense army led by Tang Ju-wu Which operated in the Tonghua area. So there was the Possibility of obtaining weapons by negotiating with the representative through the good offices of my schoolmates After taking stock of the situation i decided to keep in close touch with the self-defense army in Mengjiang.

At that time our commanding officers were not much interested in winning over the self-defense army. Most of them considered it an adventure to have contact with them. They said: The talks with Yang Se Bong broke down because we have different ideas, though he is a Korean as are we. So it will be totally impossible for us to obtain weapons from the self-defense army. What is worse, the self-defense army is now breaking up. We were told that some units had Japanese instructors in their command structures and were plotting with them to sweep away the communists. So we cannot agree that you, our commander, should walk into such a trap.

I replied to them, "We should not be afraid of Japanese Instructors who are entrenched in the self-defense army units. They put out feelers to discover communists, whereas we have courage with which to go into their units, deceiving the Japanese instructors and talk to the commanding officers of the self-defense army. The disrupted nature of the army may favor us in attaining our object. They will consider it better to hand over their weapons to us who are fighting against the Japanese than to the Japanese or bandits or throw them away. We succeeded in our negotiation<sup>5</sup> with even so obstinate a commander as Yu. So, why shouldn't we be able to win over the self-defense army?"

The commanding officers said earnestly: It was by a chance in a thousand that you, Comrade Commander, succeeded in your negotiations with Commander Yu. If Mr. Liu Ben-cai had not been there we would not have been successful. You would do well to think more .carefully about going to the self-defense army units.

So I retorted, "Saying that something is right or wrong, sitting in an isolated room without making an attempt, is not a characteristic of communists. True, we owed Mr. Liu a lot in making our guerrilla army legitimate. However, it is unscientific for us to consider our success at that time as mere chance. If we had not made positive efforts to remove the tension in our relations with the national salvation army, Mr. Liu could not have helped us. What is important is to work actively and with courage." With this I left for the headquarters of the self-defense army accompanied by an orderly.

The barracks of the self-defense army were full of soldiers and ox-or horse-drawn carts were frequently going in and out of the gate, carrying military supplies.



At the gate a sentry ordered us to halt and asked in the Shandong dialect, "What brings you here? Who are you?" He was scarcely interested in our faces, but gazed carefully at our guerrilla uniforms and five-pointed stars on our caps which were totally different from those of the self-defense army.

I replied in Chinese, imitating his Shandong dialect, saying, "We are a detachment of the national salvation army from Antu. I am detachment Commander Kim Il Sung. I have come here to meet your commander. Take me to him."

"Kim Il Sung? The Kim Il Sung detachment is a communist unit, isn't it?" Another sentry with pockmarks on his face looked at me suspiciously, muttering my name to himself. Apparently he had heard that Kim Il Sung's unit was a communist army.

"We are a detachment serving under Commander Yu. Don't you know Commander Yu?" I asked him. "Oh, Commander Yu! I know him. His soldiers captured a machine gun from the Japs in Nanhutou. He is a great man," said the sentry with pockmarks on his face proudly, giving us the thumbs up.

Anyhow, our mentioning Commander Yu produced a good result. His name was effective whenever we approached Chinese anti-Japanese troops. So when we were marching we always masqueraded under the cloak of "The Korean Detachment of the NSA," to avoid encounters with other anti-Japanese troops.

Then the sentry who spoke a Shandong dialect went to the barracks and returned with a man of noble bearing. In those days the NSA soldiers were dressed in old-style uniforms of the Zhang Xuehang army. But the officer who had just appeared with the sentry was wearing a short-sleeved shirt, breeches and canvas shoes. His hair was well-oiled and shining brightly.

"Hey! Aren't you the librarian Kim Sung Ju?"

It was my schoolmate Zhang from Yuwen Middle School who had been known as "tall Zhang." He called me the librarian because I had been in charge of the library at the school. At school Zhang had been kind to me, calling me "librarian Kim" or "librarian Sung Ju." Holding each other's hands in joy we reminisced about our school days for a good while. It was three years since we had last met. I regretted having left Jirin without saying goodbye to my schoolmates after my release from prison. But it had been unavoidable because I was terribly busy at that time running east and west with a determination to sacrifice all my private affairs for the revolution, but sometimes I felt a weight on my mind because I had been so disrespectful as to have failed to say farewell to the teachers and students at Jirin.

Meeting Zhang reminded me of various events in my days at Jirin Yuwen Middle School which I had almost forgotten, and of the romantism of the students in those days. I felt as if I were standing in the garden of Yuwen Middle School which was filled with the fragrant smell of lilac, not in the grounds of a barracks where the sound of military boots was heard. It seemed that, if I left the barracks together with Zhang, I would be at Mt. Beishan, enjoying the cool of the River Songhuajiang. This nostalgia made my heart tingle.

Zhang took my arm as he had done at school and guided me to his room laughing aloud frequently.

"I am sorry that your face does not appear in our graduation photograph from school."

As he talked he offered me a seat.

"When we had our photograph taken after the leaving ceremony, we talked about librarian Kim. If you had not left school early, you would have won the first prize. Was it that the revolution attracted you to such an extent that you left school early?"

I answered his question with a merry joke.

"Of course it did. You were also attracted by the revolution and became an officer in the self-defense army with a Mauser in your belt, I think."

Listening to me, Zhang blinked and patted the back of my hand.

"You are right. Before the September 18 incident we were stupid people who had lived with no knowledge of the world. Only when we saw the Japanese invading Manchuria did we awake from our sleep."

"That was natural. Do you remember what I said at that time? A man cannot live without politics."

"I didn't listen to you carefully. And I don't see why the situation is changing so radically. This Manchuria is a dreadful sight, a land swept away by a sudden puff of wind."

I thought that Zhang had analyzed the situation correctly. The tide of history flowing across Manchuria brought great changes which shook the world. The changes were so cruel as to cause many vicissitudes in the life of the people. A short time before, Zhang himself had had an ambition to study history at Beijing University. But after witnessing the invasion of Manchuria by Japanese troops he abandoned his ambition from his school days and volunteered for the self-defense army. And who could have imagined that Mr. Liu Ben-cai, who had been talked of as a scholar among scholars and who would gently explain the pastoral poems of Du Fu<sup>27</sup>, would become a chief of staff of the NSA and fight against the Japanese in the smoke of gunpowder?

"Look, librarian Kim. I have become a gallant man in uniform owing to the September 18 incident," said Zhang with a sad smile.

"It is not only you who are in military uniform. I, too, have become a soldier and reached Mengjiang. It is not only as schoolmates but also as soldiers that we are discussing the general situation. Isn't it a splendid work of fate?"

He said that it was a "benefit" granted us by the Japanese and that people had become somewhat clever owing to this "benefit." I learned that there were many of my schoolmates from Yuwen Middle School in the self-defense army in Mengjiang. I talked with them until late at night. In our school days they had broken with politics and dreamt only of their careers and fame, but they were now hotly denouncing Japan and branding Chiang Kaisek as the most terrible monster born of the Chinese nation. Such a change satisfied me.

We discussed joint action between the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the self-defense army until late at night. My schoolmates in the leadership of the self-defense army welcomed cooperation with our army. Thus I was able to get deep into the self-defense army and also had an opportunity to meet the representative of its headquarters in Mengjiang. One day, at the request of Zhang, I made a speech before the commanding officers of the self-defense army. The representative, too, attended the gathering.

I began by appealing to them, "Brothers, let's go together." And I continued my speech as follows:

"The self-defense army and the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army must make efforts to conduct joint action. Being hostile to the AJPGA, branding it as a communist army, is the way to obstruct the anti-Japanese struggle and help Japan.... The AJPGA and the SDA must help the units of the Korean Independence Army and form a united front with them. We must sharpen our vigilance against the plot of the Japanese who are trying to rule over us by driving a wedge between the Korean and Chinese peoples and using their conflict to weaken both of them....

"The SDA must persuade the Broad Sword Society, the Red Spear Society and other militia organizations, as well as the bandits, to refrain from murdering and robbing innocent Korean and Chinese peoples and must enlist them actively in the anti-Japanese struggle. All militia organizations, small and large, must unite into a national salvation force. Some of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units reveal such deviations as retreating to China proper or surrendering to the enemy, being cowed by the strength of the Japanese troops. We must all remember that surrendering and giving up is the way to self-destruction."

The commanding officers of the SDA responded heartily to my speech. Following my speech the representative of the general headquarters handed dozens of weapons over to us.

We stayed for about two months in Mengjiang, and during that time we were able to carry out propaganda work among the masses, conduct military exercises and expand our ranks with presentable Young men, under the protection of the SDA. When we left Antu, our unit had numbered only 40, but now it was 150. Many young men in Mengjiang and the surrounding area who had been told that Kim Sung Ju had formed a strong army and was now fighting, called on us every day and petitioned us to be allowed to join the guerrilla army. In Mengjiang we worked freely, as if we were in power there.

The liaison officer who had been to Antu said that the situation in east Manchuria was good. From a letter he brought me from Kim Jong Ryong I understood that the rest of our unit, that was staying there, was

growing all the time and that a guerrilla unit of more than one hundred men had been formed in each of Wangqing, Yanji and Hunchun.

I decided to move the stage of our activity to the centre (Wangqing) of east Manchuria where the guerrilla war had begun to develop into a full-scale struggle, and to extend the armed struggle there by combining efforts with units in other counties. One important lesson we had drawn from the south Manchurian expedition was that, at the present stage when our strength was weak, it was favorable and efficient to occupy a certain base of activity and wage a struggle by relying on it. We went straight to Antu from Mengjiang without passing through Fusong. On the way our unit met some bandits and the remnants of the defeated Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units several times. They tried to capture our new rifles because they were envious of them. So we were in danger many times.

At one such time a kind old man who had been connected with Chamui-bu suddenly appeared before us like a magician in a legend and guided us to Liangjiangkou, passing through the mountains. This march was training for us and made us ready for the long-protracted guerrilla war in the future.

When we were about to leave Liangjiangkou, the main force of a regiment under the command of Yu arrived. This regiment was known as Commander Meng's unit. Meng's secretary Chen Han-zhang had also come to Liangjiangkou, with his unit.

When he recognized me, Chen Han-zhang ran towards me shouting with joy, his arms open wide. "Sung Ju! It's been so long!"

He threw his arms around my shoulders and turned me round and round as if he were meeting me after dozens of years of separation. I was seeing him for the first time since I separated from him when I had held talks with Commander Yu in Antu. It was a meeting after only three months' separation. But he gazed at me with affection as if the three months had been three decades. This meeting seemed to me to be a miracle taking place after a long separation, so I could not control my swelling emotions. In a man's lifetime three months is a short span of time, but I felt as if a long part of my life had passed in 'those three months'. It is said that if one suffers many twists and turns one feels the time to be longer. I think this is true.

Chen introduced me to Commander Meng, and said:

"I didn't know where your unit was, so I asked many people about your whereabouts. I was told that you had gone to south Manchuria and back, but I couldn't find you. Fortunately a rumor reached our unit that a Korean communist unit started the merger with an Independence Army unit in Liangjiangkou."

"Thank you, Comrade Chen. I was also anxious to see you. By the way, what brought you here?"

"Wang De-lin ordered us to work in this area until next spring. What about you? Why don't you work together with us for a while in Liangjiangkou?"

Commander Meng, who was listening to Chen, supported his Suggestion. I accepted their suggestion gladly in the hope that if we Stayed there with them we could consolidate our common front with the national salvation army. Meng's unit was armed with modern weapons because it had deserted from Zhang Xue-liang's regular army. This unit had artillery as well as machine guns. It had an incomparably stronger combat ability than other NSA units which had only a few rifles, swords and spears as weapons. During our stay in Liangjiangkou, Meng's unit guarded the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army well.

In those days most of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units collapsed or surrendered in the face of a strong attack by the Japanese troops, and were controlled by them. Only Wang De-lin's unit had not surrendered and remained as a great force among the NSA units. But even his unit was retreating to Dongning, on the eastern border of Manchuria, or into the Soviet Union where the Japanese gunfire did not reach.

The collapse of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units because of their own impotence caused distrust among our political and military cadres. Some of them said that it was useless to establish a joint front with them because we were in no position to remove the uncertainty and confusion prevailing among them, and others said that the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army should break its useless ties with them and fight on single-handed. Neither of these opinions could be tolerated.

Abandoning the anti-Japanese allied front meant surrendering a huge armed force to the enemy and falling in with the tactics of the Japanese imperialists to swallow the anti-Japanese nationalist armed units one by one.

The uncertainty and confusion of these units were attributed partly to the class limitation of their upper levels, but mainly to their fear of the enemy. In order to remove their uncertainty and prevent their destruction, it was necessary to work with them more actively and inspire them with confidence in victory by defeating the enemy.

From this pressing need, in Liangjiangkou we convened two meetings of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee which consisted of Chen Han-zhang, Lee Gwang, Hu Jin-min and other political workers who had been active in the NSA units and military and political cadres from different counties of east Manchuria, and at the meetings we discussed the measures to deal with the problems arising in the work with the Chinese anti-Japanese units. At the meetings a report on the work in the NSA units was given first, experiences accumulated in this process were swapped and the trend in the anti-Japanese nationalist units was analysed.

The people attending the meetings decided to attack Dunhua county town and Emu county town in a joint operation with Wu Yicheng's unit and Commander Meng's unit in order to deal a heavy blow to the Japanese who were expanding their occupation without any resistance, with most of the anti-Japanese units having given up their resistance by retreating to safety or surrendering to the enemy and becoming a reactionary army, and thus to raise the morale of the patriotic soldiers and people.

Commander Meng welcomed our plan of action.

The two-thousand-strong NSA unit was divided into three groups each of which advanced in the directions of the Jirin-Dunhua railway and towards Yanji and Dunhua county town. Our unit, with Commander Meng's unit, arrived in the forest around Dahuanggou south of Dunhua having followed the road east of Fuerhe and the mountain pass east of Dapaoxihe. By dispatching a reconnaissance party to Dunhua county town we confirmed what Ko Jae Lim had told us about the enemy.

At that time there were stationed in Dunhua huge armed forces such as the Japanese garrison, the headquarters of the 3rd Jirin guard brigade of the Manchukuo army and its 4th regiment, 9th regiment and airport guards, the Japanese consulate police and Manchukuo police. The enemy's guard was very strict at every town gate and at the gate of the consulate branch building.

At three a.m., on the second of September, our allied forces launched an attack on Dunhua county town. Our unit attacked the south gate and the NSA unit led by Hu Jin-min dashed into the county town through the west and north gates. After breaking into the town our allied units raided the enemy's command post first, destroyed the brigade headquarters, the consulate branch and the police sub-station and dealt with the enemy's units under the brigade. Our forces held the initiative in the battle and the enemy fell into disorder.

To save themselves the enemy called up two planes to strafe and bomb our forces. This caused great confusion among the NSA soldiers. If day were to break while we were in this situation the battle would go badly for us and our forces would suffer a great loss. I explained the situation to Chen Han-zhang and Hu Jin-min and made the new tactical proposal that we withdraw from our present position and annihilate the enemy by luring them to somewhere favorable for us.

According to my proposal, our unit took up position on the height southwest of the county town and the NSA units on a hill south of Guantunji. There we totally destroyed the enemy in an ambush. Seeing the sudden change in the situation, which they had considered unfavorable, the NSA soldiers' morale improved and they chased the fleeing enemy. The publications in those days did not comment on this battle in particular, apparently because the control of the press by the Japanese authorities was strict. The people did not know that a battle was fought in Dunhua in the early autumn of the 22nd year since national ruin.

The assault on Dunhua county town was similar to the assault on Dongning county town in September 1933. As the former was fought in cooperation with the NSA, so the latter, too, was planned and resulted in success as a joint action with the main force of the NSA. These two assaults were similar in their scale, too. However, the assault on Dunhua county town was significant because it was the first battle of its kind in the history of the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples, in which the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army defeated the Japanese troops in a joint operation with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army.

"The Chinese people totally lost heart in the face of the military power of Japan which had defeated two major powers, Qing and Russia. But today they are free from such old-fashioned thinking. They have achieved a mental release prior to the liberation of their territory," Chen shouted, embracing me. His tearful face at that time is still fresh in my memory. "Sung Ju, let's follow this road together for ever!" he said, grasping my hand. When he said this road he meant the joint struggle. Chen Han-zhang remained faithful to his word until he died in battle.

About a week after this battle we raided Emu county town together with the NSA units. Our force was victorious in this battle, too. Though this battle was not well known in the world, the sound of the gunfire rumbled for a long time.

## 6.7. Autumn in Xiaoshahe

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When we returned to Liangjiangkou, we summoned those who had not taken part in the expedition to south Manchuria which had started from Xiaoshahe, and reviewed our work during the six months since the foundation of the guerrilla army. Of course, the main part of the review was related to the expedition to south Manchuria.

The guerrillas were unanimous in recognizing that our armed ranks had grown and developed rapidly over the six months and that, in the course of this, they had come to believe that they were able to defeat the Japanese imperialists through a guerrilla war. In order to take the guerrilla struggle onto a new stage, at the review meeting we set our unit the following tasks:

First, to move the base of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army to the area of Wangqing.

Secondly, to conduct in greater depth the work with the Chinese anti-Japanese national salvation army.

Thirdly, to give correct guidance to the guerrilla struggle which had started to expand rapidly in east Manchuria, and hasten the establishment of the revolutionary base and firmly defend it.

The matter most heatedly discussed of these three matters was that of moving the operational base of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army to Wangqing. We discussed this one question repeatedly over several consecutive days with the military and political cadres who had come from Antu, Yanji and Helong.

Those from Antu objected to moving the operational base to Wangqing. They expressed their disapproval by saying: "The guerrilla army which has been founded in Antu should remain in Antu. Why should it go to Wangqing? If the guerrilla army goes to Wangqing, what will happen to Antu?" This was naive obstinacy permeated with regional feelings.

On the other hand, those from Yanji and Helong said that for the Antu unit, the seed of the guerrilla army, to move to the center of Jiandao where Koreans were concentrated was natural and timely both from the strategic point of view and from geographical requirements. They asserted that if the Antu unit, which had the strongest fighting power, went to Wangqing, there would also be a great change in the activities of the guerrilla units in the neighboring counties such as Yanji, Hunchun and Helong.

All those from Antu also admitted that Wangqing was the best place geographically. Above all else, Wangqing was good because it was near the homeland. The area of the six towns on the other side of the river had been greatly influenced by Jirin. So this area would be a reliable source of manpower and material support for the guerrilla struggle in the future. With the area of the six towns as our foothold, we could lead the revolution in the homeland to an upsurge. The masses in the area of Wangqing had



remarkable fighting ability and revolutionary spirit.

This they displayed to the full in the Battle of Qingshanli and the Battle of Fengwugou which can be regarded historically as the zenith of the armed struggle of the Independence Army. Wangqing was the base of operations for the political and military administration in northern area, and all the hundreds of the soldiers of the Independence Army and cadets who were operating there lived on food made of the grain grown by the people in the area.

But we could not move to Wangqing without making prior arrangements just because it was a good place. Therefore, day after day we deepened our discussion in two ways; whether we should establish the base in Antu County and conduct the guerrilla struggle by our own efforts, and whether we should continue our legitimate activities with the Chinese national salvation army, while surreptitiously building up the units of Koreans.

I considered that, although we would have to be somewhat restrained in our activities because of our joint action with the national salvation army, it was important to consolidate still further the legitimacy of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army which we had risked our lives to gain and show our Chinese brothers who regarded the Koreans in Manchuria as the second Japanese that our nation was neither the lackey nor the scout of the Japanese imperialists, and that the armed group of the Korean communists whom they regarded as being pro-Japanese were thoroughly anti-Japanese.

Finally we adopted the proposal that we should continue to defend the legitimacy of the guerrilla army at the same time as conducting activities together with the national salvation army for the time being and that we should also increase our armed ranks by expanding our influence through a practical struggle and then, after the ranks had expanded, unite them.

After we decided on this plan we selected people and sent them to various parts of east Manchuria. We sent them to Yanji, Helong, and Hunchun and also dispatched many able political workers to the units of the national salvation army in Luozigou. We also formed a flying squad and dispatched it to Wangqing. We left Kim Il Ryong in Antu. Our unit, which had amounted to well over a hundred people, was reduced to some 40 again.

As we frequently sent people from our unit to other counties like this, the cadres of the east Manchurian Ad hoc committee were pleased. On many occasions they had requested that, because ours was the main unit, we should choose good people from it and strengthen the guerrilla units in other areas.

Four months had passed since our unit left Xiaoshahe and started on its expedition to south Manchuria. The autumnal tints were growing richer and richer with each passing day in the rivers and streams, fields and mountains of Liangjiangkou. Fallen leaves lay everywhere and were covered with frost, warning of the approaching severe winter of the area. With the season changing and the weather getting cold, I was inwardly worried about my mother who was in her sickbed. But I only thought of her and did not dare to visit Xiaoshahe.

Although I eagerly desired to visit Tuqidian I continually put off meeting my mother. With the approach of the day of our departure for north Manchuria, Cha Gwang Su brought me a packet of herb medicines and advised me to visit Tuqidian, taking it with me. When I hesitated, he criticized me, saying that it was not like Kim Sung Ju to do so. He said that he would never again talk to me if I, their leader, neglected my mother.

So I left for Xiaoshahe.

Even as I walked with the package of herb medicines in my hand, I was anxious about one thing that my mother, upon seeing the medicines, might again reproach me for being concerned about unnecessary things. However, I thought that my mother would be delighted to hear that the medicines had been procured for her by Cha Gwang Su.

The one mal of hulled millet which I had bought for her when I was in Xiaoshahe must have run out a long time before. My mother being unable to work, I wondered how and with what money she was now maintaining the household. Saying that spiders do not weave a web in a living mouth, my mother had told me flatly not to think of my family and to assume that I had neither a mother nor any younger brothers. However, it was not so easy for a man to forget his mother who had given birth to him, and his younger brothers, and not to think of his family.

Walking towards my home with the packet of herb medicines, my steps for some reason gradually became heavier as I approached Xiaoshahe. It was true that I felt uneasy for fear that my mother's illness might have grown worse. However, what I felt most uncomfortable about was the fact that I had returned from south Manchuria without forming a united front with Commander Yang. I thought that my mother would be very sorry to learn of this.

Although my mother was gravely ill, she had urged me to go to south Manchuria. I think this was because she was pleased and satisfied over the fact that her son was going to collaborate with a man who had been his father's friend. My mother was not pleased with the fact that the young people were on bad terms with their seniors in the independence movement and found fault with their belief. The most important thing was what my mother's condition was like. When I was leaving home my mother could not digest even thin millet gruel like ordinary water. If she had not improved during my absence, she might be in a critical state by now and in greater pain than before. I could not know what had happened. Although I was quickening my pace, I could not dispel my anxiety. Even as I crossed the familiar log bridge in Tuqidian I could not rid myself of my uneasiness.

Each time I had crossed that bridge, my mother used to fling open the door of our home. My mother had a special sense by which she could tell which of her sons it was when she heard our footsteps. But, that day the door did not open, and no smoke was rising from the chimney, smoke indicating that my family was preparing supper; nor did I see my younger brothers going in and out of the kitchen with either firewood or a large bowl of dirty water.

Feeling such fear and tension that the blood in my heart seemed to freeze, I struggled to pull the door handle. No sooner had I opened the door than I almost fell down on the earthen verandah. My mother's bed was empty. The thought that I was too late flashed across my mind. Then, all of a sudden, Chol Ju came silently up to me and thumped me on the shoulder with all his might.

"Brother, why have you come only now?"

My younger brother was sobbing into my chest. He cried out bitterly in a hoarse voice, like a child.

Then Yong Ju, my youngest brother, appeared and took my left arm.

Dropping the packet of herb medicines on the earthen verandah, I hugged my two weeping brothers. Their sobs explained everything. So there was no need at all to ask whether my mother was alive or dead. I thought: "How can it be that this misfortune has happened during my absence? Couldn't our mother enjoy even the final happiness of seeing the face of her son at her last moment? My mother, who was born into a poor family and lived all her life in poverty! My mother who, at the thought of the misfortune of the ruined country, bit her lip and gulped down her tears even when her husband died! Our mother who has passed away after dedicating herself body and soul not for herself but for the happiness of others!"

My mother had always been afraid that her son would make a mistake in his great work, swayed by personal feelings. Possibly she had died so early for fear that she might be a burden to me in my making of the revolution.

Stroking with my hand the door post which my mother held when she had admonished me for the last time, I thought, how good it would be if I could see my mother once again in front of this door, even if I received a severer reprimand than that time.

"Chol Ju, didn't mother say anything at the last?"

To this question Mrs. Kim, who had entered the courtyard through the brushwood gate, answered instead of Chol Ju:

"This is what your mother said to me, '... if our son Sung Ju comes after my death, please treat him as I would have done. If he comes when the Japanese are still in our country and without having achieved Korea's independence, you must not allow him to open my grave. You should not even let him into the yard. It is not that I am boasting of my son, but Sung Ju will not return before the battle is won.' Having said this, she asked me to open the door. Then she gazed out at the log bridge over there for a long time."

What Mrs. Kim said seemed to echo from the distant "celestial country." But I could clearly understand the profound and touching meaning of each of her words, without missing anything.

Still holding my two younger brothers in my arms, I looked round at the log bridge. I tried to imagine my mother's longing for her son and how she had felt when she was passing away without being able to see her beloved son. But before I could pass through the gate of imagination, I burst out sobbing.

When I raised my head after weeping for a good while, I found Mrs. Kim looking up at my face with tearful eyes. The expression in her eyes was so tender and caring that I almost took her eyes for my mother's.

"Mrs. Kim, you must have had much trouble looking after my mother."

Thus I recovered from my heart-rending sorrow and pain to express my gratitude to Mrs. Kim for keeping my mother company during her last days.

Then Mrs. Kim began sobbing sorrowfully and said, "Don't mention it. I failed to come often. As I failed to look after her well she herself had to comb her hair back. Your younger brothers were away from home, being engaged in revolutionary work. One day your mother asked me to cut her hair short, like a boy's, saying that her scalp was itching.... But I did not dare to take scissors to her hair. How lovely and luxuriant her hair was! I said I could not do it. She entreated me to do as she asked. 'If my scalp did not itch, I would feel like flying high into the sky,' she said. So I cut her hair...." With this Mrs. Kim wept aloud.

It would have been better if I had not heard her story, I thought. I felt as if the story about her sad, last moments was tearing me apart inside. Mother had looked after her children all her life, but had they, who she had brought up in her lap, not the least filial piety to comb the hair of their mother in her death bed?

When I was living in Fusong, I saw a boy of my age carrying his sick mother on his back from Nandianzi to hospital in Xiaonanmen, perspiring profusely. When we saw him, we all said that he was a filial boy. Mrs. Kim's story for some reason reminded me of that boy dripping with perspiration.

I had nothing to say, even if I was to blame for being an undutiful son compared with that boy. What had I done for my mother until I was over the age of 20? As a child I invited mother to sit in the warmest part of the room and breathed on her cold hands when she returned from the well, to warm them. In the morning I used to feed the hens and fetch water in a pail to help mother.

I did nothing special for my mother after I embarked on the revolution. The old saying that there is no upward love even though there is downward love may have been meant for me. That there is no upward love is a truly wise remark. I have never heard of sons and daughters taking care of their parents with filial piety exceeding the love their parents showed them.

"Chol Ju, didn't mother leave any word with you?"

Thus I asked Chol Ju again, wondering what might have been the last words she left. Chol Ju replied in a

husky voice, rubbing his eyelid with the palm of his hand, "She told us to help you, brother, well. If we help you well and become revolutionaries like you, she will rest peacefully in her grave, mother said."

This shows how she expended all her spiritual strength only for the revolution until her last moment.

My younger brothers and I visited mother's grave at once.

Mother's grave covered with pieces of grass was on a hillside with a lonely old elm.

I took off my army cap and, with my brothers, bowed before her grave.

I murmured, "Mother, I have come. Pardon your unfilial son. I called on you, mother, coming belatedly from south Manchuria."

As I knelt, murmuring, Chol Ju suddenly knelt down and picked up some pieces of turf. "What are you doing?" I said, looking blankly at my brother, a strange thought occurring to me. Then Chol Ju, weeping, silently buried in the grave the packet of medicines I had brought from Liangjiangkou.

His silent act finally touched off the sorrow smoldering in my heart. I wept sorrowfully for a longtime, kneeling down by the grave. I had become an ordinary man from a revolutionary. I felt as if all things in the world had been transformed into the grave and all matters had been compressed into a tragedy, the loss of my mother. But the blue autumn sky over our heads looked down merrily as normal. I wondered how the sky could remain so indifferent to our grief.

So I lost my dear mother. The tragic event happened in the dismal summer of 1932, twenty-two years after the loss of the country. If the country had not been ruined, she would have lived longer. Mother's illness was caused by the hardships in her life which followed in the wake of the ruin of the country.

Mother went to untold trouble for her sons. If the filial piety I showed mother was taken for ten, mother's love for me was more than ten thousand.

Once four or five members of the Young Communist League and I were surrounded by the enemy when I was conducting underground activities in Fusong. We had to leave the walled city, even if it meant fighting out of the encirclement, but we had no weapons. So I asked mother whether she could fetch some weapons from our comrades in Wanlihe.

She readily agreed, saying, "I can do that. I will fetch them."

She went and returned home safely with two pistols from our comrades in Wanline, who had loaded and cocked them as she had asked. Mother had boldly approached the gate of the walled town, carrying on her head a wooden basin containing the two pistols hidden in some ribs of beef. When the police standing by the gate pointed at the basin and asked her, "What's that?" she replied with composure, "It's

beef." The police then only lifted up the sheet of paper covering the basin to see inside and let her pass through the gate. I was surprised to see the loaded and cocked guns.

"Mother, you might have got into serious trouble. Why did you have the guns loaded?" "I asked your comrades to load them. If the police had tried to search the basin, I would have fired at them. Two or three men at most would approach me, I supposed. I decided that if they came at me I would shoot at least one to death at the risk of my life."

Mother's remark was pervaded with a noble spirit which could not be fathomed by our experience and way of thinking. It was a manifestation of her courage and genuine love attended by an understanding of and sympathy with her son's undertaking.

At one time we were living in a rented room in Ma Chun Uk's house in Jiuantu. One day when our comrades were cleaning a pistol one of them fired it accidentally and wounded my mother in the leg. The bullet wound put her life in danger and required good treatment.

She was confined to bed. If someone asked, she told him that when she had gone out to throw away some dirty water she had fallen and had broken her leg. She did not show anyone her wound and laid in bed, covered by a quilt and being secretly nursed by uncle Hyong Gwon. But she did not think ill of us or show any sign of displeasure at the man who had accidentally fired the pistol.

The man who had fired it by accident felt so guilty that he even attempted to kill himself. On hearing of this she reproached him, saying, "That will not do. The accident happened because you are no good at handling a gun. But I was lucky. To think that a man attempts to kill himself because of such a trifle! Discard such an idea and think how you can keep the matter secret. If the secret leaks out, great trouble will befall you and this house. And you will fail in your cause.

More than the bullet wound in her leg, she feared the fact that we had guns might be made known to the police.

Ma Chun Uk's family, too, never spoke of the accidental shooting to others. Mother's noblest trait was that she loved my comrades like her own sons. Mother treated them like me. When they called at my house, she gave them funds for their work. She took this money from the money she earned by sewing and washing. The workers at a timber mill and seasonal laborers who went about to dig up ginseng often requested her to make clothes for them from some cotton cloth they had brought. She earned 70 or 80 fen a day making clothes for them. At times she even earned one yuan a day.

Although she found it difficult to live she was liberal with her money. Having set aside money for the purchase of provisions, travel expenses and house rent, she did not stint the money she earned. When my comrades came, she would buy several dishes of noodles and several kilogram's of pork for them and serve them with Chinese meat dumplings or soup with wheat flakes in it; she would also give them funds for their work.

When my comrades said, "Madam, your family, too, does not lead a comfortable life. If you give us all the money, how will you manage to get along?" she replied, "A man does not die because he hasn't money but because he is mortal."

Even when my comrades stayed at our home for several months, she was never displeased and she always treated them like her sons. So those who, while engaged in the youth movement in Manchuria, stayed at my home for several days did not call my mother "Sung Ju's mother" but "our mother."

It is no exaggeration to say that she cooked meals for revolutionaries all her life. When father was alive, she was always busy cooking for the patriots, never taking a holiday. When we were living in Linjiang, she prepared meals for our guests every night. When we were about to fall asleep under our quilts, father's friends would troop in, saying jokingly that it was no time to sleep peacefully and they slept in the front room. Then she would get up and again cook meals for them.

Mother herself took part in the revolution while looking after the revolutionaries. She started her revolutionary activities when we were living in Fusong. After joining the Paeksan regional branch of the South Manchurian Women's Education Federation, she conducted enlightenment work among women and children. She became engaged in the work of the Women's Association after father's death.

Mother's development into someone who conducted the revolution from someone who helped it is ascribable not only to my father's and my influence, but also to Lee Gwan Rin's influence to a great extent. When Lee Gwan Rin was living with us, she persuaded my mother to participate in the affairs of the South Manchurian Women's Education Federation.

If mother had shown me only maternal affection, I would have failed to recall her with such warm affection. The love she showed me was not simply motherly love. It was true revolutionary affection with which she regarded me as the son of the nation rather than her own son and awakened me to the need to give priority to loyalty to the country over filial piety towards my parents. Her whole life served as a textbook for me in implanting in me a true view on life and on the revolution.

If my father could be compared to a teacher who implanted in me the indomitable revolutionary spirit of fighting through the generations and achieving national liberation, my mother was a kind teacher who taught me that a man who has embarked on the revolution should strive to the end to achieve his set aim without being swayed by temporary sentiments or whims.

If love between a parent and child is blind, it cannot be called solid love. Only when the spirit underlying the love is sound and noble can love be eternal and sacred. The spirit which underlay the love between my mother and I and my filial piety towards her in the days of the nation's ruin was patriotism. For the sake of this patriotism she renounced her right to call on her sons to practise their filial duties towards her.

I left Tuquidian valley without even setting up a tombstone by mother's grave. It was after liberation that a tombstone inscribed with my mother's name was set up by the grave. The people of Antu County set up a tombstone in her memory and inscribed the names of her three sons on it.

My mother's remains, together with those of my father, were brought to and buried in Mangyongdae in accordance with their wishes after the liberation of the country. I failed to see to the graves of my parents for a long time, even after my triumphal return home, the situation in the country being complicated and giving me too much work to do. In the mountains and fields of Manchuria in which we had spent our entire youth there were buried not only my parents but also numerous comrades-in-arms who fell in action going through the flames of the revolution together with me. In addition their bereaved children were there. I decided that I would not move the remains of my parents before I had found the remains of my late comrades-in-arms and brought them and their bereaved children to the liberated homeland.

Chang Chol Ho came to me and asked me to have the remains of my parents brought to the homeland.

He advised me to choose a suitable place for their graves in Mangyongdae, saying that he would move their graves. Among those who knew my family in my days in Manchuria, Chang Chol Ho was the only one who knew where my parents' graves were. He must have gone to a lot of trouble to move the remains of my parents.

While I was waging the armed struggle, the enemy searched persistently for the graves of my parents to exhume them. But the people in Fusong and Antu deceived the enemy and defended and tended the graves of my parents until the day of national liberation. Twice a year, on the 105th day after the winter solstice and on Harvest Moon Day, Kang Je Ha, my teacher from Whasung Uisuk School, and his family visited my father's grave in Yangdicun, taking an offering of food with them, held a memorial service and cut the grass on the grave.

After mother's death I became the guardian of my two younger brothers and the head of the family. But the revolution did not allow me to play the part of a guardian and head of family. I left with a heavy heart for desolate north Manchuria, leaving my younger brothers weeping in sorrow in Xiaoshahe where the reeds swayed plaintively in the wind, giving them no promise to return.



## 6.8. On the Heights of Luozigou

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The entry of the Japanese troops into the town of Antu was close at hand. The pro-Japanese landlords had prepared flags to welcome the Japanese. The national salvation army could no longer stay in Liangjiangkou. Regiment Commander Meng was ordered to retreat in the direction of the Luozigou and Wangqing areas, where there were grasslands surrounded by mountains.

In view of the rapidly changing situation we decided to leave Antu with the national salvation army troops. This decision was taken at a meeting of the committee for work with soldiers convened at Liangjiangkou. Our general plan was to shift our operational base to Wangqing, but we decided for the time being to encamp in Luozigou where the retreating national salvation army units were assembling and continue our work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units. The troops of Commander Yu, too, withdrew from Antu to Luozigou.

While we were busy preparing for our departure for north Manchuria, my brother Chol Ju came to see me in Liangjiangkou.

"Brother, I would like to go with your unit. Without you I cannot live in Tuqidian any more," he said before I could ask him why he had come.

I could understand what he meant when he said he wanted to go with our unit. It must have been unbearable for a sensitive boy of his age to be living off someone else in a remote village in Xiaoshahe after the death of his mother.

"If you leave Tuqidian, what will become of Yong Ju? The boy won't be able to bear it alone."

"The embarrassment is too much for me to endure. I feel that the two of us are hangers-on. If only Yong Ju stays with the villagers, it will be better, I think."

While I thought that he was right in what he said, I could not agree to his request. He was 16, so he might come with the unit and serve as a soldier, provided he had a gun. He was big and sturdy for his age. But still he was no more than a boy and might be a burden to the guerrilla unit. Moreover, he was shouldering a heavy responsibility in improving the work of the Young Communist League in the Antu area.

"If you ask again in two or three years' time, I will readily agree. But I cannot allow it now. Even if your situation is difficult and you feel lonely, endure it for a few years more. While working as a farm-hand or doing seasonal labor, work hard to promote the work of the Young Communist League. Underground work is no less important than the armed struggle, so you mustn't neglect it. Look to the Young Communist League and then, when it is time, join the revolutionary army."

I soothed and humored him to convince him. Then I took him to an inn by a pond. We entered a room. It was bleak in the room with the paper flaps at the edges of the window frames making dreary sounds in the cold draught of air. I ordered wine and some food. We were served with two plates of frozen bean curd and a bottle of wine. Seeing them, my brother's eyes filled with tears. Knowing that I was sober in my habits, he seemed to realize the significance of drink.

"Chol Ju, forgive me for refusing your request. Do you think that I don't want to take you along? Because I must leave you behind, I feel my heart is breaking. But Chol Ju, we must part here, though it is sad."

I said this under the influence of the wine; I could hardly have said it otherwise. But I could not suppress the tears welling up in my eyes. I got up to leave, fearing that Chol Ju might see my tears, but he rose from the table, too, leaving his half-finished drink behind.

"Brother, I understand."

With this, he came up to me from behind and silently took my hands in his for a moment. That was how I parted with my brother, never to see him again. Whenever I recollect the dismal and dreary autumn by the pond, I deeply regret that I did not hold his hands longer and more warmly that day when he quietly took my hands for a moment before leaving. Looking back now, it was too sad a parting. If I had granted his request at that time, my brother might not have died so young, before reaching 20. His life was but a flicker of light.

As soon as he reached ten years of age, Chol Ju began to follow the revolutionary organizations. In Fusong he was in charge of the propaganda work of the Saenal Children's Union, and after going to Xiaoshahe he worked as the secretary of the district committee of the Young Communist League. After parting with me in Liangjiangkou, he trained many Young Communist League members and sent them to join the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

He took on the difficult task of working with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units of his own free will. He took part in the assault on the town of Dadianzi with the soldiers of a Chinese anti-Japanese unit. The Chinese anti-Japanese unit under the command of Du Yi-shun with which my brother had established contact fought well against the Jiandao punitive detachment of the Japanese army, it was reported.

After that Chol Ju assumed the heavy responsibility of working as the revolutionary organization's operational chief for work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units in Antu and worked with the anti-Japanese unit commanded by Xu Kui-wu which was stationed at Lupai, Zhangzaicun in Fuyandong, Yanji County. Xu Kui-wu was a perverse and stiff-necked leader who proclaimed himself to be an anti-Japanese champion but was hostile to all the Korean communists.

At first, he had been on friendly terms with Koreans. But after the members of the Anti-Japanese

Women's Association in Fuyandong had rescued a Korean girl, a member of the Young Communist League, who had been detained by him as a concubine, he began to turn away from the Korean communists. She had been detained when she went to his unit with a group of entertainers to give a propaganda performance. Once she was captured by the man, no woman could get off unhurt unless she satisfied his desires. Xu Kui-wu had often used such means to change his women.

After the girl member of the Young Communist League had been rescued by the Women's Association, the Koreans could no longer maintain contact with his unit. Even those who had been on good terms with him would not go near him. Xu Kui-wu, maddened because of his unsatisfied lust, made his men maltreat and suppress Koreans. Then my brother Chol Ju visited the unit of Xu Kui-wu, accompanied by Comrade Lim Chun Chu, a licensed herb doctor.

"I've heard, sir, that you are seriously ill, so I've come to inquire after your health," said Chol Ju courteously in fluent Chinese. But Xu Kui-wu did not deign to look at him. He hated the sight of Koreans and did not want to talk to them.

"I've come with an able doctor to cure your illness. Please allow him to treat you." When Chol Ju said this, he became more interested and said that he would try it if the doctor was skilled. After a few days' acupuncture treatment by Comrade Lim Chun Chu, he said with great delight that he had been suffering from migraine, but doctor Lim had driven the motley ghosts out of his head.

Chol Ju took the opportunity to stay on in the unit of Xu and work openly with the Chinese anti-Japanese soldiers. In later days Xu Kui-wu, having joined our route army, was appointed commander of the tenth regiment and fought courageously to the end. Previously he had led a decadent life saying that he could not live even for a single day without opium and women. But after joining the revolutionary army, he was even admitted to the Communist Party.

When I, on behalf of the unit, congratulated him on his admission to the party, he said, "Comrade Commander, today I am thinking of your brother. But for Chol Ju, I would never have seen this day." Then he told me of how Chol Ju had come to him with Comrade Lim Chun Chu and cured him of his illness and how he had persevered in leading him back onto the path of the anti-Japanese struggle.

In June 1935 Chol Ju died heroically in the battle around Chechangzi. I was at Lake Jingbohu when I received word of his death. That is probably why even now whenever I see a large river or lake, I think of my brother. After Chol Ju was killed in battle, my youngest brother, Young Ju, was completely without family. After the family of Kim Jong Ryong had gone to the Chechangzi guerrilla base, he wandered from place to place earning a living by baby-sitting and running errands for other people.

The Kwangtung Army was taking into custody anyone related to me in order to use them to bring me to "allegiance," so my brother had to roam aimlessly, under a false name and by concealing his identity, about cities and villages all over the three provinces of Manchuria and even in China proper. He once stayed in Beijing for a while. After liberation I saw some documentary material concerning the search for

my brother in the archives left behind by the Japanese police.

When he was working at the Xinjing brewery, he became so homesick that he returned to the homeland and spent about three months there. He turned up in Mangyongdae wearing a black suit and white shoes. His appearance was so dashing that our grandfather even wondered if his youngest grandson had got a high public post and made his fortune.

My brother wanted to set the minds of his grandparents at rest, so he told them he was attending university in Changchun. Since the police had a dragnet cast for him, and photographs of him had been distributed, he could not stay at Mangyongdae but stopped with my aunt. Then he returned to Manchuria.

After leaving Liangjiangkou, the 40 men of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army moved northward in the direction of Nanhutou along mountain ridges, via Dunhua and Emu. On the way we stopped at Fuerhe where I had spent my days as a "farmhand" and conducted political enlightenment work among the inhabitants. Also, our unit fought a fierce battle with a convoy of the Japanese army that was constructing the Dunhua-Tumen railway near Haerbaling, Dunhua County.

After that battle I met Ko Jae Bong at Toudaoliangzi in the same county. He had left Sidaohuanggou where the enemy was riding roughshod over the people and come to Toudaoliangzi, where he was teaching at the peasants' school run by the underground organization. It was only 7 miles from Toudaoliangzi to the county town of Dunhua. At Toudaoliangzi I met his mother, too.

We distributed to all the houses there the flour we had captured in the battle with the Japanese army convoy. Then we prepared some food with it and had a meal with the people. The cotton cloth we had captured was handed over to the peasants' school to make uniforms for the pupils. Leaving Toudaoliangzi, our unit went farther north and conducted enlightenment work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units near Guandi and in the Nanhutou area.

Then we moved into the Wangqing area, where we studied the activities of the party and Young Communist League bodies and mass organizations and made the acquaintance of people from all walks of life. This might well be called foundation work for establishing an operational base in Wangqing.

In Wangqing, too, we did not relax the work with the Chinese anti-Japanese units. I went to Lishugou to meet Guan Bao-quan's unit which had been attacked by a special detachment led by Lee Gwang for a few rifles. But Guan Bao-quan had abandoned the anti-Japanese cause and gone away.

Frankly speaking, I had decided that, when I met Battalion Commander Guan, I would apologize to him on behalf of our comrades in Wangqing and discuss ways to conduct a joint struggle with him and thereby resolve the temporary discord and antagonism that had been created between the Korean and Chinese armed units.

Although Guan Bao-quan had disappeared, I sent a message in the hope of meeting the other people who

remained behind. Some 100 men of the Chinese unit came to us to see what kind of a unit was the Kim Il Sung unit which had smashed the Japanese troops at Dunhua county town. I admitted to them that it had been an unfriendly deed on the part of our Wangqing special detachment to have acted so outrageously against the soldiers of the unit of Commander Guan for the purpose of obtaining weapons, and spoke frankly about the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples and the mission of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units. My speech was received well by the men of the Chinese unit.

A commanding officer named Kao Shan said after my speech that he had been thinking of abandoning the anti-Japanese struggle like Guan Bao-quan, but that he would follow the right path from then. After that he fought well on the anti-Japanese front as he had pledged to. Our relations with the Chinese anti-Japanese unit in Wangqing, which had been a great headache, were settled amicably in this way.

With the object of eliminating the Left deviation revealed in the work with the Chinese anti-Japanese units and bringing more of these units into the anti-Japanese united front, we called a meeting of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee in Luozigou. At that time the national salvation army units concentrated in Dongning county town were preparing to retreat to China proper through the Soviet Union.

We decided that the national salvation army must by all means be stopped from fleeing across the border and that they should join us in the anti-Japanese front, otherwise, our guerrilla struggle might face grave difficulties; the enemy's "punitive" forces that were scattered everywhere to destroy the Chinese anti-Japanese units would be concentrated on our guerrilla force that was no more than a few hundred strong and might destroy at a stroke our armed force that was still in its cradle.

The balance of forces could turn decisively in favor of the enemy. At the time the Japanese army was stepping up its offensive against the anti-Japanese armed forces everywhere with the intention of occupying all the small towns in Manchuria. They even sought to seize all the county towns.

The meeting was attended by some 40 people, including me and Lee Gwang, Chen Han-zhang, Wang Run-cheng, Hu Jin-min and Zhou Bao-zhong. Lee Gwang and I represented our country and Chen Hanzhang, Wang Run-cheng, Hu Jin-min and Zhou Bao-zhong, China. The main item on the agenda concerned the measures to stop the desertion of the national salvation army and strengthen the anti-Japanese united front.

The meeting first discussed the mistake of the Wangqing guerrilla unit. The mistake had resulted from the Kim Myong San incident, which had happened in the Wangqing unit. Kim Myong San was a Korean who had served in the "guard corps" in the days of the Zhang Xue-liang army before defecting to the Wangqing guerrilla unit with six Chinese soldiers after the September 18 incident. Originally a master hunter, he was a good combatant. When he defected to them, the comrades of the Wangqing unit were overjoyed, welcoming his arrival as an unexpected fortune.

But once one of the six Chinese men was sent on a scouting mission to an enemy-controlled area. He ate a plate of fried buns in a cook shop at Dakanzi without paying for it, having no money. After returning to

the unit, he reported the fact honestly. The Left elements in the leadership of the county party committee labeled the Chinese soldier as an evil man who brought disgrace on the guerrilla unit and shot him to death. The number of Chinese guerrillas executed in Wangqing on the decision of the military department of the county party committee was more than ten.

Frightened by the atmosphere of terror, the other Chinese men who had defected with Kim Myong San deserted from the unit and joined the unit of Guan Bao-quan stationed near Macun. They spread the rumor that the guerrillas were killing Chinese at random. Alarmed at this, Guan Bao-quan moved his unit to a deep mountain recess a long way from the area where the guerrilla unit was stationed and watched for an opportunity to kill Korean communists. On the anniversary of the October Revolution, the people of Wangqing gathered to celebrate with primitive weapons such as spears and sticks in their hands. They carried such crude weapons in order to create a festive atmosphere.

Thinking wrongly that the people were gathering to attack his unit, Guan Bao-quan flared up and had many Koreans shot to death. Among the dead were Kim Un Sik who, as chief of staff under Guan Bao-quan, had been enlightening the national salvation army men and promoting the united front movement, and other political workers including Hong Hae Il and Won Hong Gwon who had been dispatched from the guerrilla unit. It was a counterattack which, as the saying goes, "Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind."

Afterwards, Guan Bao-quan's men who had renounced their struggle, began to go by twos and threes to the area under enemy rule. The Wangqing guerrilla unit, on the pretext of stopping the surrender of the men of Guan's unit, disarmed them. Then, finally, they killed a few of the unit who had surrendered on the ground that they refused to give up their arms meekly.

With this incident as the start the members of Guan's unit went on a war of vengeance against Korean communists without discrimination. Whenever they met young Koreans who they imagined were involved in the communist movement, they caught them and shot them. The Wangqing guerrilla unit, which was only a few months old, suffered a great loss after being surrounded by the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese unit.

The tactlessness and indiscretion they revealed in their relations with the Chinese anti-Japanese unit rapidly undermined Korea-China relations and created an insurmountable pit in the way of the Korean revolution.

The people attending the meeting mercilessly criticized the commanders of the Wangqing guerrilla unit who had spoilt relations with the Chinese anti-Japanese units without being aware of the grave nature of their mistake and who were still insisting on taking reprisals. After a long debate they reached a common understanding on the principles and rules of action to be abided by in the work with the national salvation army.

The next question we discussed at the meeting concerned how to keep the national salvation army in

Manchuria and induce it to continue with the anti-Japanese struggle.

At the time this army was tens of thousands strong, and yet they considered themselves incapable of standing up to the Japanese army. Taking at face value the story of the "invincibility" of the Japanese army spread by the Japanese themselves, they believed there was no force on earth which could match Japan and no army equal to the Japanese army, and they virtually gave up fighting. All they cared about was how to avoid being killed or captured by the Japanese troops and how to escape to safety beyond Shanhaiguan where there was as yet no spark of war.

The Japanese army intended to concentrate its attack on the forces of Wang De-lin in Jiandao. Once their attack started, it seemed that Luozigou would fall into their hands sooner or later.

Even steel, when it is rusted, is useless. Man is not steel; he is weaker and more liable to change. But it can be said that man is much stronger than steel. Steel cannot stop itself from rusting on its own, but man is capable of controlling and adjusting changes in his thoughts by himself. The question lies not in wavering but in how the wavering is overcome. Man is called the lord of all creation precisely because he has the unique ability to adjust, and revolutionaries are looked upon as great people because they are strong-willed, creative and selfless people who are capable of producing the things they need from nothing and turning an adverse tide to their advantage.

I was quite at a loss what to do. Even if the sky should fall and the earth cave in, the armed struggle had to be continued. But the men who remained with me were all rosy-cheeked youths of under 20. It could be said that I myself was still a greenhorn. When we were moving about in Jirin, writing leaflets and making speeches, we had all been heroes and great men. But here in this place we were all beginners. When we were conducting underground work, we had had many devices to resort to.

But in a deserted place without our tens of thousands of allied troops and where there were only the remnants of a defeated army, finding a way out for the 18 men was a tough problem. The stragglers in the upper house were going to become bandits, but that was something we could never do. Some countermeasure could have been worked out if we had only gone somewhere where the masses were organized, but it was about 50 miles to a Korean settlement and every valley on the way was infested with Japanese troops, so we were told.

The revolution is tough! I thought to myself. We had expected that our revolution would succeed in only two or three years, so why was it now at the edge of such a precipice? Would our ranks that had started from Antu in proud array with a flourish of bugles end their advance here on these desolate hills?

How many meals I had missed and how many sleepless nights I had passed to form this unit! Hadn't I been absent from the bedside of my mother at the hour of her death and hadn't I parted with my beloved brothers with a broken heart for the sake of forming this unit? Hadn't Cha Gwang Su and Choe Chang Gol laid down their young lives for these ranks? Cha Gwang Su had been killed while out on a scouting mission in Dunhua. Looking back on the path behind me and thinking of the path ahead, I felt my heart

as heavy as if it was weighed down by the whole mass of the Earth.

I was sitting in front of the fireplace with my mind assailed by a thousand thoughts when old man Ma came up to me and asked quietly:

"Are you the person in charge?"

"Yes."

"So why are you in tears, Commander?"

"I think it's because I've come in the face of the snow and wind," I answered vaguely, to avoid an explanation. In fact, I was weeping from my anxiety about our future, not because of the snow and wind.

The old man stroked his long beard, his eyes fixed on me for a while.

"You seem to be worried about those ruffians in the upper house, but don't be disheartened. I'll take you to a good place tonight. Rest there for a few days. Study and eat there for about 20 days, and you'll find yourselves as bright as Zhu-ge Liang, I assure you." In the dead of night when we were fast asleep, old man Ma awoke us all and fed us with meat dumplings he had prepared for New Year's Day. Then he guided us to a mountain hut all of 12 miles away. The hut was located in dense forest and was invisible even to airplanes. Its only room was barely wide enough to spread a reed mat, and there was a shed attached to it. In the shed we found frozen roe deer and hares the old man had caught, food grain such as wheat and maize, and a hand mill.

"The room is rather small, but spread it with straw and it'll be good enough for you to get through your difficulties, though it might be a little uncomfortable. Shelter here and recover your strength. I'll come and tell you the news from the outside world once every few days. When you want to leave here, I'll act as your guide."

The old man said this as he made a fire to heat the room, and we all wept, feeling a lump in our throats out of our gratitude. We were lucky to have met such a kind and warmhearted man as old Ma on the bleak and deserted heights. All our men jested that "Heaven" was keeping its eye on us. We stayed in the mountain hut for over a fortnight, resting, studying and hunting roe deer.

There were many books of the old man's in the hut. They were stories, political books and biographies of great men. Although the old man earned a living by hunting in the mountains, he was a man of great learning. We vied with each other to read the books, and all the books eventually became tattered. We made it a rule to relate our impressions or hold a debate on a set subject after reading a book. We all became enthusiastic in our arguments, quoting propositions from Marx and Lenin.

We learned by heart several propositions of the founders of Marxism and some excellent passages from



famous writers. In those days, whenever young people got together, they even criticized Sun Yat-sen. It was the fashion of the day to worship someone and also to criticize a great man who was held in high esteem by all. Everyone was his own master. Everyone thought of himself as a genius, a hero and a great man. In that hut we held earnest discussions about our future course of action, too. Should we break up and go home? Should we go to the Korean villages in Wangqing and gather the special detachments there, so that we could expand our unit with them and continue the struggle?

We all resolved to continue our struggle, except for a comrade from Hailong who said that he did not think he would be able to continue the armed struggle with us because he was weak. It was true, he was not strong enough physically to engage in the guerrilla struggle. We did not cavil at his candid confession or call it into question.

"If you cannot go, it is better that you say so outright. No one can be forced to make the revolution. The revolution is something which a man cannot be made to do by coercion or threat. Therefore, if you wish to go, you may go, and if you would like to continue with the revolution, you should stay on and fight," I told the men, making clear my view as the commander of the unit. I gave them all time to decide for themselves. A few days later we sat together again to hear their decision. Of our unit 16 men pledged to go on with the revolution, even if it might cost them their lives.

But the other two asked for permission to leave the unit. The comrade from Hailong wanted to be sent back home, being too weak to continue the armed struggle. But he asked us not to regard him as a coward for all that. Because he could not go with us on account of his physical frailty, we could not ignore his request. I told him: if you find it hard to follow us, then go home. We won't blame you for that. But you must not go looking as you do now. Your clothes are in tatters and you look like a beggar. You cannot go home to your parents looking so dreadful, can you? You may go, but go first to a Korean settlement to obtain travel expenses and get yourself some decent clothes.

The other comrade said he wanted to go to the Soviet Union and get some education. I told him:

"If you go to the Soviet Union without any sponsor, you cannot tell if they will send you to school or make you work. You may as well go to Wangqing and work there for a while, and then when you have made contact with the other side, leave with a warrant from an organization. Isn't that wiser?"

The two accepted my advice and said they would do as I had said.

After that we left the Luozigou heights safely guided by the old man Ma. He took us up to Zhuanjiaolou in Wangqing County. He really was a kind, considerate and tenderhearted old man. A few years later, at the height of the guerrilla struggle when we were striking out mercilessly at the enemy from the guerrilla bases, I visited the Luozigou heights with some cloth and provisions. But the old man Ma was already dead and gone.

Even now the image of old Ma remains in my memory as vividly as it did 60 years ago. Once I told our

writers to create an opera or a play about the old man. The story of the old man is a good subject matter for an opera or a play.

It could be called a miracle of all miracles that we escaped death from hunger and the cold and were not killed by bullets in the remote mountain recess of Luozigou that winter. Still now I often ask myself what was the force that made us rise to our feet at that time, what was the force that kept us from being defeated or dropping out of the fighting ranks and made us continue to uphold the banner of the anti-Japanese struggle until we were victorious.

Every time I answer my own question full of pride, "It was a sense of responsibility for the revolution." If it were not for that sense of responsibility, we would have remained cowering in the snow, never to rise again. At that time I was conscious that if we should be frustrated, Korea could never rise from the dead. If I had thought there would be people to save Korea after we had died, we would have been buried under the snow on the heights of Luozigou, never to rise again.

## 7.1. The Home Base

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In mid-February of 1933, guided by old man Ma, we marched towards the Wangqing guerrilla zone. When they reached the road, the 18 guerrillas, who had spent the long tedious hours of the last 20 days in the mountain hut in constant discussions of political affairs, lengthened their stride in high spirits. Although the traces of the winter-long trials they had undergone still lingered about them, the marching column was lively and moved at a brisk pace.

It is said that the inhabitants of Wangqing, if asked nowadays what are the distinctive features of their district, will remark wittily that the place is noted for the long speeches made by their county chief, the long primary school buildings, and the long valleys. This comment must be the brainchild of a local humorist fond of cracking jokes to express his feeling of attachment to the place.

If such a witty phrase had occurred to me at the time in 1933 when my comrades-in-arms asked me what Wangqing was like, I could have given them a chance to laugh following their terrible hardships. But I merely replied that it was a place where many exiles had settled. By exiles I meant revolutionaries.

In Wangqing the anti-Japanese independence struggle had raged more fiercely than in the other counties of the Jiandao area, even from the early years. It was in this county that Hong Bom Do, a famous veteran commander of the volunteers army, dealt a crushing blow to the Japanese "punitive" forces, and it was here too that Korea's independence Army under the northern political and military administration headed by So Il, Kim Jwa Jin and Lee Porn Sok had established its base. It was in this county that Lee Tong Hwi set about the training of cadres for the Independence Army.

The vigorous activity of the Independence Army and the frequent appearance of independence fighters in this area had awoken the inhabitants' national consciousness and stimulated them to fight for their country against the Japanese.

As the tide of the Independence Army movement receded and the independence fighters withdrew into the Maritime Province of Siberia and Soviet-Manchurian border districts, the leadership of the national liberation struggle in the Wangqing area gradually passed into the hands of the communists, and the main trend of the struggle shifted from nationalism to communist movement. On the patriotic soil which had been fertilized by the blood of the nationalists, the forerunners of a new ideological trend developed the communist movement.

For all this, the motive force of the struggle remained basically unchanged. The Overwhelming majority of the nationalists became converts to the communist movement. The ranks of the communist movement thus included not only those who had, from the outset, taken the communist path, but also those nationalists who had gradually come to accept communism. It would have been impossible to launch the

communist movement if it had been restricted to people free of all political taint. This is the principle of inheritance and innovation, one of the principles which have guided us in the development of the revolution. Communist ideology is the acme of human thought, and the communist movement is the highest stage of the revolutionary movements, but it would be a mistake to think, for this reason, that the communist movement starts and develops from a tabula rasa.

In any case, Wangqing was famous for its long record of anti-Japanese struggle, for the favorable mood among its masses and its firm political footing. It was also located near the six towns in the northern frontier region of Korea, and adjacent to Yanji and Longjing, which were the centers of the patriotic cultural enlightenment movement in the Jiandao area. These circumstances presented various advantages. The saying has it that deep pools attract fish, and this place naturally attracted many revolutionaries.

In those days people used to say; those who wish to work their way through university should go to Japan, those who wish to eat bread should go to the Soviet Union, and those who wish to work for the revolution should go to Jiandao. This reflected the thinking of the young people of Korea in those years, when they regarded east Manchuria as the theatre of battle for national liberation and aspired to join the struggle there.

Going to Jiandao was as dangerous as approaching the opening of a pillbox, but we marched straight towards the pillbox without hesitation in order to forward the triumph of the revolution.

We marched with light steps towards the guerrilla zone, not because a sumptuous meal or comfortable beds awaited us, but because there we would find the comrades and people with whom we would share life and death, the ground which we would tread with the step of freedom, and a land of our own, which defied the ordinances of the Japanese Emperor and the decrees of the governor-general.

By February 1933, when we advanced towards Zhuanjiaolou under the guidance of old man Ma, the work of developing guerrilla bases in many parts of east Manchuria had been almost finished, and they had begun to demonstrate the effect they could have.

To establish the guerrilla bases and use them as a source of strength to launch a powerful armed struggle was one of the major policies adopted by the Korean communists at their winter meeting at Mingyuegou. At this meeting we had stated that in order to launch a campaign of armed resistance we must establish our positions, which was simply an expression of our intention to develop guerrilla bases.

At the meeting at Xiaoshahe in the spring of 1932 we raised the matter again, as a separate item on the agenda, and discussed seriously how we could develop the guerrilla bases in the form of liberated areas - a matter which had already been discussed at the Mingyuegou meeting the previous winter. After the meeting at Xiaoshahe, we sent able leaders to different parts of the Jiandao area and increased the tempo of revolutionary training for the rural villages. This was the first stage in our work of establishing the guerrilla bases.

The revolutionized rural areas had served as temporary bases for the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army pending the establishment of the guerrilla zones, and they provided the ground on which to develop the guerrilla bases. One guerrilla base after another had been developed in the places we had selected as most suitable at the Mingyuegou meeting in winter, that is, in the mountainous areas around Antu, Yanji, Wangqing, Helong and Wangougou, Hailangou, Shirengou, Sandaowan, Xiaowangqing, Gayahe, Yaoyinggou, Yulangcun, Dahuanggou and Yantonglazi. All this was achieved through the titanic efforts of the Korean communists and at the cost of their blood in a fierce struggle against the enemy.

The blood spilt and the efforts dedicated to the establishment of these guerrilla bases in the area along the Tuman River by the Korean communists Yang Song Ryong, Lee Kwang, Jang Ryong San, Choe Chun Guk, Ju Jin, Park Tong Gun, Park Kil, Kim Li Hwan, Cha Ryong Dok, Kang Sok Liwan, An Kil, Lee Kuk Jin, Lee Pong Su and others will be long remembered in history. Prominent figures of the time were quick to assemble in the guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area, traveling from the homeland and abroad.

Many people came to the Wangqing area, including Kim Paek Ryong, Jo Tong Uk, Choe Song Suk, Jon Mun Jin and other communists of north Manchuria, who settled at Xiaowangqing. The new inhabitants of Xiaowangqing also included communists and independence fighters who had been operating in the Maritime Province of Siberia, as well as the people who, after many years of underground activity in the enemy-held area, had moved here because their identity had been exposed, and patriots and Marxists who, on hearing that Jiandao was the center of the Korean revolution, had crossed the border from the homeland.

The guerrilla bases in east Manchuria thus became the assembly area for the elite who were firmly resolved to work for the revolution, or already tempered by experience of the practical struggle. Therefore, the political character of the population was as transparent as the limpid water of the River Dawangqing. In terms of their morale and determination, each of them was a match for a hundred.

Exploiting the favorable conditions created by the establishment of this strategic center of the revolution, the Korean communists expanded the ranks of the guerrillas, established party and Young Communist League organizations, the Anti-Imperialist Union, the Peasants' Association, the Anti-Japanese Women's Association, the Children's Corps, the Red Guards and the Children's Vanguard, i.e., organizations uniting various sections of the population or paramilitary organizations, in preparation for resistance struggle involving the entire people. Organs of the revolutionary government were established in every district of the guerrilla zones. They set about building homes for the people, and providing them with genuine democratic rights and freedoms which their ancestors had never experienced.

They were true champions of the people's interests. The revolutionary government distributed land among the people, guaranteed them the rights to work, free education and free medical care, and thus built a society in which, for the first time in history, everyone enjoyed equality, and everyone supported and led each other forward, a society in which the noble morality of mutual respect prevailed. In the guerrilla zone there were neither rich people who threw their weight about nor poor people who were

weighed down by the heavy burden of debts and taxes.

The guerrilla bases were vibrant with a rapturous enthusiasm which no suffering or hardship could ever dampen. It was the optimistic enthusiasm of people who, completely free from the fetters of social oppression, were building an independent new life. The happiness of the peasants, who danced to the beat of gongs as they drove in the stakes to mark off their plots of the land distributed by the people's revolutionary government, heralded the approach of the greatest event of the century, that sweeping transformation of the world which was first effected by the Korean communists in the wilderness of Jiandao. Their life went on amid continued trials such as had already cost constant bloodshed and sacrifice, but the people's dreams of a bright future gave them hope and inspired their songs.

The guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area, a tall citadel in one corner of the East, were writing a magnificent new chapter in the history of national liberation in defiance of the enemy's constant attacks. They became a symbol of future happiness winning the adoring admiration of people in the homeland. Wherever they lived, and whatever their ideals, the Korean people regarded this citadel, built by the communists at the cost of their own blood, as their only beacon-light and gave it heartfelt support and encouragement. In short, the guerrilla zones inspired the people with hope, optimism and joy; they were the land of promise, the promise of the happiness dreamed of by the people since time immemorial.

The guerrilla bases became a source of constant headaches for the top brass of the imperial headquarters in Tokyo. Having guerrilla zones located just across the Tuman River, on the northeastern boundary of Korea, was a sore point for the enemy. Takagi Takeo' once aptly described the Jiandao area as the "centre of resistance against Manchukuo and Japan as well as a communist artery that runs from the north to Japan through Korea."

Japanese militarists called the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria a "cancer destructive to Oriental peace," an expression which clearly reflected their fear of the guerrilla zone. The Japanese imperialists feared the zone, not because the area was particularly extensive, or because a large communist force capable of overpowering their Kwangtung Army was encamped there, or because there was any possibility of a shell launched from Jiandao falling upon the roof of the royal palace or the imperial headquarters in Tokyo. They dreaded it because Koreans who harbored a bitter hatred for the Japanese made up the vast majority of the population in that region, and most of these Koreans were committed to the revolution strongly enough to give their lives without hesitation in the battle against Japanese domination.

The fact that more than 90 per cent of the communists and Young Communist League members in that region were Koreans is sufficient to explain why the rulers of Japan were so concerned by the guerrilla zone, regarding it as the greatest obstacle to their effective rule of Manchuria. Both the valorous generals of the Righteous Volunteers' Army, who had fought for over a decade in the homeland and in the wilderness of Manchuria against the "Ulsa Treaty" (the protectorate treaty concluded in 1905?Tr.) and the "annexation of Korea by Japan" forged by the Japanese militarists, and the surviving forces of the Independence Army, equipped as they were with matchlock rifles, were still operating in that region against the Japanese army and police.

The example of indissoluble fraternal ties between the Korean and Chinese communists was established there, and spread throughout Manchuria and China proper. The guerrilla zone in Jiandao was not a "cancer destructive to Oriental peace," but the very beacon-light of that peace.

Our efforts to fulfill our strategic task of establishing guerrilla bases for our revolution suffered a severe test when the Japanese militarist forces launched a wholesale "punitive" operation intended to smother the anti-Japanese armed struggle in its cradle. The result of their scorched-earth operations, however, was to speed up the establishment of guerrilla bases in Jiandao.

In the spring of 1932, the Japanese Kwangtung Army in Manchuria and their army forces in Korea discussed measures for dealing with what they called the Jiandao affair. The scheme was to dispatch a task force from their army in Korea to Jiandao in order to put down the revolutionary movement there. Accordingly a Jiandao task force composed of a regiment from the Japanese army division in Ranam, Korea, reinforced by the troops of the Kyongwon garrison, a cavalry troop, a field artillery battery and an air-force company, set out on an expedition to the four counties in east Manchuria where the flames of rebellion had raged during the harvest season and the seasonal spring food-shortage. The task force wrought havoc in the villages and towns, massacring and burning down the homes of those who rose in revolt for their country's freedom. for a life of independence.

The enemy's atrocities began with his assault on Dakanzi in the early part of April 1932 and drowned the fields and mountains of Wangqing in a bloodbath. Dakanzi was the village where Lee Kwang, RI Ung Gol and Kim Yong Bom had led the harvest-time struggle and where Kim Chol, Yang Song Ryong, Kim Un Sik, Lee Ung Man, Lee Won Sop and other comrades had captured weapons by raiding the public security office. As the large force of the Ranam 19th Division pressed forward under cover of artillery fire, machineguns and aircraft, the national salvation army unit under the command of Wang De-lin, which was stationed in the village, withdrew in haste across Mt. Mopan to Xidapo, and the defense corps of the village surrendered to the "punitive" force.

Having occupied Dakanzi, the Japanese bombed the streets of Wangqing, and then attacked the town, killing its inhabitants, setting fire to houses and plundering them of property. Even the house of Li Hengzhong, the richest man in Wangqing, who owned the largest estate in the district, was burnt down by the occupation force.

There followed the destruction of the villages of Deyuanli and Shangqingli. The atrocities were so cruel and violent that the inhabitants of Wangqing composed a song about them;

On the sixth of April, 1932, Dakanzi was attacked by the Japanese, Shells bursting, roaring across the hills all around. Under the rain of bullets and shrapnel And bombs dropped from aircraft The poor people were massacred. Flames from Daduchuan soared into the sky The village of Deyuanli was reduced to ashes. Innocent people were killed all over the fields And the fields of Wangqing became deserted. Proletarian masses of Manchuria, rise in unity And fight the enemy. Boiling blood drives us out to take the field And raise the flag of victory.

Throngs of people who had lost their homes and families in this barbarous "punitive" operation, surged into the valleys of Xiaowangqing and Dawangqing. The Japanese aircraft even bombed the defenseless refugees. The crystal-clear water of rivers in Wangqing was suddenly stained red with blood. The guts of dead people drifted down the rivers. The village of Zhuanjiaolou, to which we were guided by old man Ma, had suffered heavily from the atrocities perpetrated by the Jiandao task force. The barbarous beasts who fell upon the defenseless village had locked up scores of young people, women and children in a house and burnt them to death. The village had been instantly reduced to ashes. The fact that many counties in east Manchuria circulated a written protest, "An Appeal to Our Fellow Countrymen in Protest against the Massacre at Zhuanjiaolou!" indicates just how extensive and how brutal the "punitive" action was.

Zhuanjiaolou which is located near Luozigou and Xiaowangqing, one of the major bases of the revolution in Jiandao, had been under the powerful revolutionary influence of the anti-Japanese struggle from the early years. The valley, which was home to thousands of peasants, rafts-men and lumbermen, provided fine ground for the activities of vanguard organizations such as the party, the Young Communist League and the revolutionary organizations of various sections of the population. During the spring struggle, these organizations had mobilized the masses in the destruction of the defense corps which had been entrenched in the village.

The members of the defense corps, frightened by this mass uprising, had fled into the mountains and become bandits.

The struggle had been successful, but 13 people were killed.

The heated vortex of these struggles transformed Zhuanjiaolou into a breeding-ground for stalwart revolutionaries. Jang Ryong San, who was the commander of the 3rd company of the Wangqing guerrilla unit, had worked as a rafts man between Zhuanjiaolou and Shanchakou. Hamatang, where Lee Kwang had worked in the guise of a headman of a hundred households, was only several miles from Zhuanjiaolou.

The enemy did not hesitate to destroy a whole village in order to kill one communist: they even had a motto, "Kill a hundred people to destroy one communist." The three-point policy of killing everyone, burning everything, and plundering everything, which was applied in the attack launched on the liberated area in north China by Okamura Yasuji, commander of the Japanese forces in north China, during the Sino-Japanese war had, in fact, been applied earlier in the "punitive" expedition to Jiandao in the 1920s, and had culminated in a scorched-earth policy when the guerrilla zones throughout east Manchuria were destroyed in the early 1930s.

The three-point policy and the so-called village-concentration policy, which had been adopted by the Japanese imperialists in Korea and Manchuria for the purpose of "severing the people from the bandits," were applied by the French colonialists in military operations to put down the Algerian resistance forces and were perfected by the Americans in Vietnam.



Sandaowan, Hailangou, Longjing, Fenglindong and all the other renowned revolutionary villages in Yanji County were littered with dead bodies. In Sanhanli and in its surrounding area in Hunchun County more than 1,600 houses were burnt down. The number of people massacred in Yanji County alone amounted to ten thousand. No words could be strong enough to condemn all the crimes committed by the Jiandao task force.

The Japanese even destroyed simple kitchen utensils, in addition to killing the inhabitants of Jiandao and plundering their property. They destroyed cooking pots and overturned under-floor heating facilities. They pulled down the houses remaining and carried off the structural elements to the town of Daduchuan. The refugees had to sleep in improvised grass huts and cook on hot stones, without cooking pots.

The villagers who were unable to flee were threatened with death if they would not allow themselves to be dragged to the towns of Dakanzi or Daduchuan.

The "punitive" force made no exceptions for landlords in applying their forced evacuation orders. It was no secret that a considerable portion of the food supplies and other goods needed for the anti-Japanese guerrillas had come from landlords and propertied people. The enemy therefore attempted to cut off the source of these supplies and stifle the revolutionary army, already suffering from constant shortages of food and clothing. Harassed by the enemy's tenacious pursuits the revolutionary masses roamed the mountains, without eating regular meals. But the mountains did not always provide safe shelter. Even the deepest of the valleys had dead ends, where the refugees had to hide in the forest. In such situation a baby's cry meant death for everyone.

When the "punitive" troops were searching close to one group's hiding people, a woman gave breast to her baby and hugged it hard to prevent it crying and bringing destruction on the revolutionary masses. When the "punitive" troops withdrew, the woman found her baby was dead. Similar tragedies took place in every village and every valley of Jiandao. To avoid such accidents, some women used to doze their babies with opium to keep them fast asleep. Unable to endure the ceaseless atrocities perpetrated by the "punitive" troops, some women even gave their beloved babies to strangers.

The women of this country suffered heart-rending trials for the sake of the revolutionary masses and their comrades-in-arms, for the sake of the anti-Japanese struggle which was dearer to them than their own lives.

Bourgeois humanists may mock at the maternal love of communists, asking how a woman could be so cruel towards her baby or be so irresponsible with its life. But they must not hold these women responsible for the deaths of their infants. If they knew how many bitter tears were shed as these women buried the soft bodies of their babies in dry leaves and left their babies in the care of strangers, and if they knew what deep scars were left in the hearts of these women, they would condemn and hate the Japanese imperialists who sent their human butchers to Jiandao. The crime of trampling upon the maternal love of

this country's women was committed by none other than the fiends of Japanese militarism.

If she is to make amends for her past, Japan must repent of these crimes. Remorse for past crimes cannot, of course, be a pleasant feeling, but no matter how bitter or shameful such remorse may be, it will be much easier to bear than the heart-rending agony that our mothers and sisters felt as they were compelled to leave their own flesh and blood behind in the shadow of strangers' fences, or as they thrust lumps of opium down the throats of their babies. In demanding evidence of their past crimes, the rulers of Japan continue to mock the memory of millions of Koreans who were slaughtered by their army.

The revolutionary masses faced the alternative of being dragged down to urban communities by the Japanese or going deeper into mountains to live there and continue the fight. How many of these Koreans who had abandoned their fertile paddy fields to come to Jiandao would obey the enemy's orders to move to towns which were under the rule of the Japanese army?

Most of the inhabitants of Jiandao were poor peasants who had been deprived of their livelihood by the Japanese colonialists, and left their home districts in pursuit of the promised land like Ryultoguk. Although bled white by the local officials and landlords, the poor peasants had reclaimed steep hill slopes and valleys in the mountain ranges of Laoyeling and Haerbaling, removing the stones and pulling up tree roots by dint of Herculean efforts. Exhausting as slash-and-burn farming was, and poor as they remained, these peasants had been contented with their lot simply because they were free of molestation by the Japanese. Which of them would ever obey the Japanese orders to follow them to towns, leaving behind homes and lands which they had made fertile with their own sweat and blood? This was the test set for the people of Wangqing who had experienced the massacre.

A few people, terrified into submission by the enemy's atrocities, began to move down to the towns. But the overwhelming majority, who yearned to see a new world, moved deeper into the mountains in spite of the menace of the enemy. People who only yesterday had shared joy and sorrow in one mind for the revolution in the same village were now parting with each other, some going to towns and others to mountains.

The people who chose the mountains moved to the great forests of Xiaowangqing and Dawangqing, 25 miles away from the Wangqing county town (Baicaogou). It was around this time that the family of Lee Chi Baek moved from Zhongqingli to Macun.

The Wangqing county party committee and other county-level organs had established their bases in Xiaowangqing. The east Manchuria ad hoc committee which had been operating by moving between Xilinhe in Yanji County, Taipinggou, Wangougou and Beidong finally settled in the spring of 1933 in the valley of Lishugou at Xiaowangqing, which became the revolution's centre and capital in Jiandao. The tide of history brought ourselves and the Chinese party, our revolution and the Chinese revolution, together, and we came to share a single pulse.

The Wangqing guerrilla base consisted of five organized revolutionary districts, including district No. 1,

which included Yaoyinggou under its jurisdiction, and district No. 2, which had Macun and Shiliping under its control.

In those days the Wangqing guerrillas were grouped into three companies; their prominent commanders and leaders were Lee Kwang, Yang Song Ryong, Kim Chol, Jang Ryong San, Choe Chun Guk and Lee Ung Man.

That was what I learned on my arrival in Wangqing, from a briefing given by Yang Song Ryong, one of the founders of the Wangqing guerrilla force, and Lee Yong Guk, secretary of the county party committee. These comrades had shown me around the Wangqing guerrilla base when I visited the place to acquaint myself with the situation there in the autumn of 1932. At that time, as I made the rounds of the guerrilla zones in the Wangqing County I had given guidance to the work of the primary party organizations, the Anti-Japanese Association, the Anti-Japanese Women's Association and other mass organizations. I had also received reports from the political workers operating in the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units.

Also around this time we had given a short training course on explosive weapons for workers from the munitions factories in different counties of east Manchuria and for the commanders of the guerrilla army.

In those days the leaders of Wangqing County were racking their brains in the search for solutions to the food problem. More than one thousand people had thronged into the narrow valley at Xiaowangqing, where there were only a few dozen houses. The food reserves were too small to feed them all. Now and then the guerrillas had attacked the enemy and captured food, but the amounts were not enough to satisfy the hunger of the many people in the bases. The contribution of the harvest from the small plots of arid land in the guerrilla zone was also negligible.

In these circumstances, it was suggested that the food problem could be solved for the moment by harvesting the crops in no-man's land. By no-man's land I mean the deserted farm lands between the guerrilla bases and the enemy-ruled areas.

There were deserted villages near Xiaowangqing and Dawangqing Unable to endure the atrocities perpetrated by the barbarous "punitive" force, the villagers had fled, some of them to the enemy area, and others to the guerrilla zone, leaving their crops unharvested. Some of the crops belonged to the landlords and reactionaries who had fled to the enemy area, and some of them belonged to the peasants whom the Japanese had forced at bayonet-point to move to Baicaogou and Daduchuan.

The abandoned crops were also coveted by those who had fled to the enemy area. The landlords and reactionaries came every day with horse-drawn carts and other vehicles under the escort of armed self-defense corps men, harvested the crops and carried them away. Sometimes they even approached the guerrillas' threshing floor and opened fire.

In view of this. we decided to form harvesting teams in all the guerrilla districts and mobilize all the

people in the base to gather the crops in no-man's land without delay. We informed the Wangqing people of the decision and discussed the measures required for its implementation with them.

The harvesting team began reaping the crops at the entrance of Xiaowangqing and advanced towards Daduchuan. The grain was threshed as soon as it was reaped, then it was stored for distribution to the inhabitants of the guerrilla zone. Harvesters working in the fields below the village of thirteen households had to be protected by the Red Guards against the self-defense corps, which was equipped with rifles capable of taking five cartridges at a time. There were occasionally fierce engagements between the two sides, who fired over the heads of the harvesters. We were deeply moved by the heroism of the Wangqing people who worked day and night to gather the crops at the risk of their lives.

Arduous as the struggle was, I was satisfied, as I left Xiaowangqing, that everything in the base was being done as we had intended.

On my way back to the guerrilla base, I set myself two major tasks. The first was to achieve a large-scale expansion of the ranks of the guerrillas and the second was to intensify the efforts of the united front to rally the patriotic forces of all social strata in line with the new situation, in which the theatre of our operations was shifting to the area of the Tuman River. We also needed to work with the anti-Japanese units of the Chinese nationalists.

Having guided us as far as Zhuanjiaolou, old man Ma returned to Luozigou. The jovial fellow, whom the Anti-Japanese Association provided as our guide in place of old man Ma, told us an interesting story about the small units of the Wangqing guerrillas, and how they had defeated the Japanese "punitive" troops that had invaded Yaoyinggou and Sishuiping.

The following day, we marched into the guerrilla zone of Yaoyinggou, the center of Wangqing district No. 1, with the flag of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army flying and bugles blowing at the head of our advancing column.

Hong Yong Hwa, a woman whose nephew Choe Kum San was my orderly in later years before he was killed in battle, came running up to the roadside with about 20 members of the Children's Corps, and they welcomed us, waving their hands. She was in charge of the work with women under the party committee of Wangqing district No. 1. She was highly respected by the soldiers and the people for her devoted work for the guerrillas and the Chinese anti-Japanese units.

That day the people of Yaoyinggou prepared millet cakes and buck wheat noodles for us. In the evening they invited us to a performance given by the Children's Corps.

Lee Ung Gol, head of the organizational section of the Wangqing district No. 1 party committee, watched the soldiers and people enjoy their party together with tears in his eyes. "General Kim Il Sung," he said, "we have been hearing news of your unit for many months. We heard that, after your expedition to south Manchuria, you attacked Dunhua and Emu in north Manchuria. The people here have been

waiting for your unit for a long time. Now our hearts feel strong. "I left the celebration and followed him to the office of the district party committee. We spent hours in discussion of the work of the guerrilla zone. Our attention was focused on how we should go about expanding the party and the other revolutionary organizations in places like Zhuanjiaolou, and how we should arm all the people in the guerrilla zone.

When we were elaborating measures for the defense of the guerrilla zone, a messenger came to us with a secret note from the enemy-ruled area. The note stated briefly that the Japanese garrison troops at Daxinggou would attack the guerrilla zone the next day.

"They must be coming to avenge themselves on the guerrillas who attacked them in December last year," Lee Ung Gol remarked with a wry smile, as if he were responsible for the enemy's attempt to attack Yaoyinggou. "Those devils can't even show proper respect for guests who have made a journey of hundreds of miles. We were planning to give your unit a few days' good rest before you left. What an unfortunate coincidence!"

"Oh no!" I said. "It's a happy coincidence. The men's hands have been itching after all these months without a fight. It seems the moment has come for the enemy to pay for the blood spilt by our people at Dakanzi, Zhuanjiaolou, Deyuanli and Sanhanli." I sent a messenger to Lee Kwang, telling him to transfer his unit to Yaoyinggou in a hurry.

Lee Ung Gol puffed at his hand-rolled cigarette in agitation for a while, then stood up to go to the party and summon the commander of the Red Guards. It was clear from his expression that he had decided to give orders for a general mobilization. Smiling, I took him by the sleeve and pulled him back into his seat.

"Comrade Ung Gol, you are going to tell the Red Guards that the enemy is coming, aren't you? The party seems to be at its height at the moment. So don't disturb them, please. Send them all home in an hour and let them sleep well until early next morning. And I, too, will send my men for a sound sleep early tonight."

It might seem contrary to normal military practice to allow the men and the people to enjoy themselves, instead of alerting them, when we knew that the enemy was going to attack us very soon. It was quite natural that the head of the organizational section of the district party committee, who was also in charge of military affairs, should glance at me uneasily. Nonetheless, we kept the message about the enemy's intentions to ourselves. The men were sent to their beds as I had suggested. I did not wish to excite them when they were still tired from the march. I knew quite well that no stout-hearted man could sleep when his spirits had been aroused by combat orders.

"At least tonight I must not let their sleep be disturbed. How many sleepless nights they have already spent during the last winter!" This was the thought uppermost in my mind that night. Perhaps it was a case of indulgence inappropriate for a guerrilla commander. In any case, the men were fast asleep by

eleven o'clock.

Our guide from Zhuanjiaolou and the messenger from the enemy-held area could not get to sleep until midnight, probably because they did not feel sure that my decision was correct. Lee Ung Gol, head of the organizational section, too, tossed and turned in his bed. "On our march I found the hills at the entrance to Yaoyinggou fascinating. What about giving battle there?" I suggested in whisper. "There's a motor road running along the foot of the hills, isn't there?"

Lee Ung Gol responded to my words by sitting up. "You mean the hills west of Dabeigou? They are a natural fortress."

We were still discussing this question at about four o'clock in the morning.

Not long afterwards we climbed the hills, which were the gate to Yaoyinggou, so to speak. The commander of the Red Guards and the member of the Anti-Japanese Association from Zhuanjiaolou accompanied us. The southern sides of the hills were craggy cliffs, along the bottom of which ran a vehicular road. Parallel to the road flowed a river called the Yiaotongou. The hills were full of rocks which provided natural shelters for the guerrillas.

We built up piles of stones between crags and then called together all the men of the Red Guards from Yaoyinggou and my unit and some members of the special detachment and took them to the hills. I told them to dig themselves in on the frozen ground and gave them combat orders, which concluded with an encouraging speech to the following effect:

Our ancestors used to describe such features of the terrain as impregnable. Highly advantageous to the defenders, and disadvantageous to the attackers! An impregnable fortress is a fine thing, but I have more confidence in your combat efficiency. Comrades, sing the song of tragedy no more, but let the enemy pay dearly today for the blood shed by our people. Blood for blood!

That day, more than 80 Japanese troops who were advancing on four trucks into the valley of Yaoyinggou, were caught in our ambush and scores of them were killed or wounded. The next day, the Japanese garrison troops at Daxinggou launched an all-out attack on Yaoyinggou again, only to suffer heavy casualties before they fled.

That was the first battle we fought in a guerrilla zone in Jiandao. It was probably named the defensive battle of the Yaoyinggou guerrilla zone by the historians.

On the evening of the following day the inhabitants of Yaoyinggou celebrated the victory in the village of Dabeigou. I still remember the event. The representatives of the various organizations delivered speeches of passionate congratulation, waving their fists in the air. Of course, I also made an impassioned speech that night.

I think it was during that winter or the previous autumn that I met O Jin U at Yaoyinggou. On that occasion the villagers of Xiaobeigou held a welcome meeting in our honor at the Children's Corps school where O Jin U was working as an instructor. He occasionally looks back with deep emotion upon our first meeting, saying that he was strongly impressed by me as I spoke then, holding a Model 38 rifle in my hand, with the butt resting on the ground. He was then fifteen or sixteen years old, and he would follow at my heels, toying with the Mauser that hung on my waist. He seemed to be very envious of it. We were all equipped with Model 38 rifles or with the most modern pistols.

I asked O Jin U if he wished to join the guerrilla army. He said he had applied, but had not been accepted because he was too young. We accepted him into the 4th Wangqing company the following year or the year after, and took him on an expedition to north Manchuria. While we were preparing to leave for Xiaowangqing after having repulsed the enemy and acquainted ourselves with the work of the party and mass organizations, a messenger arrived with a summons for us to go to Macun to discuss an important military matter. We left Yaoyinggou immediately.

On our arrival at Xiaowangqing we were received by Wang Runcheng, alias Ma Ying, and two other men. He was more often known by another nickname - Wang danaodai - which meant a man with an unusually large head.

Dagezi and some other personnel of the guerrilla zone guided me to the foot of the hill at the back of Macun and the house of old man Lee Chi Baek where I stayed and where I met the representatives of the east Manchuria party committee. Dagezi is Lee Yong Guk's nickname, it means a long fellow. He was the secretary of the Wangqing county party committee at the time. There was a bachelors' quarters which had been made into a "travelers' home," but I was persuaded to stay at the old man's house because the "travelers' home" was crowded and noisy. Lee Chi Baek was Kim Jung Gwon's father-in-law, and the name of the old man's wife was So Song Nyo.

Lee Chi Baek's family were all patriots and revolutionaries.

In his house I dressed in dabushanzi (a Chinese gown?Tr.) for talks with Wang Run-cheng and his company.

"Congratulations upon your arrival in Wangqing!" Wang Danaodai greeted me.

"I am glad to see you again," I replied, shaking his hands.

I was lucky to meet a revolutionary who was an old acquaintance of mine in Wangqing, where I was a stranger. I had first met him at Antu, when I was concentrating on work with the anti-Japanese units of the Chinese nationalists, following my return from the campaign in south Manchuria. In those days he and Chen Hanzhang had been working with the soldiers of Commander Meng's regiment of the national salvation army.

Commander Meng's regiment had moved from north Manchuria to the Antu area in order to make contact with Tang Ju-wu's units of the self-defence army in the Liaoning area and enter into cooperation with them. The Chinese communists who were working with Wu Yi-cheng in his national salvation army unit had been trying to extend the anti-Japanese struggle throughout Manchuria by arranging an alliance of the anti-Japanese forces in north and south Manchuria.

Commander Meng's regiment had been sent to Antu by Wu Yicheng on another mission to obtain opium needed to raise funds for military purposes. The Antu area was a major source of opium and ginseng (ginseng?Tr.). Tang Ju-wu had also sent his men to Antu with a view to establishing a monopoly of the opium trade in that area. In those days opium was used in place of currency.

"Comrade Kim Il Sung," Wang Run-cheng said half-jokingly at a meeting of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee held at Lee Kwang's house, "the success of the national salvation army units in cooperation with your unit in the attack on Dunhua and Emu can be attributed to opium. The large amount of opium that was obtained in Antu and distributed among my men had strengthened their morale."

We were familiar enough with each other to speak our minds frankly on such matters. Wang helped us a great deal in the course of our work in Antu. He used to carry messages to maintain contact between myself and Hu Jinmin or Zhou Bao-zhong. Since he was in charge of propaganda in the national salvation army, he had had free access to the commander's headquarters, to say nothing of regimental, battalion and company headquarters. He was a good messenger for me and for the communists who had been posted to the national salvation army.

As was usually the case with intellectuals who had been trained in a normal school, Wang, though a man of large build, was gentle and good-natured. He had taken up the revolutionary cause during his normal School days at Ningan, under the influence of schoolmates who had studied in large cities like Beijing, Nanjing and Tianjin. His final commitment to the revolutionary cause was due especially to the influence of Comrade Pan, who was on the provincial party committee.

"Comrade Kim Il Sung," Wang said. "The revolution is raging fiercely in east Manchuria now, and in this situation we expect a great deal from you. We are very glad of your arrival in Wangqing at a time when the revolution in east Manchuria needs able strategists to develop party work, guerrilla activities, and work with the national salvation army.

He analyzed the developments in north and east Manchuria in considerable detail, and we had a frank exchange of views concerning the tasks facing the party organizations in east Manchuria at that time. The most urgent task we discussed was the establishment of a system of unified command over the companies that had so far been operating autonomously in the different guerrilla zones, and also the increasing of our military forces and the improvement of their quality. This matter was also later discussed in detail with Tong Chang-rong.

As a result, the guerrilla companies in Wangqing were brought under the unified command of their



battalion headquarters.

This was followed by a regrouping of the companies in other counties in east Manchuria into battalions, and by the reappointment of their commanders. These were preparations for the full-scale development of guerrilla warfare.

These were the impressive events that marked our arrival in Wangqing. We soon became used to the new surroundings. The sense of exotic newness we usually felt whenever we changed our theatre of activity soon gave way to an attachment to the new place and curiosity about it.

By 1933 I had lost nearly all the people dearest to me. The death of my mother had orphaned her three sons, and the sweet home of these three boys at the village of Xiaoshahe among the field of reeds had been left deserted and filled with cobwebs. All that remained with me were my two younger brothers, who were in the charitable care of strangers, and my grandparents who had given their beloved sons to the country, and were now living in isolation at my old home in Mangyongdae, for which I felt a bitter nostalgia. My feelings of filial devotion to them could not reach out to the hearth of the home, and my desire to take loving care of my brothers was a source of futile worry.

The only place where the tender feelings of my heart could produce any effect was the guerrilla zone in which I was to fight. The people here would become as dear to me as my own grandparents, my own parents and my own brothers. In the personality of the mistress of the house, So Song Nyo, I rediscovered the warm character of my own mother, her love and benevolence.

Because of the enemy's constant blockade and "punitive" assaults, the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria faced numerous trials from the outset. In this historic land of Wangqing which is fixed for ever in my memory, many battles were fought, much blood was spilt, and we endured great agonies. Sometimes scores of people were killed, or scores of houses and barracks burnt down, in a single day. The hospitals were crowded with wounded soldiers and sick people. Food-shortages throughout the guerrilla zone and recurrent famine caused innumerable deaths. Sometimes an epidemic threatened the entire population of Jiandao with extinction.

In that part of the world there were neither shops, nor markets, nor merchants, nor any money in circulation. Here the law of value had no effect. Shoes and clothing for the population were obtained by capturing the enemy's supplies. From time to time Leftist deviation shook the guerrilla zone and plunged it into apprehension.

Nonetheless, all these difficulties by no means dominated life there. A new way of living in freedom and happiness - although in a somewhat limited and relative sense-together with the optimistic spirit of a people who had been liberated from the tyranny of the enemy, defined the main line of development in the guerrilla zone. The difficulties were enormous, but the morale of the soldiers and civilians was high. In this isolated region, beyond the reach of the administrative power and Japan, the Korean communists created a culture and a morality which were more progressive and revolutionary than those in any other

part of the world.

For this reason we treasured the guerrilla base with all our hearts.

The heroic action of our nation to defend the guerrilla base was displayed daily throughout the whole of east Manchuria.

The remote valley of northern Jiandao, where the day dawned in battle and the sun set in battle, the guerrilla base where a new way of life and a new ethics were beginning to thrive even amidst the thunder of bursting shells - this became my dear home.

## 7.2. The Enemy's Ground by Day; Our Ground by Night

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On arrival at Macun, we were again accorded a hearty welcome, which I thought was more than we deserved. The news of our success in the battle at Yaoyinggou had quickly spread throughout Jiandao, and the inhabitants of Xiaowangqing greeted us with wild enthusiasm. Life in the guerrilla zone, which was completely free from the enemy's rule, fascinated us. However, not everything that happened in this new world was to my liking. We were not always pleased by the attitude to work and the way of thinking of some of the people at the helm of the revolution in Jiandao.

What surprised me most was the Leftist tendency that was spreading like an epidemic among revolutionaries in east Manchuria. This tendency was especially conspicuous in the work of consolidating the guerrilla base. When discussing the establishment of the guerrilla bases at meetings held at Mingyuegou and Xiaoshahe we had agreed on the definitions of three types of bases - a full-scale guerrilla zone, a semi-guerrilla zone, and a base of activity - and on the need to ensure a reasonable balance among them.

Some communists in east Manchuria, however, expressed enthusiasm only for the development of a full-scale guerrilla zone in the form of a liberated area, and paid insufficient attention to the establishment of the semi-guerrilla zone and the base of activity. In the early days, efforts in Wangqing were also limited to the establishment of liberated areas. The Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, for instance, was made into a Soviet district in the form of a liberated area which was as large as a county in our country today. This district was under the control of the revolutionary forces. In those days a full-scale guerrilla zone was also called a Soviet district.

Having the Soviet flag that symbolized a worker-peasant government over this wide territory, the cadres busied themselves with nothing in particular, simply creating a lot of fuss amid shouting "Revolution! Revolution!" They seldom fought outside the guerrilla zone, but spent day after day mouthing empty slogans about establishing a proletarian dictatorship and building a society for the proletariat. On public holidays they assembled in the yard of the soldiers' barracks or in a children's playground to dance Russian dances or sing the May Day. Sometimes cadres from the east Manchuria ad hoc committee and from the county would get together and have a heated argument about something or other.

We, too, spent the spring season in this atmosphere, unable to concentrate on anything. By degrees, however, we came to recognize this Left-wing communist mistake for what it was and seek ways of correcting it. The guerrilla zone was crowded with people. During its formation thousands of refugees and exiles had flocked to the Wangqing base alone. The situation was similar in Hunchun, Yanji and Helong.

Such large numbers of people in a mountain valley with a very limited area of arable land posed the problem of food supplies. Everyone had to eat bean gruel. The beans were ground with a millstone and cooked, together with a pinch of grain, into a gruel. When this gruel was available, people might complain about it, but when these supplies ran out, we had to eat cakes made of pine bark which was first boiled in caustic soda water and then pounded, or else we were compelled to allay our hunger with boiled bracken, the shoots of *Atractylodes*, and the roots of broad bellflower, *Codonopsis lanceolata* or Solomon's seal. In spite of this, we sang revolutionary songs and made speeches, waving our fists in the air and calling on the people to overthrow imperialism, the pro-Japanese elements and the coterie of parasites. That was the way things were done in the early days of our life in the guerrilla base.

Of course, we engaged in a number of small battles, such as raids on police stations, attacks on the enemy's supply convoys, and counterattacks on enemy forces which had invaded the guerrilla zone and from which we captured weapons. When we returned from triumphant battles, the people shouted hurrah, and waved flags, but there were not many major battles, and we spent most of our time on standing guard on hilltops and protecting refugees. The territory under our control was large, but there were not many rifles or armed troops. A few rifles were allotted to each of the groups of soldiers, mostly in order to guard the base.

When we tried to increase the ranks of our armed soldiers, we were obstructed by weak-kneed secretaries or committee-members, who whined that the revolutionary army was not a united-front army, and that therefore, it must recruit only the most stalwart of the workers and peasants, not taking just anybody, in case it should become a rabble. In those days the anti-Japanese guerrillas in the Soviet area were called the worker-peasant guerrillas. The defense of a territory that covered thousands of square kilometers was overtaxing the strength of a few companies. Since there were many gaps in the defense structure, the "punitive" forces could easily penetrate deep into our defenses, and then thousands of the local inhabitants had to pack up their things and seek refuge. Such situations caused panic among the population almost every day.

The Leftist leaders, who regarded the size of our liberated territory as the decisive factor in the triumph of the revolution, were bent on maintaining a large territory without any scientific assessment of the balance of hostile and friendly forces and were motivated only by their subjective desires. They even demarcated the guerrilla zone and the enemy-ruled area in an artificial manner, by calling the former "Red territory" and the latter the "White territory". They labeled the inhabitants of the enemy-held area as "reactionaries" and those in the intermediate zone as "doublefaced" and suspected or rejected them for no reason. The people from the homeland were also treated as "reactionaries" and that was the most serious problem.

The women in the "Red territory" had their hair bobbed in order to distinguish themselves from those in the "White territory". A "Red" style of written and spoken language, songs, schools, education and media differed from the "White" style. People traveling to the Red territory from the "White territory" were strictly checked and even after interrogation, they were not allowed to go home immediately. Orders to deal with the "White" people who came to the "Red territory" as enemy spies were issued from the top of the hierarchy down to the Children's Corps organizations. Some of the members of the Wangqing county party committee harbored continuous ill feelings towards the people who had moved from the

Xiaowangqing valley to the towns.

Some men of the Red Guards who had been posted as long-range look-outs at Dongricun once detained a peasant from Daduchuan who had come to buy an ox in the guerrilla zone. A Leftist element on the county party committee informed of the interrogation of the unidentified peasant, told the investigators to press the suspect person to reveal his identity even by torturing him, saying that he might possibly be a spy. No matter how severely they tortured him, the peasant insisted that he was not a spy. In fact, the peasant was neither a spy nor an agent of the enemy. But the Leftist wronged this innocent man and ordered his money to be confiscated.

Recollecting the undisclosed abuses perpetrated by the Leftists in the guerrilla zone in those days, Choe Pong Song, who worked for the Young Communist League in Wangqing for many years, said:

"The mere mention of the Leftist deviation always reminds me of events in the guerrilla zone in the early days. The Leftist abuses in Jiandao were really shocking. Once we guerrillas captured a cart-load of salt from the Japanese on the Wangqing Pass and took it to Xiaowangqing. This was probably at the time when you, Mr. President, were operating in south Manchuria. The carter was a Korean who led a hand-to-mouth existence in the lower depths of society. The Leftist elements labeled him as one of the 'double-faced' people and dealt with him as a criminal. They said he was a traitor because he had carried supplies for the Japanese. So naturally the people outside the guerrilla zone did not view the 'Red territory' in a favorable light. It was disgusting."

Such abuses as the punishment even of innocent people, without discriminating friend from foe, were also frequent in the guerrilla zones in other counties as well. The problem was very serious, because all these cursed acts were committed unhesitatingly in the noble name of the revolution, and they forced a large number of revolutionary people who were opposed to the Japanese to move across to the "White territory".

The Leftists went so far as to arrest the relatives of old man Lee Chi Baek, when they came from Onsong to Shangqingli to attend the memorial ceremony for their parents who had been killed in a "punitive" action by the enemy. The Leftists regarded them as "reactionary" people. Whenever I saw cases of such injustice, I felt thoroughly ashamed. If a man who professes to be a communist punishes an innocent person by labeling him a reactionary, he is no longer a communist, but the worst of criminals.

Even after our arrival in Wangqing, these criminals continued to throw their weight about, behaving like "privileged revolutionaries" that no one could ever touch, and lording it over the masses.

Some people regarded the Soviet as everything, and this viewpoint was a serious problem to us. We came to the conclusion that if we were to preserve the base and develop the revolution, we must overcome the tendency of isolation and extend the theatre of our operations. In other words, it was imperative to abandon the shortsighted practice of clinging only to the defense of the guerrilla zone, and to form large elite forces so as to launch active military and political operations with freedom of mobility.

If the army was to launch full-scale operations, it had to be relieved of the burden of defending the base. We found a solution to this problem in creating and expanding many semi-guerrilla zones in the vast territory surrounding the full-scale guerrilla zone, and in getting them to support it. We sought our breakthrough to fresh victory in the creation of semi-guerrilla zones.

I met and talked with Tong Chang-rong on many occasions in order to learn the experience of guerrilla zones established in China proper.

In the autumn of 1931, a Chinese Soviet Provisional Government was proclaimed in Ruijin, Jiangxi Province, and a Soviet zone was established. According to Tong Chang-rong, the central Soviet zone, in which the headquarters of the Chinese revolution was located, covered a very large area with millions of inhabitants and the military forces of several armies. Tong Chang-rong himself had experience of establishing a Soviet zone in Henan Province.

In those days the Red Army under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party numbered more than a hundred thousand, and controlled a vast area extending from the southern part of Jiangxi Province to the northern area of Guangdong Province.

My interview with Tong Chang-rong convinced me that the experience of the establishment of the Chinese Soviet zone, which was equivalent to a sizable independent state in terms of territory and population, could not be applied to our efforts in the area on the Tuman River, and that establishing semi-guerrilla zones in the area that surrounded the full-scale guerrilla zone and in the northern region of Korea was the only way for the Korean communists active in the base of Jiandao to defend their revolutionary headquarters and launch a guerrilla war on a large scale.

The need for a semi-guerrilla zone became ever more pressing in the course of the practical armed struggle. The overwhelming task of defending a large area with a small force made it imperative to work out a fresh solution as soon as possible. If we had tried to formulate a theory at our desks by merely analyzing classical theory or drawing on the experiences of Russian Bolsheviks or the Chinese in Ruijin, we might merely have recognized the need for the guerrilla base of a new type, different from the type of the liberated area, but failed to press forward at speed with its establishment in a correct understanding of the pressing nature of this question.

The question of the semi-guerrilla zone was not taken up as a matter simply of the form of the base. The discussion reflected the ideological question of whether to establish the principle of Juche in the revolution by overcoming dogmatism and the worship of the great powers; it concerned the view to be taken of the masses and the need to overcome the Leftist error and accept as the motive force of the revolution the broad masses of the people who had been rejected as the "double-faced"; this was a serious question of direct relevance to the formation of the revolutionary forces, the question of whether or not to rally them in an anti-Japanese national united front.

By a semi-guerrilla zone we meant an area which would be partly under our own control and also partly

under the control of the enemy, an area which would be under the enemy's formal territorial rule, but effectively, under our control, which would provide support for the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, train revolutionary forces, including reserve forces for the guerrilla army, and play the role of a liaison between the guerrilla zone and the enemy-ruled area. Figuratively speaking, it would be governed by the enemy during daylight, but would come under our control at night.

The semi-guerrilla zone was suited to our struggle to build a revolutionary base. We found no significant examples of this type of guerrilla zone in the foreign experiences of guerrilla warfare. It was the development of our revolution that posed the establishment of the semi-guerrilla zone as a pressing task.

In mid-March 1933, we advanced to the area around Mt. Wangjae, Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province, in order to extend the armed struggle to the homeland and bring about a rapid acceleration of the Korean revolution as a whole, centering on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The strategic objective we had maintained since we began fighting the Japanese was to spread the armed struggle to the homeland and liberate the country, an idea which nothing could ever erase from our minds. Creating a semi-guerrilla zone in the area of the six towns and the surrounding area of the northern part of Korea was a prerequisite for extending the armed struggle to the homeland. A firmly-structured semi-guerrilla zone would contribute to the elimination of various Leftist practices in the development of the guerrilla zones.

We had formed a detachment consisting of 40 men from the 2nd company of the Wangqing battalion, who had been operating from their base at Sancidao, and ten commanding officers and political workers who had been selected from the companies, a detachment to be sent to the homeland. We then sent an advance party of several men under the command of platoon leader Park Thae Hwa to the Onsong area.

Certain people, who were influential in the east Manchuria party organization at the time were very displeased with our plan of operations in the homeland, and obstructed its implementation in every possible way. They warned us that the Korean communists in China were demonstrating a nationalist tendency to "extend the revolution to Korea" by fighting for the Korean revolution, and that we should abandon the idea of operations in the homeland because it was contrary to the principle of one party in one country.

I rejected their objection and continued to prepare for the operations, being convinced that loyalty to my national duty meant loyalty to my internationalist duty, and that the Korean revolutionaries had an inviolable right to fight for the liberation of Korea. At about this time, I was incensed by an incident that cast a shadow over the anti-Japanese guerrillas' advance to the homeland. A man from the 2nd company who had been to Onsong of the homeland on a liaison mission was arrested on his return by a man named Kim Song Do and taken to the east Manchuria ad hoc committee.

The 2nd company commander An Ki Ho and its political instructor Choe Chun Guk hurried to see me at Macun and complained furiously of Kim Song Do's abuse of power, denouncing the arrest of this man without his commanders' knowledge.

Choe Chun Guk, who used to be as gentle as a newly-wed bride and so well-mannered that he seldom spoke ill of anybody, even went so far in his abuse of Kim Song Do as to call him by his nickname "one-eyed Wang." I simply listened in silence, for I was not acquainted with Kim Song Do. All that I knew of him was that he had been the head of the propaganda department of the east Manchuria ad hoc committee of the Young Communist League, had recently been appointed to the east Manchuria party ad hoc committee, and was now inspecting different counties in east Manchuria. In the east Manchuria party organizations, those cadres from higher structures who traveled around and gave guidance to their subordinate organizations were called inspectors.

I rebuked Choe Chun Guk sternly for his indecent manner of speech. "Comrade Chun Guk, when did you get into the bad habit of calling people by indecent nicknames? True, Kim Song Do has ignored us and gone too far, but can't you have the magnanimity to respect his person?" Choe Chun Guk was very tolerant of criticism. "I am sorry," he apologized with a serious expression. "Forgive me if I was indecent or rude."

"The guerrilla zone is a place where people live close together, so people may well have nicknames. But 'one-eyed' is too rude a nickname.

At that moment, I was more offended by the Wangqing people who called Kim Song Do "one-eyed Wang" than by his arrest of the 2nd company man.

I asked why Kim was called Wang. Choe Chun Guk answered that the inhabitants of Jiandao had probably nicknamed him Wang because Kim Song Do, a Korean, smelt like a Chinese and groveled too much to his superiors.

On my way to the east Manchuria ad hoc committee, I dropped in at the county party committee and discovered that there, too, Kim Song Do was known by the name of "one-eyed Wang."

From Lee Yong Guk in the office of the county party committee, I learned that Kim Song Do was a veteran party member who was admitted to the Korean Communist Party as early as 1927, and worked as a member of a party cell committee under the Manchurian general bureau of the Tuesday group before being arrested by the Japanese consulate police and imprisoned and beaten. After his release from prison, he quickly transferred to the Chinese party and was promoted to a post at ad hoc committee level. He wore dark glasses, probably in order to disguise his ruined eye, and went about in dabushanzi.

Lee Yong Guk described Kim Song Do as a "man not only eloquent but also tactful enough to slip socks onto the feet of a flying crow".

I had interviewed Kim Song Do for about three hours in the office of the east Manchuria ad hoc committee.

As I sat face to face with him, my intention of accusing him of an abuse of power gave way to a feeling



of pity for him. The eye that had withered away and his darkish complexion gave him an exhausted look that aroused pity in me. How praiseworthy and moving it was that despite the physical handicap of the loss of one eye, this man was trekking across steep mountains in Jiandao in the service of the revolutionary cause!

"Comrade Inspector," I addressed him, trying to be courteous and refraining from raising my voice. "Why did you arrest the man at his workplace, without so much as discussing his case with us?"

Kim Song Do gazed at me over his glasses. His look seemed to express displeasure with me and question how I dared to ask such an insolent question of an inspector of the ad hoc committee.

"It is strange that you should ask me such a question. You know quite well that this man's act in crossing the border is an expression of nationalism, which contradicts proletarian internationalism.... We consider him to be a member of the 'Minsaengdan.' "On what grounds?"

"His journey to and from Korea is an expression of nationalism, and this nationalistic error has made him a member of the 'Minsaengdan.' Can he be anything else?" "Is this your own view?"

"Yes. And my superior's also."

After this answer, I was tongue-tied for a short while, because I felt more pity than repugnance for him.

It was strange that I should feel a certain sympathy for him, not contempt, at that moment. I should have been angered by the tomfool and shattered his nonsense with cogent argument. His totally absurd prejudice and childish way of thinking, so much out of keeping with this illustrious position of inspector on the east Manchuria ad hoc committee, must have aroused this sense of pity for him in me.

"How miserable that he should be mentally crippled in addition to his physical handicap!" I thought to myself. "Of course, the stamina with which he devotes himself to the revolution, even wearing dark glasses to conceal his withered eye that could be noticed by secret agents is laudable. How good it would be if this mettle were reinforced with a sound intellect! How can a man suffer from such miserable mental disorder?"

"You seem to be identifying nationalism with the 'Minsaengdan,' I said in a quieter tone of voice. "How can you dare to weigh them on the same balance? Is it not too fallacious a syllogism to tar the two with the same brush because a few nationalists like Park Sok Yun, Jo Pyong Sang and Jon Song Ho have suggested the formation of the 'Minsaengdan'? As far as I know, you, too, first belonged to an organization which was under nationalist leadership, and then later you joined the communist movement. Would you accept it if for this reason you were labeled a 'Minsaengdan' member? Answer me.

"How could I ..." he mumbled.

I gave him a few minutes to reflect, and then resumed my forceful argument, "I presume you had Tong Chang-rong in mind when you mentioned a superior of yours. But I don't think he is such a narrow-minded man. If Secretary Tong Chang-rong had made such a decision out of minor prejudice or misunderstanding, without being fully informed of the actual state of affairs, you comrades, who are familiar with the Korean situation, should have advised him in every possible way so that he had a correct understanding, shouldn't you?"

Kim Song Do was silent.

On my way back to my headquarters, taking with me the arrested comrade, I could still hardly rid myself of a feeling of pity for him.

To be candid, I always felt sympathy for him through all the many conflicts we had during debates on theoretical matters, until he directed the purge of revolutionaries, dancing to the tune of others.

But I ceased to sympathize with him then, when I saw him murdering many staunch revolutionaries under the pretext of purging the "Minsaengdan." Later, he himself was executed on a charge of being a "Minsaengdan" member. My experience over decades of turbulent events showed me that terrorists fell at the hands of terrorists, that Leftists were tried and executed by Leftists, and that self-destruction was the fate in store for those who lacked the guts to stick with their own conviction and tried to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

The detachment to the homeland that had left Macun early in March, arrived on this side of the Tuman River opposite Thamakgol, Onsong County. It billeted itself on the village of Solgol and during the week while it awaited the arrival of the advance party that had infiltrated the Onsong area, it set about the work of revolutionizing the village and its surrounding area to build a semi-guerrilla zone. During daylight, we had combat training at the western foot of Mt. Songdong and at night we visited the villagers, establishing underground organizations among them.

At that time, we also worked among the chiefs of ten households and a hundred households, who were at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy of the puppet state of Manchukuo. Because we respected the interests of the people and established our relations with the local inhabitants in accordance with the code of conduct of the revolutionary army, we left an excellent impression on the people. While staying at the village of Solgol the guerrillas gave the peasants a helping hand with many jobs. Some of us brought bush clover down from the mountain and even mended the fences of the villagers with whom we were billeted.

The story of an axe, well-known from the reminiscences of Park Yong Sun, occurred during our stay in the village.

One day, with a view to helping my Chinese host, I took an axe and a water pail to the Tuman River. In winter the villagers used to fetch drinking water from the river. The water was drawn from a hole made

by breaking the ice with an axe or a pickaxe.

When I had nearly finished breaking a hole in the ice, the sharp head of the tool slipped from the handle and fell into the hole. I raked about for hours with a long pole with hooked prongs on its end, but it was in vain.

I offered a generous price to the master of the house, apologizing to him sincerely for my carelessness. The old man would not accept the money, saying that, although he was too old to help the revolutionary army, he was grateful to me for my helping hand every morning. I insisted on his taking the money, saying that if I were to leave the place without making good his loss, I, the commander, would be violating the discipline of the revolutionary army.

Although I had paid generously for the axe, I was still haunted by the thought of it. No amount of money would be able to make up for the old man's loss of his cherished tool. In the spring of 1959, I asked a group of visitors to old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle in northeast China to apologize once again for me to the old man in the village of Liangshuiquanzi.

To our regret, however, when the group arrived at the village, the old man was no longer in this world.

We crossed the Tuman River, and then, guided by the advance party, climbed Mt. Wangjae at about four or five o'clock one afternoon.

The heads of the revolutionary organizations in the region of the six towns and the political workers, who had been in hiding among the larches on the ridge, came out to meet us.

On the summit of the mountain, which was densely covered with young oak trees, I surveyed the scenery for a long time. There is a saying that a decade changes the world, but this part of the country had been changed in less than three years. The slag heaps from a coal-mine were a new sight that had not existed when we were forming the homeland party organization on Turn Hill, and so was the train that was running along the Onsong-Unggi (Sonbong) line, one small piece of the new Onsong, which had not been there in the autumn of 1930 or in the spring of 1931.

Along with the mountains and the rivers, the people and the revolution had grown and advanced. Since we were here last, new anti-Japanese revolutionary organizations had been created one after another and begun their activity.

The fighters in the six towns and surrounding areas had been enveloping the enemy's administrative machine in an immense steely network of revolutionary organizations in the northern frontier zone of Korea, where the heads of the Japanese military and police structures in charge of keeping the peace boasted of perfect security on the border. Our armed struggle, too, had grown. The guerrilla forces in east Manchuria, for instance, had developed into battalions. The battalions in different counties were to develop into regiments and then into divisions before very long. The armed guerrilla forces of the Korean

communists were active in south and north Manchuria as well. The day when our divisions and corps would advance in force into the homeland and As I stood, lost in these thoughts, I recalled a piece of poetry composed in Chinese characters by General Nam I, which I had learnt at Changdok School from my maternal grandfather. I chanted it in a calm voice:

Grinding my sword wears down Mt. Paektu's rock: My horse gulps and dries the Tuman River. Should a man at twenty fail to subdue the land, Who will in later years call him a man of caliber?

My grandfather had explained to me that General Nam distinguished himself in the battle against invaders from the north and was promoted to the post of minister of the army at the age of twenty. My grandfather encouraged me to become a general or a commander of the vanguard when I was grown up, and to fight the Japanese invaders. Hearing that General Nam was executed on the basis of a false accusation against him by a treacherous subject, I had lamented his death. I resolved to grow up to stand in the van of the war, repulse invaders and fight for the security of my country and my fellow people just as General Nam had done. On the summit of Mt. Wangjae I pledged to myself: "As General Nam repelled the invaders from the north by fighting on the strong basis of the six forts on the northeastern frontier, so we will spread the armed struggle deep into the homeland by drawing on the support of the semi-guerrilla zone created around the six towns, and will trap the Japanese imperialists and destroy them!"

The political workers and heads of revolutionary organizations who assembled on the mountain reported to me the situation in the homeland and the activities they had conducted.

I spoke words of encouragement to them, telling them that the work of laying the mass foundations for the anti-Japanese revolution was proceeding without a hitch in the northern frontier. I also set them the task of developing the armed struggle and extending it into the homeland.

In this question, I laid special emphasis on the task of establishing the semi-guerrilla zone. We intended to establish semi-guerrilla zones in the Onsong area and many other regions of the homeland, secret rendezvous points and other bases for our activities in the dense forests, and thus lay the cornerstone of the armed struggle in the homeland. The meeting on Mt. Wangjae discussed the task of rallying the whole nation as a single political force under the banner of an anti-Japanese national united front on the basis of a worker-peasant alliance, as well as the task of the revolutionary organizations in the homeland in speeding up the development of the mass movement and the preparations for founding the party.

The guerrillas' advance to the Onsong area was a prelude to the spreading of the anti-Japanese armed struggle to the homeland, and it marked a new milestone in the development of the national liberation struggle. It demonstrated at home and abroad our unshakable conviction in the view that the Korean communists had an inalienable and inviolable right to fight for the Korean revolution.

The advance of the anti-Japanese guerrillas to the Onsong area and the meeting on Mt. Wangjae proved the correctness of our policy of establishing semi-guerrilla zones around full-scale guerrilla zones and in the homeland, and that the subjective and objective conditions for the establishment of semi-guerrilla

zones in Jiandao and in the area of the six towns on the northern frontier of Korea were mature.

After this meeting, we visited Ryuda Islet and Paksokgol in Kyongwon (Saeppyol), and Kumsan Hill at Sinhung village in Jongsong County and many other places in the homeland, where we held meetings, gave short courses and conducted political work, mainly for the purpose of teaching the political workers and heads of revolutionary organizations in the homeland the principles and methods of the underground revolutionary struggle.

In the homeland we frequently met with revolutionaries in order to instill in them the Juche-oriented revolutionary line and working methods, and help them to guide the complex practical struggle with due care. The proper political and practical training of the leaders of the revolutionary organizations and their hardcore elements in the homeland was a prerequisite for success in the creation of the semi-guerrilla zones.

The elites who had been sent on the mission of guiding the revolutionary struggle in the homeland became active within the very fabric of the country, in trade unions and peasants' associations, which were concentrating their efforts on the resistance against the Japanese, and they formed revolutionary mass organizations in many parts of the country. These political workers extended the network of their activity to Seoul and other parts of southern Korea.

The party organizations formed in the area on the Tuman River played a decisive role in establishing durable semi-guerrilla zones around the six towns and in pushing forward the revolutionary movement in the homeland.

Following this, the cadres in east Manchuria adopted our policy on the establishment of semi-guerrilla zones, and set out to implement this policy themselves. Some people denied the correctness of our proposal and called it a Rightist deviation, but they were refuted on the spot.

From the spring of 1933, strenuous efforts were made to establish semi-guerrilla zones in the Soviet districts of east Manchuria. Semi-guerrilla zones were established in wide areas?in Luozigou, Dahuang wai, Zhuanjiaolou and Liangshuiquanzi in Wangqing County, in Yanji, Hunchun, Antu and Helong. They made a great contribution to the development of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. Some full-scale guerrilla zones which were unsuitable for defense were reorganized into semi-guerrilla zones.

Many of the village heads who had been appointed by the puppet state of Manchukuo sympathized with us and supported us. The area surrounding Luozigou, for instance, was completely under our control, and nearly all of its inhabitants took our side. The experience of the development of semi-guerrilla zones proved valuable for the activities of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in the Mt. Paektu area in the subsequent years, and the validity of the policy was fully demonstrated through these activities.

The semi-guerrilla zone had proved very effective, so when we established our bases in the Mt. Paektu area on the Yalu River in the latter half of the 1930s, we built secret camps only in the places where the

revolutionary army units were stationed, and established semi-guerrilla zones elsewhere.

We formed revolutionary organizations among the masses, without defining them as either "Red" or "White," and we sent political workers to them. We did not remain in one spot, but moved from place to place, so as to prevent the enemy from discovering the base of our operations. The semi-guerrilla zones produced many patriots such as Jong Tong Chol, Lee Hun, Lee Ju Ik (Lee Chwi) and many others from among the district heads, the heads of a hundred households or ten households, sub-county chiefs, policemen and self-defense corps men. In those days we planted clever men as our operatives in the lowest administrative organs of the enemy.

We also won over many other junior officials, so that they supported the revolution. During daylight, they pretended to work enthusiastically for Manchukuo; at night, they helped us, guiding the revolutionary army on the march, meeting operatives from the revolutionary army to hand over information they had collected during the day, and collecting goods to be sent to support the revolutionary army.

The semi-guerrilla zones established in east Manchuria and Korea became reliable satellites which protected the army and the people in the liberated areas and the people's government established there, as well as the achievements of the struggle for democracy. Drawing on the support of the full-scale guerrilla zones and the semi-guerrilla zones which had been established in the vast area surrounding the former, the anti-Japanese guerrillas penetrated deep into the enemy-ruled area, revolutionized the masses, and expanded the mass organizations as well as the vanguard organizations of the party and Young Communist League.

They were thus able to strengthen the mass foundations of the anti-Japanese armed struggle and switch from the defensive to the offensive. As we went over to the offensive in the war against the Japanese, we were able to break the enemy's tight economic blockade and find easier solutions to the problem of food, the greatest headache in the life of the guerrilla zone.

The semi-guerrilla zones enabled us to overcome the Leftist deviation that had discriminated between "Red" and "White" territories and driven a large number of people over to the enemy side, and also to rally broad sections of the population into a single political force under the banner of the anti-Japanese national united front. They also contributed greatly to the elimination of flunkeyism and dogmatism, and the establishment of the principle of Juche in the development of the Korean revolution. Luozigou and Liangshuiquanzi were the most exemplary of all the semi-guerrilla zones in the Wangqing area.

Lee Kwang rendered distinguished service in transforming Luozigou into a semi-guerrilla zone. When he was dispatched there, he built up strong footholds for us by working among the soldiers of the anti-Japanese army of Chinese nationalists as well as among people from the Independence Army.

Luozigou had been made a major base of the independence movement led by Lee Tong Hwi and his group since the beginning of the 1920s. The old people who had joined him in the Independence Army movement had great influence in the area. Under the auspices of these people, Lee Kwang was able to

educate and organize the inhabitants on revolutionary lines. Many able political workers were sent to Luozigou to help transform it into a semi-guerrilla zone. Some of them laid down their lives. Choe Jong Hwa, who contributed greatly to the work of revolutionizing Luozigou, was one who died there.

Park Ku Song, an able detachment commander of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, and Choe Kwang were working underground at Luozigou in those days.

The enemy formed reactionary organizations such as the concord society or cooperative society in that area and made frantic efforts to stamp out the revolutionary forces, whereas we formed large mass organizations like the Anti-Japanese Association and united all the patriots. Luozigou also served as food-supply base for the revolutionary masses of people in Wangqing.

Whenever there was a food crisis in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, messengers were sent to a revolutionary organization in Luozigou to fetch emergency supplies. The members of the revolutionary organization in Luozigou would carry loads of cereal on their backs as far as Shimen at Shiliping and deliver them to the people from Wangqing. Even after Luozigou was occupied by the enemy, food was still carried from there to liberated areas.

It would be no exaggeration to say that, from the latter half of 1935, when the guerrilla zone was disbanded and the main force of the KPRA left on its expedition to north Manchuria, the revolutionaries in Wangqing County survived by eating food from Luozigou. Some of the revolutionary masses who took refuge from the enemy's "punitive" operations on the hill to the west of Luozigou also ate the food from Luozigou during the autumn and winter of 1935 as did the soldiers of the 3rd company of Wangqing.

Luozigou became such an excellent source of food supplies for the a natural revolutionaries in Wangqing partly because the place was nary surrounded by fertile land, where even passing beggars were welcomed to share meals of millet, but more especially because many revolutionary organizations had taken root there and given the inhabitants a good education.

Kim Ryong Un, a head of a hundred households in Luozigou, a grassroots civil-servant who enjoyed the confidence of the Manchukuo authorities, was a member of our organization. He took advantage of his official position in order to help us revolutionaries a great deal. In order to prevent the guerrilla operatives from infiltrating into the walled town and the people from maintaining secret contact with the revolutionary army, the enemy strictly controlled the flow of people going in and out of the town by posting young men on guard at all times, while at the same time taking stringent measures against the smuggling of food and consumer goods out of the town. The guards were each equipped with a club, which served as a sort of credential issued by the puppet state of Manchukuo.

When soldiers of the revolution army went to Luozigou to obtain food, Kim Ryong Un used to select only young men under our influence for guard duty. When the soldiers who had come for food reached the town, the guards would hand over their clubs to them, then run back to the head of a hundred households. Under his direction they collected food and delivered it to the provisions detail.

Members of revolutionary organizations in Luozigou would coax soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army into selling their ammunition to them. One shop in the town was run by a veteran of the Young Communist League. In order to obtain goods to assist the revolutionary army, he swore an oath of brotherhood with soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army. One puppet army soldier, who desperately loved money, would buy things at low prices in various places and then ask the shopkeeper to sell them for him at a high price.

The soldier did this because, if he were discovered selling things himself, he would be punished. He swore brotherhood with the shopkeeper and even sold him ammunition. The shopkeeper bought it at 25 fen a piece and sent it on to the revolutionary army. As many as five thousand cartridges were obtained in this way.

This is merely one simple instance proving the validity and effectiveness of the semi-guerrilla zone.

The semi-guerrilla zone established around the village of Liangshuiquanzi in the southern tip of the Wangqing area gave a great support to the revolutionary army. The revolutionary organizations in that village sent food and goods to the liberated area on dozens of occasions.

In those years, we obtained much of our cereals, clothing, matches, drugs, explosives, salt and other essentials required for the guerrilla zone from the revolutionary organizations in Onsong and Liangshuiquanzi.

Salt was the scarcest commodity in the guerrilla zone. Things were so hard that we had to satisfy our craving for salt by putting a tiny grain of it into our mouths after eating every five spoonfuls of gruel. In order to make life impossible in the guerrilla zone, the enemy used every conceivable means to stop food and salt finding its way there. In autumn, the peasants were forced to bring all their harvests into the stores of the concentration villages under the enemy's control, and then receive daily rations based on the number of mouths in each household. The enemy knew that any surplus food would find its way across into the guerrilla zone.

The enemy even went so far as to form anti-contraband squads, the salt police, and have them make surprise searches of the peasants' houses. Any surplus of soy sauce and bean paste was taxed, and the owners of the surplus were whipped with triangular wooden sticks. In the autumn of 1934, we sent a large group of peoples including 30 men from the 2nd company with horses, and even some children, to Liangshuiquanzi to obtain salt. It was 50 miles to the village and back from Wangqing.

Notified in advance of the salt operations the revolutionary organization of the village made piles of salt near the bank of the Tuman River with the salt that they had obtained from the underground revolutionary organizations in Onsong and the Namyang shipping agency. They met the salt convoy near the river.

The convoy loaded two to three sacks of salt on each of the horses and carried them to Sancidao safely. The remainder was transported to the guerrilla base, 20 to 30 kilograms on each man's back. Some of the



salt was exchanged for flour at Luozigou.

Most of the supplies which the organization of Liangshuiquanzi sent to us came from the six towns including Onsong on the northern frontier of the homeland. The people there also obtained many of the goods they sent to the guerrilla base from Tumen and Longjing, because it was impossible to procure large amounts of consumer goods in the homeland, which was under the the strict surveillance and control. People in the organizations in the homeland would cross the river in secret and travel to commercial centres like Tumen and Longjing to buy essentials which were later sent to anti-Japanese guerrilla bases through the appropriate channels.

Tumen and Longjing were in effect our reliable sources of supplies. For this reason, we seldom attacked such places as Tumen, Longjing and Baicaogou, where many of our revolutionary organizations were working underground. Once in the early days of our guerrilla war, our comrades attacked Baicaogou. Immediately after the raid, Lee twang's father informed us of the adverse effect the battle had on the rich people whom he had intended to draw into the united front. He said they had been frightened by the attack. From then on, we refrained from attacking such places. The semi-guerrilla zones in the six towns rendered historical and highly meritorious services to the survival of the soldiers and civilians in Wangqing and other liberated areas.

We established a large number of concealed bases of activity in the enemy-ruled areas, in addition to the full-scale guerrilla zones and semi-guerrilla zones. These bases supported the military actions and political activities of the guerrillas as well as providing liaison links. The combination of underground revolutionary organizations and liaison points provided a type of temporary and mobile base, which was established in many large cities such as Longjing, Hunchun, Tumen, Laotougou, and Baicaogou and along the railways in the enemy area.

Whenever I recall the unforgettable days when the semi-guerrilla zones were being established in Jiandao and in the homeland, I remember Oh Jung Hwa, a man who made a most powerful impression on me.

On his release from the Sodaemun prison in Seoul, Oh Jung Hwa took a train bound for the north, stopped at his wife's family home in the vicinity of Huimudong for a few days to recuperate, and then immediately returned to Shixian and came to see me.

His release and his reappearance in Wangqing were a great joy and consolation to me at the time when I had just arrived in the guerrilla zone from my expeditions to south and north Manchuria.

The first thing he asked for in the interview with me was a major assignment. Judging from his unhealthy complexion, I thought he needed a few months of convalescence, but since he insisted on having something to do, I told him to establish a semi-guerrilla zone in some part of the area around Gayahe.

District No. 5, in which he worked was adjacent to Liangshuiquanzi, Tumen, Yanji, Baicaogou, Daduchuan and other major bases of the enemy's "punitive" forces, and in Gayahe there was a substation

of the Japanese consulate police. Liucaigou was raided by the enemy early in January 1933, and later Sishuiping was attacked twice by the “punitive” forces. Though he had been released from prison, Oh Jung Hwa himself was being shadowed by an enemy agent. But he could not conceal his joy at the assignment he had received.

I gave him the assignment of establishing a semi-guerrilla zone near Gayahe because the area was so close to the enemy's bases and also because the area was a frequent target of enemy attack. The assignment was difficult and dangerous, but I had every confidence in Oh Jung Hwa.

He had already made a strong impression upon me when I first met him in the autumn of 1930, an impression that gave me confidence in him. At that time I had a serious talk with him in his own house. When I came out after the conversation, I found several sturdy young men standing alertly on watch outside the fence. Similar young men were also on guard at the entrance to the village. These arrangements demonstrated his working ability and his revolutionary attitude to me in a very powerful way.

His revolutionary prowess found brilliant expression in rallying the masses to action. As the first step towards giving the village a revolutionary training, he obtained a pair of hair-clippers and formed a scissors association which enlisted all the villagers. In those days, ordinary barbers' shops charged 15 fen for a haircut but Oh Jung Hwa charged only five fen. He bought books with the money he earned in this manner, and taught the members of the association how to read and write. Interested in being able to read as well as in a cheap haircut, people participated in the work of the association with great enthusiasm. In this way Oh Jung Hwa educated the villagers.

After providing them with the basics of enlightenment he formed the Lingdong Friendship Association by merging the old boys' association, schoolmates' association and friendship association. The new friendship association was a legal organization of young people and students in Dunhua and Yanji, Hunchun, Helong and Wangqing?the localities situated to the east of Haerbaling.

Oh Jung Hwa frequently prepared and produced dramatic performances in order to give the villagers a revolutionary training. When he wrote a script himself, his cousins, of whom there were very many, would divide the parts among themselves, make the scenery, direct their own performances and stage a perfect show.

After inspiring the people with revolutionary enthusiasm in this manner, Oh Jung Hwa first accepted his own family and relations into the revolutionary organization, and then enlisted all the villagers. Both before and after the winter meeting at Mingyuegou, he and Kang Sang Jun, Jo Chang Dok and Yu Se Ryong helped with the procurement of weapons, a fundamental task in the preparations for the formation of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

The weapons they had captured from the enemy at the risk of their lives were a significant contribution to the equipment of the special detachment whose members included Choe In Jun, Han Hung Gwon, Kang

Sang Jun and Kim Un Sik. Just as we intended, Oh Jung Hwa established an excellent semi-guerrilla zone in part of district No. 5, the district which was first in the line of the enemy's attack. He also carried out in good faith the task of establishing bases for activity in the enemy-held area. The Chonil Printing Works in Tumen, which he transformed into a major base for our activity, became the eyes and ears of the revolutionary army.

The enemy regarded Oh Jung Hwa and his family as a thorn in his side, and was watching for a chance to eliminate them. In the spring of 1933, a small guerrilla army group captured a secret letter from the Japanese consulate in Longjing to their police station in Shixian. It contained a directive ordering the killing of the Os.

As soon as we learned of the secret instructions, we sent guerrillas to save the family. The guerrillas swiftly evacuated all 31 of the Os to Shiliping.

In the summer of 1933, Oh Jung Hwa, who had fought undauntedly and tirelessly every minute of all his life, always racing about at the speed of a short-distance runner, was unfortunately arrested by the enemy at a secret rendezvous in Beifengwudong. He was murdered on the spot immediately he was captured. We have no way of knowing what his last moments were like or how he faced his death. The enemy agents who murdered him and his comrades disappeared leaving their vile deed as an eternally unsolvable mystery.

When old man O Thae Hui came rushing to the scene of the murder in furious haste from Shiliping, his son was lying, bloody and battered, his eyes open~ near the rendezvous. The eyeballs, in which the spark of life still lingered, reflected the blue sky of the guerrilla zone on which he used to gaze with such fondness when alive.

But the mouth was closed more tightly than in his life. From the sight of it the old man knew that his son had not betrayed the secret of the organization in order to save his life. The heroism of this death only grieved the old man all the more. "You have lived a life of only 34 years, but it was an honorable life. A long life does not always mean happiness. But you have left me too soon! How heart-rending your death will be to General Kim Il Sung, who treasured you so much!" The old man thought as he held his dead son in his arms.

I could not believe that he was dead. How could it be that a man who had talked and walked so much, and achieved 50 much in his work, living like a blazing fire, should die so quietly?

No one was with him at the moment of his death. He was left lying there on the ground, leaving not a single word of behest. If he had had something to tell me what would it have been? He might well have asked me to give him another assignment, since the semi-guerrilla zone was already established.

If he had lived, I would have entrusted him with greater responsibility. According to the revolutionary ethics, entrusting a man with many assignments is an expression of the greatest love and the greatest

possible confidence in him.

Our revolution had lost yet another distinguished organizer and propagandist, a man who was loved by everyone in Jiandao, another loyal and stalwart pillar and support, who had inspired the people with pride and struck terror into the heart of the enemy. It was a heart-rending blow struck just at the moment when our revolution was surging ahead in east Manchuria.

Oh Jung Hwa had awakened the revolutionary consciousness of the masses and roused them to action by sacrificing himself. Though he was gone, new heroes sprang up like bamboo shoots after the rain in the soil of the semi-guerrilla zones where his blood had been spilt, heroes who would carry the great war against the Japanese imperialists to ever greater heights.

## 7.3. The Choice between the Soviet and the People's Revolutionary Government

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With the establishment of guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area, the type of political power to be established became the subject of wide-scale discussion. In order to maintain and administer those guerrilla zones which were liberated areas, it was necessary to set up a government which would organize the economic activities of the people, educate them and develop culture in the area under its jurisdiction. Without establishing a government in the guerrilla zones, which were the embryo of a state, it would be impossible to provide the people with a livelihood and mobilize them in the struggle.

From the autumn of 1932, therefore, the communists in east Manchuria undertook the historic task of establishing the government in the guerrilla zones. On the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution in the same year, a mass meeting was held in Gayahe, Wangqing County, and the establishment of a Soviet government was proclaimed. Almost simultaneously, Soviet power was established in Wangougou and Sandaowan in Yanji County. The establishment of the revolutionary government in the guerrilla zones must be regarded as a significant step towards realizing the people's cherished desire.

In its initial stage, I, too, was pleased at the establishment of Soviet power in the guerrilla zones. I considered that the name of the government was not important as long as the government championed the people's interests.

In those days "Soviet enthusiasm" was sweeping throughout east Manchuria. The establishment of Soviet power was recognized as a historical trend by revolutionaries and progressive people in all countries which aspired to socialism and communism. This hot wind swept through Europe and Asia. The establishment of the Chinese Soviet in Ruijin and of the Nghe Tinh Soviet in Vietnam are clear examples.

Even those who regarded the Korean revolution as a bourgeois democratic revolution spoke about a worker-peasant Soviet government.

The "Action Program of the Communist Party of Korea" which had been drafted by Choe Song U, a Korean, and other people working at the Comintern headquarters, in cooperation with the officials in charge of the Oriental Department of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (Kuusinen, Magyar and Okano), proposed the immediate task of "establishing a Soviet state of workers and peasants," along with the complete independence of Korea.

Unconditional support and acceptance of the Soviet line in revolutionary practice was a matter of common sense beyond dispute in the international communist movement and was regarded as a criterion

for distinguishing between the stances of communist revolution and opportunism. The establishment of a Soviet government was regarded as the most important task by the communist parties and communist organizations in capitalist countries, to say nothing of the colonies and semi-colonial countries. In fact, Soviet power became the ideal of the entire world proletariat.

The Soviet idea was so very influential because it was recognized as the only type of government capable of putting an end to all manner of exploitation and oppression and building a welfare society that would regard the interests of the working masses as absolute. A free and peaceful new world without exploitation and oppression was the age-long dream and ideal of humanity.

The newborn Soviet government in Russia had proved its unprecedented effectiveness in suppressing the insurrection of the overthrown exploiting class, defending the country from the invasion of allied imperialist forces, rehabilitating the economy, and pressing forward with the building of socialism. The triumphant advance of Soviet socialism aroused an admiration among the people which was little short of belief in an illusion.

It was by no means unreasonable for mankind to regard the Soviet Union as a beacon-light and accept the Soviet as the best and most advanced of all forms of government. It was natural that the people of Jiandao, which was adjacent to the Soviet Union and subject to its influence in many ways, should be swayed by illusions about Soviet power. On my return to Wangqing from the campaigns in south and north Manchuria, I was dumbfounded at the complaints against the Soviet policy that could be heard in all parts of the guerrilla zone. These complaints indicated serious problems that we could not overlook.

I saw instantly that the rumors spread by disgruntled people contained some truth. As I traveled around the guerrilla zone, I learned about the people's attitude towards Soviet power in greater detail. My constant contacts and candid conversations with hundreds of people gave me a full picture of the consequences of Leftist Soviet policy.

The inhabitants of the guerrilla zone began to be disillusioned by Soviet power from the time when the government, following the slogan of the immediate introduction of socialism, proclaimed the abolition of private property, and brought all personal property and real estate under communal ownership. Everything was communalized, from land and provisions to the farming tools and implements such as sickles, hoes and pitchforks that had belonged to individual peasants. After this sweeping introduction of communal ownership, the Soviet government subjected all the inhabitants of the guerrilla zone - men and women, young and old - to the new order of communal life, communal labor and communal distribution. This was the life of the cartel proclaimed by the Soviet radicals.

This policy amounted to sending kindergarten children to university without giving them primary and secondary education. The Soviet government also expropriated, without compensation, all the rich farmers and landowners, regardless of whether they were large landowners, small landowners, pro-Japanese landowners or anti-Japanese landowners, and even confiscated their cattle, horses and provisions.

Those landowners who remained in the guerrilla zone even after the land of east Manchuria had been divided into "Red territory" and "White territory," were in general patriotic and strongly opposed to the Japanese. They gave enthusiastic support to the guerrilla army when the communists were raising an army in Wangqing.

One of those progressive landowners was a Chinese named Zhang Shi-ming. At the time of its large-scale "punitive" invasion, in the spring of 1932, the Japanese Jiandao task force even burnt down his grain store. Even though the "punitive" forces ordered a forced evacuation at bayonet-point, Zhang Shi-ming remained in the guerrilla zone, instead of moving to Daduchuan. His previous grievances against the Japanese were augmented that spring. Landowner though he was, he had given unstinting material and moral support to the people in the guerrilla zone.

"Officers and men from the guerrilla army," he would say to the guerrillas who came to him for contributions. "I am remaining here in this valley because I hate to see the Japanese. Please at least drive them away from Daduchuan!"

The people in the guerrilla zone were on good terms with him. But the Soviet government drove even this landowner away to the enemy-ruled area. He pleaded with the Soviet government for permission to live in the guerrilla zone, but the Soviet rejected his request.

"The Soviet government has decided to expropriate the property of all landowners," the Soviet informed him. "It is true that your anti-Japanese spirit is strong and you have given generous support to the work of the guerrilla zone, but you are a member of the exploiting class, and we are obliged to eliminate you. Leave this place quickly."

All the property of this landowner who had given wholehearted support to the revolution was confiscated there and then and put into a storehouse which was at the disposal of the Soviet government. The beggared landowner left in tears to go to Daduchuan, where the Japanese forces were stationed.

Those who obeyed the order to carry out a purge at that time even took the children's flower-patterned shoes from the chests at landowners' houses. The Chinese people had an interesting custom according to which, when a female baby was born to them, they prepared the shoes for the children the female baby would have when she grew and married. Such shoes were called "flower-patterned shoes." They used to make shoes of various sizes for babies younger than one year, for one-year olds, two-year olds and so on upwards, and then store them in chests. The chests contained some shoes as small as thimbles.

Having meekly allowed even these shoes to be taken away, what thoughts would these landlords carry with them as they left the guerrilla zone?

The valley of Xiaowangqing was crowded with cattle and horses that had been confiscated from propertied people. There were more than enough of them to stock a sizable farm, and every young person

in the guerrilla zone went about on horseback. It was what one might call a fashion under Soviet rule.

The Leftist elements even regarded Chinese women's customs of wearing earrings and wrapping their feet tight to check their growth as evils to be combated. During the first half of the 1930s, Leftist abuses were rampant in east Manchuria, and this Leftist tyranny subjected the sacred revolutionary principles to a severe test. How did this Leftist wind come to sweep the whole of east Manchuria? Were all the revolutionaries in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao hooligans or lunatics?

No. The overwhelming majority of the communists who were administering the guerrilla zone were good people with noble revolutionary ideals and warm hearts. They loved people and nourished the aspiration to justice more warmly than others. How was it, then, that these sympathetic and discreet people committed the irretrievable error of advocating and implementing this Leftist policy?

We identified the cause in the policy itself and in the ideological immaturity of the people who had determined the line. These absurdities in revolutionary practice were produced by the unrealistic directives issued by people at the top of the hierarchy who, in ignorance of specific circumstances, aped the ill-digested principles of the classics and lessons of earlier experience.

In those years, the blind rejection of people, indiscriminate elimination, overthrow and ostracism were considered to be in keeping with a thoroughgoing class approach, the qualities of the most advanced revolutionaries.

The instance of a widow who lent at a small rate of interest the money she had earned by weaving cloth by hand was labeled as a usurer, so that her promissory note was thrown into fire and even her capital confiscated by some peasants in Wangqing, shows what a sacred cow this Leftist practice had become. Unless they were misled by some of their leaders, the simple peasants could not have resorted to such absurdities.

Once I was surprised to hear how a company commander, Lee Ung Man, had joined the guerrilla army in Wangqing.

In the early days of recruiting, only people from the working class, poor peasantry and hired farm hands were admitted to the armed ranks. Lee Ung Man's father had owned a little more than three hectares of sterile hillside land, so he had not been considered a poor peasant. He had applied to join the ranks more than once, but his earnest requests had been turned down because he came from an undesirable family. He had been told that a man with more than three hectares was a middle peasant.

After many days of mental torture, he had sold his father's land without his parents' knowledge, bought a box of Browning pistols, and taken it to the armed group, begging to be admitted. Only then had he been accepted. He was glad that he had become a guerrilla, but his family was at a loss, left without any means of livelihood.



My resolve to combat Leftist evils grew still firmer after I moved to Jiandao. I have been combating them all my life ever since. My experience in those days has been of great help in my postliberation struggle to counter Leftist evils and eliminate bureaucratic tendencies.

Under the cloak of slick revolutionary phrases and ultra-party slogans, the Leftists continually mock the masses, abuse and deceive them, in pursuit of their own glory and advancement. From these selfish motives, they depict themselves as tanks or armored vehicles advancing in the forefront of struggle. Thus counterrevolutionaries make use of the cloak of Leftism. So all communists must always be highly vigilant and not allow the Leftists to get a foothold in their camp.

The Leftist Soviet policy plunged the guerrilla bases into a state of vacillation and confusion which was difficult to rectify. A large number of families, disillusioned and discontented with the Soviet policy, departed for enemy-ruled territory.

One night, on our way to Sancidao where Choe Chun Guk, the political instructor of the 2nd company, was working, my men and I met a middle-aged man and his family who were fleeing from the guerrilla zone. The man was leaving by night for fear of being labeled a counterrevolutionary if he was caught traveling in daylight. The five members of his family were carrying a few bundles or almost empty-handed. The three children were helped by their parents as they hobbled along.

The man, who looked about 50, trembled at the sight of our armed group. He seemed struck with dismay at having been discovered by a guerrilla commander. "Have you done anything wrong?" I asked in a gentle voice, drawing the three shivering children to me one by one.

"No, nothing."

"Why, then, are you leaving the guerrilla zone?"

"It is too hard to live here...."

"Where are you going, then? Things will be even worse in the enemy area, won't they?"

"We have been living here because we couldn't endure the Japanese atrocities, so why should we go back to them? We are going deeper into the mountains to live by slashing and burning the land where no one will disturb our peace.

At his words my heart felt weary with oppression. I wondered if they could find the peace of mind they sought in a deeper recess of the mountain than Macun, a recess which offered no guarantee of a livelihood in the days to come.

"The thaw has not yet set in, have you food enough to last until it does?" I asked. "No. We shall live as long as we can, and we may die.... That's all there is to it. My very life is a nuisance to me now.

As she listened to him, the sobs of the man's wife shook her shoulders. The three children who were in my arms also burst into tears.

I fought back my own tears as I was standing blankly in the darkness. If all the people left one by one in this manner, on whom could we rely in making the revolution? Why had our revolution entered this dead end? The consequences of the reckless Soviet policy had been too destructive.

"Things will be put to rights soon. So don't feel too discouraged. Let's wait till things are smoothed over."

I sent him and his family back home with an escort of my men. I changed my plan of staying overnight in the barracks of the 2nd company and called on old man Choe Ja Ik at Xidapo. The heart-rending incident of the miserable family prompted me to try to dig into the depths of the people's minds. Choe Ja Ik was the father of Choe In Jun, who, after joining the Wangqing special detachment, had been promoted to company commander and then to regimental commander of an independent brigade before he fell in battle. Whenever I visited Sancidao, I had paid a call on Choe Ja Ik.

Being a well-informed man, he had even served as secretary of the northern political and military administration headed by So Il. Moreover, he was open-minded and candid, and told me many instructive things whenever I met him.

"Old man, how are you getting along these days?" I greeted him.

"I think I am living just because I am alive," he said bluntly in reply to my greetings. Believing that his intonation expressed the people's mind, I asked again, "Is your life in the guerrilla zone so hard?"

At this question, the old man flew into a rage and began to grumble, saying:

"I put up with the Soviet government when it took away my work animals and farm implements. I guessed that we were following the example of collective farming in Russia, for which the Russians had collected such things. But when I saw the people from the Soviet collecting spoons and chopsticks a few days ago for what they called a communal eating house, I spat at them.

I said, 'Shall we old people leave our under-floor-heated rooms and walk to and from the public eating house in the cold weather three times every day? I cannot live in this manner any longer. If you are going to create a hell and call it a commune or cartel, do it yourselves, young men. We are already out of breath and can't keep up with you any longer.' And then there was what they called the purge of feudalism, when old people were subjected to criticism by their daughters-in-law at mass meetings. Has anything so ridiculous ever happened in the five-thousand-year-long history of our country? And still, my son, In Jun, told me not to slander the Soviet. So I was going to break his back."

If the father of a commander of the guerrilla army could spat on Soviet policy, there was clearly no need

to probe the attitude of other people any further.

Later, during the terrible days of the ultra-Leftist struggle against the “Minsaengdan,” and during the sad days when the soldiers and the people were bidding a tearful farewell to one another prior to the break-up of the guerrilla zones, I often recalled the old man lamenting over the things that were happening, pounding his breast with his fists, at the time when I met him.

Less than half a year after the establishment of the Soviet government, the relations between the Korean and Chinese peoples had deteriorated again. Most of the landowners who had been expropriated were Chinese, so it was natural that a situation similar to one at the time of the May 30 Uprising should recur. The Chinese nationalist army, which was opposed to the Japanese, once again became hostile to the Korean communists. The national salvation army and Chinese landowners were now our enemies, in addition to the Japanese and Manchukuo armies.

The anti-Japanese guerrilla army found itself once again in the restricted circumstances of the days of its establishment, when its small units had to hide in the back-rooms of other people's houses. The guerrillas once again had to be billeted cautiously on Korean settlements. It was quite impossible to rename ourselves as Chinese special detachments. Whenever they met us, the national salvation army units would attack us, calling us "gaolibangzi" (a Chinese derogatory term for the Koreans). Guerrilla activity was effectively reduced to a semi-underground struggle.

Everything that had been built up by our year-long struggle was being brought to naught. Our comrades began to develop divergent opinions of Soviet policy. Some of them said that, since things had come to this, we should go to Russia to learn the methods of revolution and then make a fresh start; some of them insisted that, since the way the people in Jiandao were doing things would make a mess of the revolution, we should return to our own ground and fight in our own way; and another man let slip that it would be better to go home and fulfill his filial duty to his parents than to fight for something which was not much like a revolution. The Chinese comrade who wished to go home was allowed to do so, and another Chinese comrade who wished to study in the Soviet Union was sent there. Even in this state of affairs, the people in charge of the guerrilla zone could not bring themselves to change their policy. The east Manchuria ad hoc committee which was in a position of leadership had no defined line of its own with which to amend the policy of the Coin-intern.

Somebody had to smooth over this chaotic situation and save the guerrilla zone from collapse, even at the risk of being stigmatized as a Rightist. This task required determination and the formulation of new theses capable of countering the Leftist Soviet line. It was about this time that I wrote a thesis on eliminating factionalism and strengthening the unity of the revolutionary ranks and published it in a pamphlet.

I had made up my mind to take issue with Tong Chang-rong at Macun over the type of government to be established. However, county party secretary Lee Yong Guk and a few others dissuaded me from doing so. They said it would be useless to argue with him because the "Decision of the East Manchuria ad hoc

Committee on the Great Program of Building the Soviet" had already been issued to its subordinate units and a Soviet government had been established at Sishuiping. They even warned me that if the argument went the wrong way, I might be punished. Lee Yong Guk told me briefly how Kim Paek Ryong had been charged as a Rightist because of his careless criticism of the Soviet.

Kim Paek Ryong was working as a member of a county party committee in north Manchuria. At the time when propaganda was at its height prior to the formation of the Soviet in Jiandao, he came, by way of the east Manchuria ad hoc committee, to Wangqing district No. 5, which had been selected as the first demonstration unit for the establishment of the Soviet government.

When he heard that a Soviet government was going to be set up in the district, he said that it was premature to have it in east Manchuria. Because of this single statement, he had been stigmatized as a Right opportunist and became the target of active measures. The incident ended with his escape to north Manchuria.

In the winter of 1934, two years after I heard the story of his case from Lee Yong Guk, I met Kim Paek Ryong at Badaohezi, Ningan County. At the time he was the secretary of the district party committee.

He recollected with sadness the incident in the autumn of 1932 in which he had been branded as a Rightist capitulator because of his statement that a Soviet government was premature. By the time I met him, the Leftist Soviet policy had been rectified, and the people's revolutionary government had long been administering the guerrilla zone, so he did not hesitate to criticize the proponents of the reckless, Leftist Soviet line. In my talk with him I found him an extremely intelligent and upright man.

I asked him why he had said that it was premature to establish the Soviet.

"The reason is simple," Kim Paek Ryong replied. "When I was in Gayahe, I talked with a lot of peasants and found that they did not even know the meaning of the word Soviet. So I said it was premature to create a Soviet which was beyond the people's comprehension."

In fact, the people in those days did not understand the meaning of the word, and this fact indicated their lack of preparedness.

The old people in Gayahe who participated in the election to the district Soviet took the word "Soviet" to mean automatic gun.

"I watched the platform after the election," one of them remarked, "for I had been expecting automatic guns from the Soviet, the guns that would kill many Japanese. But it produced only a red flag."

Some of the people from Macun, who attended the ceremony for the establishment of the Soviet at Wangqing district No. 2, mistook the word "Soviet" for soebochi (tin pail). Another villager was said to have asked voters to take a close look at the Soviet and see whether it was large or small. Some other

villagers were said to have gone out with baskets to gather wild vegetables, because they had nothing special to offer the Soviet, an important guest.

These subjective interpretations of the meaning of the word or comical mistakes were due, of course, to the people's ignorance, and in particular to ineffective propaganda on the part of their leaders. The titles of public lectures, for instance, were full of loanwords such as Soviet, kolkhoz and commune which were beyond the people's comprehension. As for the Soviet itself, the propagandists themselves had no clear idea of what it was.

After the establishment of Soviet power everywhere, the radical elements who had been poisoned with Leftist ideas swaggered about, shouting loudly about the dictatorship of the working class, poor peasants and hired farm hands, as if the revolution had already been carried through.

In spite of the advice of the comrades at Wangqing, I did challenge Tong Chang-rong to a debate about the appropriate form of government.

"The birth of the revolutionary government in Jiandao and its proclamation is an event to rejoice at. But, Comrade Tong Chang-rong, I cannot remain a silent onlooker when our policy of the united front is being encroached upon by the Soviet line." Tong Chang-rong looked at me in surprise.

"It is being encroached upon? What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"As I told you at Mingyuegou, we have adopted the line of rallying all the patriotic, anti-Japanese forces, who are interested in our revolution, into a strong political force, and we have striven to implement this line at the cost of our blood in the homeland and Manchuria over the past years. In the course of this struggle, we have united many people, including patriotic believers, shopkeepers and manufacturers, junior officials and even landowners. But the Soviet policy has rejected them all indiscriminately. Until yesterday, they supported or sympathized with the revolution, but now they turn away from it or are opposed to it. The relations between the Korean and Chinese peoples have been aggravated once again."

Tong Chang-rong smiled, patting me on the wrist.

"That is quite possible, but it is not a matter of great importance. What is important is that the Soviet government has met all the requirements of the people. The revolution is triumphing. The workers and peasants, the vast majority of the masses, are following the Soviet government. What is there to be afraid of? I believe that, with the support of the workers and peasants, we can carry out whatever revolution we need. We have to be prepared to lose a minority, don't we?"

"I admit that there may be losses. But why should we reject people who can be won over? Our general strategy is to isolate the enemy as far as possible and win over as many people as possible. That is why we have risked our lives working among the anti-Japanese nationalist forces over the past year. We communists have managed to recover the prestige that was damaged by the May 30 Uprising, and we

have resolved the discord between the Korean and Chinese peoples by dint of painstaking effort. But now there is the danger again that the results of these great efforts may be brought to nothing overnight."

"Comrade Kim Il Sung, surely you are too pessimistic?"

"No. I am in the habit of always looking on the bright side. The revolution will, of course, continue its victorious advance. But, Comrade Tong Chang-rong, I cannot help being deeply worried about the negative consequences of the Leftist policy in east Manchuria. I believe that the party in east Manchuria must give prudent consideration to this matter." "So you mean that the policy should be reconsidered?"

"Yes, the policy should be reconsidered as well as the form of government that shapes the policy."

Tong Chang-rong frowned disapprovingly and then said, "Comrade Kim Il Sung, there may indeed be errors in the policy of the Soviet government, but the form of the government is inviolable. The policy concerning the establishment of Soviet power comes from the center." The argument continued.

He persisted in his opinion, describing the Soviet as an absolute. He was a man of moderate character and kind heart, but a die-hard. He was well-informed, but dogmatic in his thinking and practice.

We resumed the argument on another day, when the point at issue was whether to maintain the Soviet or abandon it, and if it was to be discarded, what form of a new government should be adopted.

I said that, since life had proved that the Soviet was not suited to the guerrilla zone in east Manchuria where the task of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution should be addressed, the Korean and Chinese communists must resolutely change the form of government, and adopt a policy capable of meeting the requirements of the people in order to calm down the chaotic situation.

In reply to my cogent argument, Tong Chang-rong said, "I, too, admit that the Soviet does not suit the specific situation of east Manchuria and that some of its political measures have resulted in losses to the revolution. I now understand why the other day you expressed your apprehension concerning the united-front line being encroached upon by the Soviet line. Comrade Kim Il Sung, the grave developments in east Manchuria in recent months have compelled me to give serious consideration to your warning. To our regret, however, we have not yet decided on a form of government that can replace the Soviet."

I was pleased by this change in the opinion of the secretary of the ad hoc committee. He was no longer the same die-hard who had insisted that the Soviet was the only type of government for the communists at the high tide of revolution when the masses were in buoyant spirits.

"The Commune and the Soviet are the only forms of working-class government that mankind has ever discovered, aren't they?" Tong Chang-rong asked, and gazed at me. His eyes seemed to suggest that, if I had a form that might convince him, he would not choose to object to it. "If that is so, then let us make up a suitable one for ourselves," I said.

"For ourselves? I'm afraid that I'm not such a great genius. How can we make up things that are not mentioned in Marx's classic works?"

I could not agree with this view or attitude which regarded things as immutable and absolute, from which one could not deviate.

"Comrade Tong Chang-rong, did the French working class refer to any classics when they created the Commune? Was the Russian Soviet proposed by the founders of Marxism in their classic works? How can you regard the Soviet as the brainchild of a genius? If the people had not required it, if the Russian situation had not required it, I think the Soviet would not have emerged in the arena of history."

Without giving any sign of what he thought, Tong Chang-rong produced a large tobacco pouch from his pocket, filled his pipe and set it between his lips, then offered the pouch to me. He used to carry the tobacco pouch and the pipe in his hand while inspecting the guerrilla zone. When he met a peasant on the way he would fill the pipe and then offer it to the peasant. He was a man of peculiar character, and this simplicity of his won him love and respect from the people in the guerrilla zone. In winter he went about in a fur cap like those worn by local peasants.

His silence vexed me, but the fact that he refrained from further argument was a good omen. Following my conversation with him, I met Lee Yong Guk, Kim Myong Gyun, Jo Chang Dok and some other military and political cadres, and discussed with them the question of replacing the Soviet with a new revolutionary government. We debated the matter seriously for several days.

For purposes of a smooth discussion, we emphasized the importance of a criterion for defining the form of the government.

I asserted that we must not make the criterion too complicated, and that, since we were all fighting for the people and were their faithful servants, determined to dedicate all our lives to their cause, we must draw the criterion from the character of our revolution at that stage, laying emphasis on whether the government we were going to establish would be able to champion the interests of all sections of the population and whether it would enjoy their enthusiastic support.

On hearing this, my comrades cheered, saying that everything was now clear to them, that a government which was to champion the interests of all sections of the population must be a united-front government, since the term "all sections of the population" would mean not only the workers and poor or hired peasants, but other broad sections of the people, that a united-front government would suit the character of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, and that they would welcome such a government with open arms.

I again emphasized that the united-front government must be a people's revolutionary government based on a worker-peasant alliance. Nowadays, this is known in the history books as the line on the

establishment of the people's revolutionary government.

There is no need to mention the result of our vote, for they believed that the form of people's revolutionary government we chose suited to east Manchuria, where Koreans were the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants, was ideally suited to the character of the Korean revolution which was directed at democracy and against imperialism and feudalism, and that it met the requirements of the people. We discovered the criterion for the form of government in the people's requirements and in a means of championing and representing the people's interests.

After deciding on the form of government, we agreed to set an example in one district and, if the result was accepted as good, to extend the example to other revolutionary districts. District No. 5 was chosen as the unit in which to set an example.

Lee Yong Guk, Kim Myong Gyun and I visited Wangqing district No. 5 and attended the meeting to elect the district committee of the people's revolutionary government. The meeting was held at the village of Xiamudan, two and half a miles away from Sishuiping. The day was the anniversary of the MOPR, a Russian acronym for the International Organization for Assisting Revolutionaries. The Executive Committee of the Comintern decided in 1923 to establish this organization for the purpose of assisting the families of revolutionary martyrs, and set March 18 as the international anniversary of the MOPR.

Jo Chang Dok, chairman of the fifth district Soviet government, showed us into the office of the Soviet, where I talked to about 20 peasants from Gayahe.

"We have decided to set up a new government to replace the Soviet government. It must represent your will. What kind of government would you like to set up?" I asked. An old man rose and answered, "If the government to be set up will make our life easier, we'll ask for nothing more."

I declared excitedly that a people's revolutionary government would be established in place of the Soviet government, and that the new government would be the first genuine people's government in the world history of political power.

"This government will represent and champion the interests of all the people who love their country and their fellow people. It will fulfill their most cherished desires. What are your cherished desires? The people's revolutionary government will fulfill all of your desires to own land, to have the right to work, to educate your children, and to have equality for all."

The people from Gayahe fully supported the line of the people's revolutionary government which I explained to them.

Prior to the ceremony to proclaim the establishment of the people's revolutionary government, we saw to it that all expropriated private property was returned to the former owners. In order to compensate for what had been damaged or consumed after expropriation, Yang Song Ryong even organized an armed



raid on a lumber station. The cattle and horses captured from the enemy in that battle were used by the peasants to cultivate the land distributed to them in the spring of that year.

At the meeting I made a speech to the effect that the people's revolutionary government was truly a people's government, and then the government's ten-point program was announced. This program was later incorporated almost without amendment into the Ten-point Program of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

Still vivid in my memory is the image of the county party secretary, RI Yong Guk, during the meeting at the village in Sishuiping. While everyone was enjoying themselves dancing together, he sat in a corner, shedding tears. I slipped away from the dancing party and walked over to him.

"Comrade Secretary, why are you sad when everyone is dancing?"

Without even attempting to dry the tears trickling down his cheeks, Lee Yong Guk heaved a deep sigh.

"I can't see why these people do not spit at me. The Wangqing people have suffered from Leftist evils entirely because of me. But they thanked me. Commander Kim, you are the man who should receive thanks from them."

"Our people are generous and good-natured. The fact that instead of settling accounts with you the people thanked you, Secretary, means that they have accepted the line of the people's revolutionary government wholeheartedly. From now onwards, let us give our minds only to the future."

"I have not been living in my right mind, but in some other man's. You have opened my eyes to a truth of genuine value. Let us live for the people! What profound meaning there is in this simple motto! I will remember it all my life," Lee Yong Guk firmly resolved, squeezing my hand.

He was not able to live up to his pledge, for the east Manchuria ad hoc committee dismissed him from his post of secretary of the county party committee. The ad hoc committee said that Lee Yong Guk was dismissed because he had belonged to the M-L group and the Wangqing county party committee was guilty of an ultra-Leftist error in implementing the Soviet line. It also said that he was suspected of having been involved in the case of the "Minsaengdan."

The charge that Lee Yong Guk had belonged to the M-L group was not true. When involved in youth work at Xilinhe he had been recommended for the post of secretary of the Young Communist League under the east Manchuria ad hoc committee by a man who had been involved in the M-L group. That was all. It was unreasonable and immoral that the secretary of the county party committee was alone held responsible for all the evils resulting from the ultra-Leftist Soviet line. If Lee Yong Guk had deserved the punishment of dismissal, then what punishment should have been meted out to the people who had imposed the Soviet line upon their subordinates and the men who had forced him to implement the line?

The charge that Lee Yong Guk had been a "Minsaengdan" member was totally unfounded.

I stated on several occasions that he had been neither a factionalist nor a "Minsaengdan" member.

However, while I was in Luozigou for negotiation with Wu Yicheng, Lee Yong Guk was executed on a false charge of being a "counterrevolutionary." His records contained no evidence to prove him to be a "Minsaengdan" member. He had once taken refuge in the Maritime Province of Siberia from the wholesale arrest and he could have lived there in peace as an exile for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, he had returned to Jiandao and plunged into the tempest in order to serve the cause of the revolution.

I still do not understand why it was necessary to label such a faithful and honest man a "Minsaengdan" member.

Not long after the establishment of the people's revolutionary government in the district No. 5, Tong Chang-rong came to me and said, with a pleasant smile on his face, "Comrade Kim Il Sung, we are going to discuss the matter of a change in the political line before long, with the participation of a man sent from the Comintern. I hope that you, Comrade Kim Il Sung, will make the keynote speech, since you have the experience of having established the people's revolutionary government in the district No. 5."

In the summer of that year, an important meeting was held to discuss the change in the political line. The meeting was attended by a man who had been sent to east Manchuria from the Comintern, who brought with him a document concerning the change in the line.

At the meeting I proposed the line of a people's revolutionary government as a united-front government based on a worker-peasant alliance, and explained once again the draft of the government's policy, which included land reform and other democratic measures to be implemented by the government in the fields of the economy, education, culture, public health and military affairs. Our policy was in agreement with the new line formulated by the Comintern. The man from the Comintern expressed his full support for and approval of the line on the establishment of the people's revolutionary government.

The meeting, which lasted many days in an atmosphere of serious debate and ideological struggle, adopted a decision to reorganize the Soviet in accordance with our line of the people's revolutionary government and to combat the evil consequences of the Leftist Soviet line in all the guerrilla zones.

After the meeting, all the Soviets in east Manchuria were reshaped into people's revolutionary governments. In places where the conditions were not ripe, measures were adopted to form peasant committees and gradually reorganize them into a people's revolutionary government. Property that had been expropriated in the name of the abolition of private property and consumed by the people in the guerrilla zones was compensated for by the new government in cash and in kind.

The people's revolutionary government, which was run by the people, its masters, implemented democracy for the popular masses, the overwhelming majority of the population, and exercised

dictatorship over the enemy.

The establishment of the people's revolutionary government in Gayahe and the meeting that had adopted the changed line led to the emergence of a people's revolutionary government in every district of the revolutionary organization in east Manchuria, and also in every village. Each district people's revolutionary government had its own chairman and vice-chairman, and nine to eleven executive committee members. It also had departments of the land, military affairs, economics, food, communications, and medical services.

This was the embryo and prototype of the people's government to be established in the liberated homeland.

The people's revolutionary government distributed land to the peasants without compensation and enforced an eight-hour working day in all the guerrilla zones. In those days there were approximately a thousand workers in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla base. Most of them were lumbermen, raftsmen and charcoal burners. Five hundred of them worked at Sancidao, the administrative center of the district No. 2, and the other five hundred at the foot of the Fangcao Mountains near Macun. They all benefited from the eight-hour working day.

The people's revolutionary government took stringent measures to ensure that private entrepreneurs doubled the workers' pay.

The government also placed the forests in and around the guerrilla zones under its control and prohibited the felling of trees without its permission.

In these circumstances, the Japanese manager of the Qinhe lumber station at Daduchuan and Chinese lumber dealers came to the guerrilla zone authorities to negotiate permission for timber-felling. The matter was settled so that the purchasers paid one yuan for a piece of lumber, but payment was made in kind, in items such as clothing, food and other consumer items.

The people's revolutionary government established the Children's Corps schools and gave the children free education, and it ensured that all the population received free medical care at the hospitals at Lishugon and Shiliping in the guerrilla zone. A law on women's equality was enforced and women participated in public life and work, on a basis of equal rights with men.

Printing works, tailors' shops and weapons repair works were operated in the guerrilla zone.

Cultural activities in the guerrilla zones produced many famous songs of lasting significance for our people, and theatrical art flourished, producing many original works, which later developed into such masterpieces as *The Sea of Blood*, *The Fate of a Self-Defence Corps Man*, and so on.

The term "Soviet," symbolic of inhumanity and expropriation, remained only a memento of the past. The

people who had fled to the enemy-held area from the evils of the Soviet policy began to return to the guerrilla zones one by one or in groups. Old people freely visited their neighbors, carrying their pipes at their waists. The guerrilla zone rang once again with the laughter of a large and harmonious community of people who trusted, loved and relied on one another.

The valleys and mountains of Wangqing, which had withstood the severe winter, began to be adorned with various kinds of rustling flowers: the throbbing of a new life was in evidence.

This life roused such envy that the son of a landowner, who had been held hostage at Xiaowangqing by Commander Chai's unit, begged to be allowed to live in the guerrilla zone.

## 7.4. The Man from the Comintern

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In April 1933, when our struggle against the Leftist deviation was at its height in the guerrilla base, Tong Chang-rong came to see me in the company of a middle-aged man dressed in *dabushanzi*. The man appeared like a gentleman and had a gentleman's manners. Seeing me from a distance, he smiled and raised his hand above his head in a gesture of greeting. His eyes were shining in such delight, I might have taken him for an old acquaintance of mine. On shaking hands with him, however, I found him to be a stranger. But strange to say, I still had the feeling that this stranger was an old acquaintance. So I received him kindly, with a smile.

This mysterious guest was Manchurian provincial party committee member Pan, an inspector from the Comintern. Just as Wei Zheng-min used to be addressed as Old Wei, this man was addressed as Old Pan. Pan is the Chinese pronunciation of his surname. According to Chinese custom, an elderly or respected person was given the title "Old," which was used as a polite way of addressing him. Few people called him by his real name Lee Ki Dong or by his nickname Pan Qing-you.

Inspector Pan was renowned as a revolutionary and party worker among the communists in Manchuria.

I first heard of Pan from Wang Run-cheng. When Pan worked as secretary of the Ningan county party committee after the September 18 incident, Wang Run-cheng was a member of the committee for propaganda under him. Wang said that he was put in charge of propaganda on that committee on Pan's recommendation, and he was very proud of the fact. According to him, Pan was a veteran who graduated from the Huangpu Military Academy, participated in the uprising at Wuchang and the northern expedition in China, and studied in the Soviet Union. He had also been the secretary of the Suining central county party committee. Wang said that he had been charmed more than once by Pan's noble qualities and keen understanding. Wang's respect for him was quite exceptional.

Hearing about him from Wang, I was delighted at the fact that able revolutionaries like Pan were working in our local areas. I later heard more about Pan from Choe Song Suk and Jo Tong Uk, who came from north Manchuria. Choe Song Suk said that she had been advised by him to come to Wangqing, and she described in an interesting manner how she had participated under his guidance in the May Day demonstration in the streets of Ningan. These previous contacts led us to spend much time on recollections of our common acquaintances Wang Run-cheng and Choe Song Suk.

"Is Comrade Choe Song Suk from Ningan well?" Pan asked at the beginning of our conversation.

His inquiry made it clear to me what Choe Song Suk had meant when she said that Pan's consideration for his subordinates was his particularly good point, and I was deeply moved. "Yes. On her arrival from north Manchuria she was elected to the Dawangqing Soviet. She has now been elected to the women's

department of the Xiaowangqing district committee, and is actively involved in the work of the Women's Association."

"Does she go about on horseback over here, too?"

"So I have heard, but I have never seen her riding a horse."

"She learnt to ride, and resolved to join the cavalry of the revolutionary army. She is a bold and determined girl."

"Then we Wangqing people are very fortunate! Don't you regret having sent her to us?"

"Why should I regret it? Her family is in north Manchuria, but I told her to come to east Manchuria. To be candid, Jiandao is the center of the revolutionary struggle in Manchuria, so I told her that if she wished to do her bit for the revolution, she should go to Wangqing, to where the base is, to the people's land; that I expected a great deal from Jiandao, and that I, too, wished to come and work here."

Though I was grateful to Pan for acknowledging east Manchuria as the center of the Korean revolution, I felt somewhat ashamed to hear it. I wondered what impression he would be given by the Leftist abuses in the guerrilla zone when he witnessed them. Of course, I had previously known almost nothing of his political ideas and attitude. Though he was a man of broad political perspective and rich experience in the struggle, he could not always be expected to oppose the Leftist trend unreservedly.

However, I set great store by Wang and Choe's opinion of Pan. They often emphasized that Pan, being an experienced man, had never suffered from prejudice against his subordinates and dealt with every matter on the basis of his own conviction, with fairness and prudence. Moreover, Pan produced a good impression on me when I first met him. That day's conversation allowed me to get to know him. We parted with a promise to have more serious talks later. The visitor from the Comintern had timed his visit badly for me, for I had to go to command my unit in the fight to repulse thousands of "punitive" troops who were attacking us in waves.

"Then I must go with you to fight," he said. "Please give me an old rifle at least."

Pan insisted on taking the field with us for at least one day, saying that as an envoy of the Comintern, if he returned without so much as seeing how we were fighting in east Manchuria, he would feel ashamed of himself and would regret it all his life.

"Comrade Pan, bullets do not make exceptions for inspectors from the Comintern. There will be many chances to see battle, so please rest from the fatigue of your journey today." After I had dissuaded him, I went to the battlefield.

The enemy had surrounded the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone on three sides, and had been attacking us

persistently for three days. In stubborn defensive tactics, we mowed him down. The enemy suffered hundreds of casualties before he retreated. The "punitive" forces, which had invaded the guerrilla zone in the direction of Guanmenlazi and Mt. Ppyojok under cover of spring fog, began fighting among themselves, in the style of a tragi-comedy, which was much talked about among the inhabitants of Xiaowangqing. Pan, too, burst into laughter at the news.

His appearance in Wangqing provoked different reactions among the inhabitants.

Those who, regarding the Leftist Soviet line as the Comintern's policy, had placed themselves at its beck and call, thought that Old Pan would support their position, and that his appearance would, therefore, be a good opportunity to apply sanctions against the proponents of the line of the people's revolutionary government and brand them as Rightists, so that they would no longer dispute the form of government.

On the other hand, those who, denouncing the Soviet line as Leftist, had worked all along for the establishment of a new form of government in accordance with the line of the people's revolutionary government, watched Old Pan's every action closely, apprehensive that their anti-Soviet position might be rejected by him or that, in the worst case, they might even be punished in the name of the Comintern. Many of them foretold that Pan's visit would complicate the situation in the guerrilla zone, which had just begun to shake off the grip of the Soviet line.

The former group was in triumphant mood; the latter was in a state of mental defeat. Both attitudes sprang from the fact that they regarded the Comintern authority as absolute. The Comintern, which was capable of disbanding a party or trying a man for his crimes, seemed as awesome to them as an international supreme court. They thought that the Comintern could redeem or destroy the fate of a revolutionary as it pleased.

Pan's appearance placed a strain on the guerrilla zone. I, too, could sense the strain in the atmosphere at every moment.

The attitude which Pan would take towards those of us who had supported the line of the people's revolutionary government against the Soviet line of the Comintern and denounced the Soviet measures as Leftist abuses was a matter of serious concern for us.

I thought it fortunate for our revolution that the Comintern had sent its representative to east Manchuria, where the people were groaning under the yoke of Leftist high-handedness. At a time when the advocates of the Soviet line and the line of the people's revolutionary government were arguing with each other over who was correct, Pan's appearance would initiate a decisive phase by his supporting or rejection of the different lines.

Nobody had yet given any assurance that the Comintern would support our position. But I was determined to lodge a protest to Pan against the directives that had been issued in turn by the Comintern, the Manchurian provincial party committee and other organizations, directives which did not suit the

actual conditions in the guerrilla bases. I was also ready, if necessary, to argue with him about theoretical questions, in order to rectify the ultra-Leftist tendency in the implementation of the Soviet line and the anti "Minsaengdan" struggle. I was not in the least afraid of punishment or sanctions. In short, I believed that the decisive moment had arrived.

During those days certain disgruntled comrades apparently sent a letter of complaint to the Comintern, requesting it to settle the dispute in east Manchuria. Having examined the letter, it had apparently sent Pan, a Korean, to settle the dispute, because the majority of the inhabitants in east Manchuria were Koreans. Inspector Pan himself later said that such a letter had been received by the Comintern.

When I came back from the battle in defense of Xiaowangqing, Pan came to see me again. His expression was not so radiant as it had been when I first met him. From the inspector's expression, which betrayed heavy anxiety behind his vague smile, I judged that he had finally found himself faced with a choice between the grim realities on which political philosophies had become entangled. It seemed that he had clashed with Tong Chang-rong over the issue of the political line.

I saw to it that Pan stayed at old man Lee Chi Baek's house, the largest one in Macun, and spent some ten days talking with him in the front room of the house.

Pan spoke Chinese fluently, and he spoke in Chinese from the start, so I was obliged to do the same. We talked mainly at night and early in the mornings. During daylight hours I had no time to spare to talk with him because I was commanding my unit. Pan traveled around the guerrilla zone during the day, busily acquainting himself with the actual conditions there.

People who have frequently stayed away from their homes will understand very well how intimate traveling companions who share the same lodging can become, despite the inconvenience, and how charming and interesting stories become woven through their intimate relations. Pan and I, too, became intimate during those ten days, so intimate that we became like members of one family.

Although Inspector Pan was my elder by more than twenty years, as well as being a veteran revolutionary with a rich experience of struggle, he never put on airs or betrayed any awareness of his seniority. He talked to me frankly and enthusiastically, placing himself on comradely terms with me.

First we introduced ourselves, tracing our pasts, but avoiding formal matters relating to revolutionary practice. I did this first, and then Pan followed suit. And then we took turns in filling up the blanks in our past experiences or relating our impressions of the events we had experienced, not noticing that the night was passing.

Pan became very curious about me when he learned that I had been in prison four times before I was even twenty years old.

"So you are my senior, Comrade Kim, in terms of imprisonment, aren't you?"



He said that he, too, had some experience of prison life in Harbin, and that as a result of a large May Day demonstration he had organized, the party organization in Ning'an County had suffered wholesale destruction. The organization was crushed by the merciless repression of the Manchukuo authorities and the "punitive" actions of the Japanese army, and the party members and hardcore elements were scattered far and wide, he said. Pan attributed the losses to the mental vertigo that had afflicted him with the rapid growth of the party ranks and of their energetic activities. But he recognized that the lessons of the May Day demonstration had provided the political motive for the foundation of the Ning'an guerrilla forces under the command of Kim Hae San and Lee Kwang Lim.

"People realized after a few lashings in prison that we had organized the demonstration clumsily and belatedly. By organizing it in the streets of the county town we actually exposed party members to enemy repression at a time when we should have sent the organization deeper underground and prepared it for an armed struggle!"

Whenever he mentioned the demonstration he was angry with himself. But he admired the demonstration we had organized against the Jirin-Hoeryong railway construction project. He was the type of man who is fair and generous in assessing other people's achievements while underestimating or even denigrating his own success.

"You say you celebrated your twenty-first birthday a few days ago, so you are only half as old as I am, but I must say, Comrade Kim, that you are my senior not only in terms of imprisonment, but also in terms of life experience," Inspector Pan said when he had heard my personal history. I could not help feeling awkward as he repeated that I was his senior.

"Comrade Pan, if you praise me to the skies, I am afraid you will make a fool of me." He shrugged his shoulders in the way Russians do.

"I should like you to know that it is discontent with my own life which underlies my admiration of you. I am a man who has not led a satisfactory life. At my age of forty-three I can say that the prime of my life is past, but I have done nothing which I can be proud of. That is my sorrow.

"Don't be too modest. You have experienced the scorching sun in the south and the snowstorms in the north; your life has known laughter, anguish and tears. To be frank, I am not fond of people who look down upon themselves. How can you say that the prime of your life is past at only a little more than forty?"

He was not displeased by my criticism. I thought he was too modest with himself. The meritorious service he had rendered as secretary of the Ning'an county party committee and the Suining central county party committee, and the role of a midwife he had played in the birth of the Ning'an guerrilla forces, not to mention his activity in southern China - all these could never be ignored. The Suining central county party committee was a very large organization that had been formed by the merger of the

Muling, Ningan, Dongning, Mishan and other county party committees.

Once rumour had it that Pan was to receive honorable promotion to the post of a senior cadre in the eastern area bureau of Jirin Province, which was to play the role of an intermediary liaison echelon between the Comintern and the Manchurian provincial party committee. I was not sure whether he actually had been promoted or not, but the mere fact the Comintern had appointed him as the inspector in charge of the work in east Manchuria was eloquent proof that he was a man of high reputation.

Our conversation proceeded with an exchange of information and opinions concerning the current political questions of mutual interest.

The first subject of our discussion was the Comintern and the international communist movement. This discussion was extremely valuable to me, for although I was in touch with the workers of the Comintern liaison office, I had never had candid and serious talks with them.

I explained to him the efforts made by the Korean communists to implement the decisions of the Comintern, and then clarified our position and attitude towards its line and directives.

"We consider that the Comintern fulfils the role of the General Staff of the international communist movement excellently. Over the past years it has achieved a great deal by rallying the communists throughout the world into an international alliance and struggling against imperialism, for peace and socialism. In the clear understanding that the Comintern is the international center which performs the function of centralized control of the communist movement, we will, in the future as in the past, remain loyal to its rules and its line. But, Comrade Pan, I would like to take the liberty of telling you something else about the activity of the Comintern." The final part of my statement immediately made him tense.

"How should I take what you have said? You don't happen to hold any opinion opposed to it, do you?"

"Perhaps an opinion, or a complaint. I have wanted to tell to the Comintern a few things for a long time."

"Speak up, whatever you have on your mind." He gazed at me with curiosity.

I believed the time had come when I should speak out to the Comintern.

"I do not support any faction, but I very much regret the Comintern's decision in the past to disband the Korean Communist Party. Factions existed not only in the Korean Communist Party; the forging of signatures by means of potato stamps was also practiced by the Indochina Communist Party and other parties, wasn't it?"

A look of surprise, rather than tension, flitted across his face. My words had taken the inspector by surprise, a man who had been through all manner of bitter experiences.

"As a Korean communist like yourself, Comrade Kim, not as an inspector from the Comintern, I regarded the disbandment of the Korean Communist Party as a disgrace, and share you in your regret that the Comintern had declared its disbandment. But there is one thing you must understand in this matter, and that is, why the Indochina Communist Party remains in existence, while the Korean Communist Party was disbanded. It is because a prominent figure like Ho Chi Minh represented Indochina in the Comintern. By contrast, in those years the ranks of the Korean communist movement contained no such outstanding figure or center of leadership who would be recognized by the Comintern."

His view that one of the major reasons for the party's collapse was the absence of a leader or a center of leadership shocked me, for I had considered factional strife within the party to be the primary cause of its disbandment. It took Pan's cogent analysis to discern that the disbandment of the Korean Communist Party was due to the absence of a leader, a man of world renown acknowledged by the Comintern, who could resist his party's disbandment.

In addition to the matter of the Comintern, we also had a valuable discussion concerning the practical questions arising in the Korean revolution.

Inspector Pan said that the Korean communists must work hard to found a new party of their own, instead of living in a state of frustration, and sharing lodgings with the party of another country because most of their party members were in exile after the party had ceased to exist.

"I am not saying this because I am a Korean revolutionary, but I do believe that the Koreans must have their own communist party. If the Korean communists regarded the disbandment of the Korean Communist Party as depriving them for good of the chance to rebuild their party, that would amount to suicide. It is the legitimate and inviolable right of the Koreans to have their own party. One may share another man's room for a couple of years, but not for ever."

Pan's conviction that the Korean communists must rebuild their party completely was in agreement with our policy of founding a party, which had been adopted at the Kalun meeting. "You are right," I said, encouraged by his words. "If a Korean does not strive to rebuild the party, he should be regarded as having abandoned the Korean revolution. We must not be like a man who shares another man's room, studying his expression, and wasting time. On the basis of this point of view, we put forward a new policy of forming grassroots party organizations first, and then establishing the party from bottom to top by expanding and strengthening them, and we established a party organization, the Society for Rallying Comrades, three years ago in line with this policy."

I went into the details of the historical background to the formation of the first party organization, as well as describing my own involvement in this work and its expansion.

Pan listened to me with close attention.

"Comrade Kim, I may be a man of fancy, but you are a man of thorough practice. It is simply marvelous.

But, look here. It's a problem that there are too many factions in the Korean communist movement. So you must not recognize the factionalists, but make a fresh start among young people. You can do nothing with factionalists around you. Many of them have become dogs of the Japanese. And many of the confirmed factionalists who are not Japanese dogs are involved in a tug-of-war struggle for hegemony, instead of working for the revolution. In order to combat factions, we must fight the Japanese successfully. If our ranks grow stronger, and the hardcore elements are united in the course of the struggle, they will lay the foundation for the establishment of the party."

His words excited me greatly. They were, of course, not new to me. The basic policy we had maintained was that the party should be formed with young people who had not been infected with factionalism.

I renewed my resolve to found the party by uniting the Korean people and building up its core, so as to accomplish the basic task of national liberation.

It was fortunate that Pan and I had the opportunity to discuss questions concerning the international communist movement, the Comintern, and the founding of the party in Korea, and reach complete agreement.

Our conversation naturally turned to the issue of Soviet power, which had been occupying everybody's attention in Jiandao. I was honestly eager to hear Pan's opinion of the Soviet government to which the people had turned their backs, at which they had spat, and from which they stood aloof.

"Old Pan," I said casually, "what is your impression of the guerrilla zone you have looked around on your first visit to Jiandao?"

"I would like to pay my respects to the people of Jiandao and the revolutionaries who have built a wonderful society on this barren land," Pan said in a loud voice, unbuttoning and opening the front skirts of his gown. "The people here have done a lot of work and endured tremendous hardships. But I must say that it is a matter of great regret that an unwelcome specter is hovering over this marvelous land."

From his emotional tone, I could tell that he was greatly excited.

"A specter? What do you mean by that?" I asked.

He picked up a large pinch of cut tobacco from the pouch which old man Lee Chi Baek offered and began to roll a thick cigarette.

"I mean the Leftist Soviet line. It is pulling down the tower which has been built by the strenuous efforts of the people of Jiandao. I can't understand this at all. How is it possible for the revolutionaries of Jiandao, who pioneered the Manchurian revolution, to take leave of their senses to such an extent?"

"To tell you the truth, I find the Leftist deviation so upsetting that my hair may turn white."

"How can they be so blind and stupid?... I talked with them, and they were totally ignorant of the Soviet government in Russia. Comrade Tong Chang-rong is a man of rich fighting experience and gentle character.....

"What a preposterous mistake! It is clearly no accident that letters of complaint were addressed to the Comintern. You have had plenty to worry about, I expect."

He glanced at me in commiseration.

"I wouldn't mind personal distress, no matter how great. My heart ached at the sight of people who were suffering under Leftist high-handedness."

Pan puffed at his cigarette nervously and continually, as if to give vent to his anger. "I have encountered a stroke of good luck in the midst of misfortune, which is that the line of the people's revolutionary government was born of the soil overgrown with Leftist weeds, the government which enjoys the people's support and will save our revolution from the crisis. Comrade Kim, a short while ago I informed Comrade Tong Chang-rong that your proposal is marvelous."

"Do you mean to say that you also support the line of the people's revolutionary government?"

"If not, why should I have said so to Comrade Tong Chang-rong? He has also expressed his support for the line. He seems to have been strongly impressed by your statement that anything the people like is good. Let us now work better, with firm confidence in ourselves."

Pan grasped my hand in an unconscious but significant gesture, and then released it. In this way the Comintern support for our line on the people's revolutionary government was confirmed.

Pan said it was a remarkable success for us to have gained the freedom of activity of the guerrilla army by forming a special detachment and improved relations with the national salvation army of the Chinese nationalists. He encouraged us revolutionaries in east Manchuria to follow up this success.

Saying that our line on the people's revolutionary government was basically in accord with the line of the revolutionary masses' government proposed by the Chinese party, he explained the Chinese line briefly.

The Chinese line proposed a new and clear strategy on the Manchurian issue, centering on the switchover of their political line. It had been formally issued in the name of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, but was in fact drafted by the Comintern. It could be said, therefore, to represent the will of the Comintern.

Their idea of forming peasant committees as organs of rural government attracted our attention. The proposal was that the peasant committee should manage relations between the peasants and the guerrilla

army, supplying food to the army and organizing armed self-defense guards on a routine basis, and that the party should ensure that hired farm hands and poor peasants become the leading force in the peasant committee, and thus rally the masses of middle peasants around them.

In other words, the Comintern had recognized the irrationality of the Leftist Soviet line in the question of political power, and had acknowledged the need to replace it with a new form of government. After all, this was the confirmation of the correctness of the line of the people's revolutionary government which we had proposed.

However, Inspector Pan was very concerned about the name of the peasant committee. Although peasant committees were better suited than Soviets to the situation in Manchuria, he said, a policy which was orientated towards the hired farm hands and poor peasants would not be able to rally the broader masses behind them. He stressed that the people's revolutionary government was an improvement and advance, a type of united front which was capable of rallying all sections of the population - workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and others - who were opposed to the Japanese. He said he would express this opinion in a letter to the Comintern and the Manchurian provincial party committee.

"What does it matter whether we call it a peasant committee or a people's revolutionary government? All that is required is to satisfy the people's desires. A people's revolutionary government will do in a place where we can put up such a sign, and a peasant committee will do where a committee is more suitable, won't it?"

In this way, I tried to calm the inspector's anxieties, but he was still not at ease. "You are right in general, but the name of the government must cater to the people's preferences. In any case, I must bring the matter to the Comintern."

I am not sure whether he did express his decision in a letter to the Comintern or not. In the wake of these events, the Soviets in all the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria were replaced by people's revolutionary governments or peasant committees, the Worker-Peasant Guerrilla Army was renamed the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, and the Red Guards were reorganized as the Anti-Japanese Self-Defense Corps.

The inspector's visit raised a whirlwind that swept away the outmoded political order of the guerrilla zone. The Juche-orientated revolutionary policy which we had maintained since our days in Jirin won international support and encouragement, and the correctness of all our lines and policies was confirmed yet again.

This does not mean, however, that we agreed with everything that the Comintern did or that we obeyed its orders blindly. While respecting the measures taken by the Comintern, I applied my own independent judgment to them, regarding them from the point of view of the interests of the Korean revolution and the world revolution.

The most doubtful aspect of the Comintern strategy and the steps it had taken were its views on, and its

manner of dealing with, the Korean revolution as a link in the overall chain of the world revolution.

When the October Socialist Revolution triumphed in Russia, and the ideal of socialism became a reality, the communists of all countries were faced with the noble task of both preserving the gains of the revolution and following up its success on a world scale.

In response to the requirements of the times, Lenin established the Third Communist International in 1919. Its historic mission was to organize the struggle of the working class and the oppressed nations of the whole world to free themselves from imperialist oppression and the chains of capital, and to develop this struggle on an international scale. This was a militant mission that differed from those of its predecessors, the First and Second Internationals, and fitted with the requirements of new times.

One of the major tasks of the Comintern at the time was to safeguard and defend the Soviet Union. The defense of the positions of victorious socialism was inseparable from the expansion of the socialist cause. Without defending them, it was impossible to spread and further develop the success of the October Revolution on a global scale. It was quite natural that the defense of the Soviet Union became an international slogan for all communists, and that the implementation of this slogan became the major content of the international communist movement.

These relations, which were historically inevitable and essential, supplied grist to the mills of those who opposed communism and lent plausibility to the reactionary bourgeois theoreticians who denounced the communist parties of various countries which implemented the orders of the Comintern as "stooges of the Soviet Union" or traitors to their own nations.

The communists in every country should have learned a lesson from this and combined their national and international duties in an appropriate manner. The Comintern should also have regarded this matter as highly important. If it was to fulfill its mission satisfactorily, the Comintern, while emphasizing the defense of the positions of victorious socialism, should have given sincere support to the communist movements in other countries, and should, in particular, have championed the interests of the lesser nations suffering under imperialist oppression and assisted their revolutionary struggles.

The Comintern, however, paid little attention to this need. Some officials of the Comintern talked loudly about the revolutionary movements in large countries, but dealt in a slighting or arbitrary fashion with matters relating to the revolutions in small countries. They discriminated too much in their views and their attitudes towards the revolution in different countries, in proportion to the share they could contribute to the building of an international bulwark for the defense of the Soviet Union.

Certain individuals and theoreticians occupying important posts in the Comintern spread the view that victories for the revolutionary movements in large countries would automatically lead to victories for the revolutionary struggles or independence movements in the adjacent small countries. Figuratively speaking, they held the view that if the head ripens, the ears will also ripen of their own accord.

This view gave rise to a sycophantic tendency among communists of small countries, who abandoned the independent position that one's own effort and the efforts of one's own people were the motive force of revolution, and began to rely on large countries. It also produced a chauvinistic tendency among the communists of the large countries, who ignored the communists of small countries and restrained their independent activities.

Thus it was not fortuitous that the revolutionaries' confidence in, and unsullied devotion to, the Comintern and the international communist movement became stained, despite the fact that these communists from different countries had been tremendously inspired by the great events of the birth of the socialist state and the foundation of the Comintern, and looked up to them as an ideal and a beacon-light as they advanced through the flames of struggle.

After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution and the foundation of the Comintern, loving support and a yearning for communism surged across the face of the world in an inexorable wave.

Renowned persons in all parts of the world were quick to join the ranks of those who espoused communism. Many of the major figures of the time, regarding communism as the only idea that represented the future of mankind, made efforts, through different channels, and regardless of their political affiliations and religious beliefs, to establish contact with the newborn Soviet Republic or the Comintern and receive aid from them.

Many of the nationalists in Korea also espoused, supported or sympathized with the idea of communism. Authoritative Christians, Chondoists and other religious believers were among them. For instance, Hyun Soon, the third minister of the Seoul Jongdong Methodist Church, represented the Korean religious organization of "Faith in Jesus" at the Far Eastern People's Congress held in Moscow in January 1922.

*Lee Wha Rang - Photo: Rev. Hyun*





Soon in October 1919 (far right, front row) in Shanghai. Shin Ik Hee is far left and Ahn Chang Ho is at center, front row. Rev. Hyun (his American name), aka Song Won Sang, was one of the 33 signatories of the 1919 March 1st Declaration.

He was born in Whang-dong, Kyonggi Province, in 1878, into an yanban family. His grandfather had three wives at the same time. He went to Japan in 1898 for education, but was unable to come up with the tuition and returned home in 1902. He was hired as an interpreter for Korean farmhands at the Kahuku

Plantation in Hawaii and arrived at Honolulu on March 1903, with the second shipload of Korean immigrants to America.

Most of the Korean immigrants were Christian converts due to the fact that American missionaries in Korea were primarily responsible for recruiting laborers for Hawaii's sugar crops. He helped establish several Korean churches in Hawaii and became pastor of the Korean Methodist Church in Kapaia, Hawaii, in 1905. He returned to Korea in 1907 to preach at the Chung Dong Church, Seoul, noted for its central role in the March First Movement of 1919. Upon collapse of the movement, he fled to Shanghai and participated in the Korean Provisional Government as deputy foreign minister. He returned to Hawaii in 1921 as official representative of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, and later worked for US intelligence during World War II.

Rev. Hyon sired Peter, David, Alice and two other children in Shanghai. Peter Hyun, joined the US Army during World War II and landed in Korea, a major, with the occupation force in 1945. Alice was recruited by the US to spy on Kim Il Sung. She was caught a few weeks before the Korean War started.

Hyun Soon was a minister of high reputation in Korea and he was elected one of the members of the Korean Provisional Government when it was formed in Shanghai. According to material which our comrades obtained from the Comintern archives in the Soviet Union a few years ago, when he attended the conference he carried with him a letter of attorney signed by Kim Pyong Jo, one of the group who drafted the Independence Declaration of March 1, 1919, and by Jo Sang Sop, Son long Do, Kim In Jon, Song Pyong Jo and other ministers.

When Hyun Soon filled in the form issued by the Koryo Department of the Russian Communist Party, he stated that he was connected with the Shanghai Communist Party, and that he had spent three weeks in Russia in September 1919. In answer to a questionnaire, on his "Aims and hopes," he wrote, "I aim for the independence of Korea and hope for the realization of communism." This document was only recently obtained by our comrades.

Of course, I am not sure how deep an understanding he possessed of the new idea of communism, or how warmly he sympathized with it, but it seems that he expected a great deal from the Comintern.

Lee Tong Whi, the first Prime Minister of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, was involved in the communist movement. It is well known that he was sent as a representative to Moscow to report to the Comintern on the results of a joint conference of the Koryo Communist Party. The reformist force of Chondoism also sought alignment with the Comintern.

Choe Tong Hui, a son of Choe Si Hyong, the second leader of the Chondoist religion, and a grandnephew of Choe Je U, the founder of Chondoism, represented the reforming wing of Chondoism. In his capacity as chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Emergency Supreme Revolutionary Council of Chondoists, he spent some time in Vladivostok in Russia, working hard for negotiations with the Comintern. He wrote letters to Katayama Sen, Injelson, and other officials who were working at the Oriental Department of the Comintern, requesting them to give the support needed by the movement for Korea's independence, and declaring that active cooperation between the Chondoists, the servants of the poor people, and the Comintern, the vanguard of the working class, would guarantee the success of the revolution in the Orient.

Choe Tong Hui even sent a letter to Chicherin, at that time People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Republic, requesting him to send within two years the weapons, explosives, ammunition, cavalry equipment, and means of transport required to equip fifteen composite brigades of the Koryo National Revolutionary Army which it was planned to organize. The fact that the reformist forces of Chondoism sought a new route for the independence movement, despite the hatred and denunciation of conservative Chondoists, was worthy of national admiration. But neither Soviet Russia nor the Comintern complied with their request.

Ryo Un Hyong, alias Mong Yang, also visited Moscow in 1919 and spoke with Lenin on the question of Korea's independence.

People would not believe it if they heard that an anti-communist element such as Syngman Rhee once supported Soviet Russia. But it seems to be true. There is information that he once visited Moscow and requested a colossal amount of financial aid, and that when his request was ignored, he turned against Soviet Russia and the Comintern and became ultra-pro-American.

Korea, the territory of which was only a hundredth of the Soviet Union, a land of thatched mud huts

huddled together and skinny, hobbling donkeys, obviously appeared too small and too miserable to attract the attention of the Comintern officials. Even in the years when we were waging an armed struggle against the Japanese in Manchuria, their views on Korea did not change greatly. I greatly regretted the fact that the Comintern was so indifferent to the fate of the peoples of small countries and the national liberation struggles of the communists of small countries. Needless to say, this unkind treatment and cold attitude merely poured oil on the flames of our determination to establish the principle of Juche in the revolution and liberate our nation by our own efforts.

I was annoyed most of all by the fact that we lacked the strength to oppose or correct the attitudes and activities of the Comintern with which we disagreed, and were unable to control the way in which the Comintern work was organized and its chronic malady of red-tapism, although we knew this might lead to the sacrifice of the Korean revolution or place a stumbling block in the path of its Juche-oriented development.

We, the communists of the new generation, longed for the Comintern to understand the problems of the Korean communists and march in step with our aspirations and our unshakable resolve to carry out the revolution in our own way.

Pan's appearance in east Manchuria at a time when we were struggling with complex problems requiring prompt solutions was welcome. My acquaintance with him was one of the most significant events in my life. It was a good thing that there were people in the Comintern who understood us and supported us. His statements that the ranks of the Korean communist movement should be renewed with trained hardcore elements who had not been infected with factionalism, and that a party of the Korean people should be established produced an especially strong impression on me. His advice encouraged me and strengthened my sense of independence in thinking and in practice. Had it not been for his influence and comradely encouragement, it would have been impossible for me to fight effectively, even though I risked my life, in defense of the Juche spirit of the Korean nation and our revolution at a time when the struggle against the "Minsaengdan" was being conducted in such a dreadful manner.

Park So Sim introduced me to Marx's Capital, Shang Yue taught me the Dream at the Red Mansion, and now Inspector Pan had given me sincere support, encouragement and sympathy and so strengthened my conviction that Koreans must not forget Korea.

In all history of my revolutionary struggle against the Japanese imperialists I never discussed the fate of the Korean revolution and the political line of this revolution so enthusiastically, sincerely and so seriously as I did with Inspector Pan. He was a rare theoretician, with an unshakable commitment to the revolution. Had he been alive to work with us when we advanced to the area of Mt. Paektu in command of large forces in the latter half of the 1930s, he could have made many theoretical and practical contributions to the solution of the difficult problems facing the Korean revolution.

My acquaintance with Pan opened my eyes to the vital need for a theoretician capable of guiding and steering the practical struggle, in addition to the man of practice who was also important in the

revolutionary struggle.

Following our unforgettable discussions at Xiaowangqing, Pan became my most intimate friend and comrade. Although he was more than twenty years older than me, we forged a relationship as friends and comrades in a matter of ten days, and this friendship and comradeship were as intimate as those of ten years duration. But they were not cemented by any material or personal interests. This exceptionally warm friendship was derived from a common, long-cherished desire for the liberation and freedom of Korea and from a shared way of thinking and aspiration to independence in all matters.

The depth of a friendship cannot be measured by the length of its duration or by the number of conversations. A long period of association does not necessarily indicate a deep friendship, nor does a short period of association mean friendship is shallow. The essential thing is the viewpoint and attitude one maintains in approaching man and his destiny, in approaching one's nation and its destiny. Depending on this viewpoint and attitude, the warmth of friendship may be redoubled or it may cool. Love for man, love for one's fellow people, and love for one's country are the touchstone of friendship. When Inspector Pan was leaving Xiaowangqing, I saw him off on horseback as far as the boundary between Wangqing and Hunchun Counties. Because he limped a little, I had seen to it that he could travel on horseback.

During our ride we talked a lot, and during a two days' stopover at the village of Shiliping, we discussed a host of subjects, including the international communist movement, our relations with the Chinese party, and matters relating to the Korean revolution at the present and in the future. We also made firm pledges to one another.

The subjects we discussed at the time would be good material for the plot of a novel. Lee Pom Sok's military academy was in that village, the Oh Jung Hwa's family were taking refuge there.

Pan even touched on his own family life. He said his wife was only half his own age. I don't remember exactly whether he called her O Yong Ok or O Pung Ok. I asked him why he had only married when he was over forty.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed, "no need to ask why. I did not have the charm a husband needs, so girls stayed away from me. Who would ever love a lame man like me? If it were not for Madam O, I might have remained an old bachelor."

He seemed to have been born with a low opinion of himself. I sympathized with him deeply for his delay in marrying.

"I expect Madam O has a sharp eye for a man. I have heard that she is a rare beauty. Late love must be as sweet as honey."

"Of course, but strangely enough, it was she, not I, that proposed. Anyway, late love is indeed

exceptionally sweet."

"Rumor has it that she is the envy of all in north Manchuria."

"But, Comrade Kim, I hope you will not take so long as I did, if only for the sake of male dignity."

"Well, I, too, may be late. It does not depend on what I wish."

We chatted and laughed, sitting in a grass field near the village of Shiliping, and deepening our friendship.

Pan said that he had become deeply attached to Wangqing, and regretted parting with me. His next destinations were Hunchun and Helong.

"Comrade Kim, I will carry your image in my memory all my life. I am very happy to have met you in Wangqing, Comrade Kim Il Sung," he said, with a serious look, his eyes brimming with tears, his hand squeezing mine, as he crossed the border.

"So am I. I am most fortunate to have met you, Comrade Pan. Frankly, I don't want to bid you farewell."

"How could I wish to part? I wish that after this journey I could come to east Manchuria with my wife and work hand in hand with you, Comrade Kim. I am outdated in some ways. A little stained.... Please be Korea's Ho Chi Minh."

With these words, Inspector Pan took his leave of Wangqing. When he was some distance away, he turned round and raised his hand above his head. Looking at his hand as I had when I first met him, I felt as if a long time had passed. The details of his expression seemed to have been imprinted on my eyes to remain there for decades.

Feelings of loneliness and sorrow at parting from a man with whom I had forged a friendship in so short a time gripped my heart as he looked back at me, and I wondered why the farewell was so sad. Pan was smiling, but he, too, looked sad. His smile lay heavy on my heart. If he had not smiled, my heart would have been much lighter. He left me, wishing that he could return but died in Hunchun and we never met again.

He was murdered by Park Tu Nam, the political commissar of the Hunchun guerrilla battalion. Park Tu Nam was criticized most severely by the inspector at an enlarged meeting of the Hunchun county party committee which discussed the change in the revolutionary line.

Branded as a ringleader of factional strife, he was dismissed from his post as political commissar. While the inspector's guards in the yard of the house were looking at some Model 38 rifles that had been captured from the enemy, and the inspector was busy writing something, the traitor picked up one of the

rifles and shot the inspector dead. The news shocked the people in Wangqing.

When I heard the news, I locked myself up in the front room of Lee Chi Baek's house, where Pan and I had discussed the revolution and the meaning of human life, and wept over his death all day long.

## 7.5. The Memory of a White Horse

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I was intending to leave out this anecdote, because I considered a war-horse too insignificant to be given a space in the memoirs of my eighty years of life, in which there were so many heroes, so many benefactors and so many events that should be remembered. But my affection for this horse seems to tint my memory of it too strongly, and the impulse to make it known to the public is too strong for me to keep it to myself. Moreover, the animal is unforgettably linked with many people by the bonds of human feelings. The stories of these people are also too valuable to be consigned to oblivion.

In the spring of 1933 I came into possession of a horse. One day an official of the people's revolutionary government of Shiliping came to see me with some guerrillas, and brought me a white horse. In those days, the headquarters of the Wangqing guerrilla battalion was located in the valley of Lishugou, Macun, Xiaowangqing. The procession these people formed appeared too ostentatious for a company leading a war-horse with them. The visitors hitched the horse in the front yard of the headquarters, and then announced their arrival.

"Commander Kim, we respectfully wish to present a horse to you, who have to travel many rugged miles. Please accept this gift," said the official, speaking for his company. I was embarrassed at the sudden appearance of the delegation and at their solemnly decorous manner which seemed more appropriate to some grand function. Moreover, I was immediately surprised by the size of the group, larger than a squad of soldiers nowadays.

"I am afraid I am not worthy of such rich consideration as to allow me to ride about on a horse at the age of just twenty," I said, attempting to express my thanks modestly. The elderly official gesticulated in surprise.

"Rich consideration? The Japanese battalion commanders ride around pompously on horseback to show that they are fine officers. Why should our guerrilla commanders be any worse than them? I have read a book which says that Red-gowned General Kwak Jae U commanded his cavalry on horseback. A military commander needs dignity before everything else." "Where did this horse come from? It's a draught horse from a peasant's family, isn't it?" The government official waved his arms in denial.

"No, it isn't. It's a pet horse. Do you remember the old man, a former farm servant, who was elected to the government council at Shiliping the other day?"

"Of course. I even spoke in his support."

"This is a present to you from that old man."

"I can hardly believe that he had such a wonderful horse," I remarked, looking closely at the horse with

its saddle and stirrups hanging on both sides, while I stroked its back. There was really no doubt that it was a farm horse. I could not make myself believe that any peasant in the mountain valley of Shiliping could possess a sleek pet horse like this, still less the former servant of a landowner. The official insisted that it was a pet horse, probably because he was afraid I might refuse to accept it if he admitted the truth. I don't remember the old man's full name, but his surname was Park. Old man Park had a reason for making a present of the horse to me. It is a moving story which should be told here.

The story begins at the time when he left the landowner's house after serving out his term. When the old man became too old to work, his master released him. In return for his life-long service, the landowner gave him a white foal which was a few months old. Immediately after it was born, the unfortunate animal suffered serious bruising, when it was stepped on by its mother, and it was ailing in the stable, too sick to romp about outside. It was infirm and undernourished. The niggardly landowner pretended to show him favor by giving him the sick animal, which might die the same day or the next, which was already as good as dead.

Old man Park came home to his hut with the sick foal in his arms, shedding tears. The sight of this sick foal, given as a reward for all the drudgery he had performed for decades made him feel sad at the absurdity of his whole life and at the hardness of the world. Nonetheless, the old man, who led a solitary, lonely life, treasured the animal as if it were a precious stone in his hands and tended it with all the care he could muster. The foal grew into a full-fledged horse. Whenever he felt lonely, he would go to the horse, and grumbled to himself, giving vent to his feelings at his sad plight, and grieving over his fate. The horse was a loving son and daughter and friend to him.

Having been mistreated all his life, the old man ranked himself with draught animals and accepted worldly abuses as natural. When on rare occasions he was treated as a man should be, he would feel uncomfortable or awkward. This old man was elected to the government council for the Shiliping guerrilla zone. There is surely no need to explain how deeply he was moved and how many tears of thanks he shed on that occasion. This explains why he brought his white horse to government yard one evening.

"Mr. Chairman, please send this white horse on my behalf to Commander Kim Il Sung. Today for the first time in my life I was treated like a man, thanks to the commander. As a token of my deep gratitude to him I wish to present my pet horse to him, the horse which I have fattened for many years. Please convey my thanks to him."

On learning why the old man had sent the horse to me, I felt it improper to decline the present.

"I don't really feel I should accept the gift, but the kindness of the old man's heart obliges me to accept it. Please convey my thanks to him," I told the official from the Shiliping government, as I took the tether from him, and then I asked him why so many people had come when one driver would have been sufficient.



"Commander Kim, we wished to see you on horseback, so the guerrillas and the people have sent their representatives. Please mount the horse!" the official said earnestly. The men from the 2nd company, too, insisted that I ride the horse. Only after seeing me mounted, were the visitors satisfied and returned home to Shiliping.

I was very grateful to the old man for his kindness and his respect for me, but I did not ride the horse for many days. I was afraid that, if I went about on horseback, I might appear extravagant in the eyes of the people and my men. I gave the horse to Lee Ung Man, who was working in the arsenal, the man who had brought a box of Browning pistols in order to be allowed to join the guerrilla army. He was brave, but one of his legs had been amputated after a serious wound.

The leg had been amputated by Jang Un Pho, the doctor of the guerrilla-zone hospital which was located near the battalion barracks at Xiaolishugou. He represented the medical profession in Xiaowangqing, the only doctor, but a man of versatile abilities, practising both medicine and surgery, and treating all cases. The hospital was managed by a mutual aid society, and patients who needed treatment were required to bring a letter signed by the chairman of the council of the people's revolutionary government. The mutual aid society acted as a medical council and would often decide that bones damaged by bullets had to be amputated. Drugs were scarce and no other remedies were available, so drastic measures had to be taken.

The doctor had improvised a scalpel by grinding down the spring of a worn-out clock and he used this for surgery. That was how Lee Ung Man had become a cripple and had been discharged from the guerrilla army. After leaving hospital, he stayed at Yang Song Ryong's house near the hospital, living under the care of Yang's mother for some time. Lee Ung Man found the white horse very useful. He rode to and from the arsenal, cheerful in his life and work.

In the course of time another white horse came into my hands. It was captured from the Japanese in the battle at Dahuanggou. Some veterans say that it was captured in the battle of Zhuanjiaolou, but I don't think it is worth the trouble of denying that. Where it came from is not essential. The point is that a horse which a Japanese officer had ridden about came into our possession, and it was a perfect war-horse that won everyone's admiration. In that battle I had made some of my men lie in ambush, and the Japanese officer on the horse was unfortunate enough to be hit first and he fell to the ground. Then a strange thing happened. The horse, having lost its rider, came running over to the slope where my command post was located, instead of running away to the enemy camp.

When he saw the horse, Jo Wal Nam, my orderly, tried to drive it away towards the road, in case it should attract the enemy's attention to the command post. But although the orderly threw tree stumps and empty cartridges at the horse, the animal would not return to its dead master, and approached us. However hard the orderly tried to chase it away, the horse simply balked, with its legs rooted to the ground.

"Why insist on driving him away when he refuses to go? Don't be too cruel," I rebuked the orderly, and I approached the horse and stroked its mane.

"He's attracting the enemy's attention to the C.P.," the orderly shouted in surprise, shielding me with his body. "Take care, please."

"Ho, ho! They haven't got time to try to spot the C.P. They're already turning tail." In this way the horse came into the possession of the guerrilla army.

The men tried to describe the incident as something extraordinary, the strange story of an enemy horse coming over to our side.

"This animal can tell the difference between Koreans and Japanese," said a man who saw its identification tag and discovered it was born in Kyongwon (Saeppyo), Korea. "He came straight over to us because he recognized us as Koreans."

"The Japanese officer must have been cruel to his horse," another man remarked, as if seeking a more authentic motive for its action. "Otherwise, it wouldn't have come over as soon as its master fell."

On our way back to Macun from the battle, we gave the horse to an old Chinese man to use as a work animal. In Jiandao, horses and cattle were widely used as draught animals. A few days later, the old man came to us and returned the horse to us. He said that the horse's pasterns were too slender and weak for a draught horse. Worse still, he added, it was so wild that he could not even approach it or touch it, let alone tame it.

One of my comrades-in-arms said, "This horse is destined to be one of our company after all." My comrades advised me to take the horse, since I was suffering from an ache in my calf muscle. They even warned me that if I overtaxed the ailing leg in a guerrilla war that might last for years, I might lose the ability to stand on my feet. The ache in my calf muscle actually bothered me considerably whenever I was on the march. The problem probably came from doing too much walking since my childhood. When I was in Jirin I traveled by rail or bicycle now and then, but in Wangqing, which was under constant blockade, such luxury could not be expected. The painful leg was a great physical handicap to me in the life of the guerrilla zone, which required forced marches of dozens or even a hundred miles over steep mountains almost every day.

However, on this occasion also I declined to accept the advice of my comrades-in-arms. Then the comrades called a party meeting and adopted a decision to the effect that I should travel by horse from a certain date. The decision was tactfully worded so that the battalion commander, Yang Song Ryong, too, should ride a horse. Probably they anticipated that I would doggedly refuse if I was the only one to be mounted. I obeyed the decision of the organization. On the day when I first mounted the horse, my comrades surrounded me, clapping their hands in delight.

The horse's records said that it came from the Kyongwon war-horse replacement center. Sometimes the sleek horse appeared grayish, sometimes snow-white. His pasterns were as slender as those of a race-horse, and he ran as fast as a tiger. This horse carried me on his back to battlefields and sometimes

through primeval forests for approximately two years, sharing every hardship with me. His image still rises out of my memory now and then, thrilling me with emotion.

My daily routine began with tending of the horse. I would rise early in the morning, pat him on the head and brush his coat with a broom. As I had had no experience of tending a horse, I did just as my grandfather in Mangyongdae had done when he tended a cow. The horse jerked away whenever the broom touched him. Once when I was struggling with the horse, old man Lee Chi Baek gave me a metal comb, and told me to comb the horse's back with it and see what would happen. I did as I was told, and the horse stood quiet with his hoofs stuck to the ground.

While saddling the horse one day, I discovered a pouch between the saddle-leather and the padding. The pouch contained a small notebook inscribed "Horse's Record," a metal comb, a brush, a piece of rug, and a pointed piece of steel. I could guess the use of all of the things except for the piece of steel shaped like a scalpel. I picked up the steel tool and approached the horse.

Now came the miracle. He lifted one leg high, as a circus horse might. This suggested some relationship between the tool and his hoof, but I could not pinpoint exactly what. He circled around me a few times, then approached a stake a little distance from me, and rested one of his forelegs on it. I found dirt, stone splinters, and pieces of straw stuck between his sole and shoe. I removed them from his hoof, and then he lifted another hoof on the stake and looked at me as if in invitation.

While I was learning from guess-work how to tend the horse, a man from a horse-breeding farm in the homeland came to visit a relation in Xiaowangqing. He taught me the skills of grooming and horsemanship before he left for home. A horse detested its body getting dirty and splinters of pottery and similar things getting stuck in its hoofs, he said, so that it should be washed with clean water twice every day, combed, brushed and oiled, and dirt and straw pieces regularly removed from its hoofs. He made a point of wiping the horse well when it had been sweating or had been exposed to the rain.

He also told me that hay and oats were essential food for horses, that barley and beans were also good, that horses must eat a little salt every day as human beings do, and that too much cold water was bad for them after heavy exercise. In the course of tending the horse as I had been instructed, I got to know him better. He was always obedient to me. I was surprised at the cleverness with which he understood from my glances and hand movements what he should do, and he never failed to serve me to my satisfaction. As I caught glimpses of his character and noticed actions that reminded me of their artistically perfect beauty of human qualities which would win universal admiration, I sometimes wondered if this was really an animal and not a human being.

While he was clever and faithful to me, the white horse was also fierce. He tolerated no one except his master touching him or sitting on him. If some tomfool took his tether out of curiosity and tried to mount him, he avoided him by walking in a circle or kicking or threatening to bite.

Jo Wal Nam was one of those who was given the cold shoulder by him. First he stood the horse by the

veranda and then, after gently combing his side, jumped swiftly into the saddle. But the moment his buttocks touched the saddle, the horse shied off to one side and he fell to the ground with a thud. After this shameful defeat, the orderly hit upon a bright idea. He took the horse to soft ground, where his pasterns sank into the mud, and while he was grazing, he slid onto his back. He failed again. He was thrown into the mud.

Next the young orderly tied the horse to a tree and gave vent to his anger by whipping him. After the incident, the horse ran away or kicked at him whenever he approached. The orderly even cried in his exasperation. For all the efforts he had made to tame the animal, he could not even approach him, still less ride him. In the end he said he had to return to his company.

I said to him that the horse rejected him because he did not love him, and that, therefore, he should try to feel warmer devotion for him. I taught him how to tend the horse with great care. The orderly followed my advice, and the horse naturally obeyed him in proportion to his kindness. Time has obscured many details of my memories, but I can still picture a few events vividly.

Once I went to Luozigou to carry out political work among the people. O Paek Ryong and his platoon accompanied me. In those days, I used to sleep only two to three hours a day. The day's battle, training my men, and work among the people usually kept me awake until one or two o'clock in the morning, and sometimes right through the night. When our company reached the foot of the Jiapigou Pass, I dozed off on horseback. Perhaps I had stayed up all night at Macun or at Shiliping the previous night. As the white horse was marching at the head of the platoon, nobody noticed that I was dozing.

As we began climbing the pass, the horse's gait changed. The platoon leader O Paek Ryong noticed it. The horse was scaling the slope carefully with his forelegs drawn in, and pace of the march was so slow that the platoon leader was irritated.

"How strangely he is walking today, this horse which is like an English gentleman!" O Paek Ryong thought to himself.

On the down slope, too, the horse walked with difficulty, his hind legs drawn in. In the meantime, the column far out-marched me, leaving myself on horseback and O Paek Ryong behind. The platoon leader was impatient with the horse, and worried about me, but he dared not lash the horse on which his commander was riding. When he had climbed down the slope, the horse balked before a fallen tree on the Jiapigou Riverside. Seeing the horse, which normally leapt such fallen trees without any difficulty, hesitating before a small obstacle, O Paek Ryong grew even more suspicious.

"Why does the commander leave this lazy horse alone, without so much as shouting at him or spurring him on?" the platoon leader thought, looking up at me. Only then did he discover that I was dozing.

"What a fine show!" the platoon leader exclaimed aloud.

The horse's foreleg tapped on the fallen tree, and the sound woke me up.

"This white horse should be given a feast today," O Paek Ryong said, beaming with a broad smile and stroking the horse's nape. I felt a great change must have taken place in the universe while I was asleep.

"Why a feast all of a sudden?"

The platoon leader explained to me with great enthusiasm how the horse had climbed over the pass and how he behaved when faced with the fallen tree.

"My father said that in ancient times the best horse in the country was called the state horse, so what about calling him that from now on?" the platoon leader suggested.

"Why should we simply call him a state horse? Your story proves that he is more than worthy of being called the heavenly horse...."

"What does the heavenly horse mean?"

"It means the best horse under heaven."

"Then let us call him the heavenly horse. Brother Oh Jung Hwa once told me that in some country a high title was awarded to a horse."

"So I've heard. The emperor of that country conferred the title of political administrator on his pet horse. His horse ate from an ivory trough and drank wine from a gold cup, and enjoyed respect from everyone. Shall we give him the title of Ryonguijong (a feudal post corresponding to the modern post of prime minister)?"

"Anyway, this is a quite uncommon horse. He has no eyes in his back, how could he know that you were asleep?"

I spurred the horse, and he jumped over the fallen tree and rushed forward. We overtook the platoon in an instant and arrived at the vicinity of the valley of Sandaohezi, Luozigou, where rocky peaks soared high on both sides of a stream which teemed with trout. I drew a circle around the horse on the grass, and then coiled his tether around his neck. I gave the men their assignments for political work among the people at Sandaohezi, Sidahezi and Laomuzhuhe. After dispatching them to their various destinations, I met the political operatives and the workers in charge of underground organizations who had been waiting for me by the riverside. I talked to them for a long time.

When I returned to the horse after all this talk, I was surprised yet again, for the horse was grazing within the circle I had drawn. It was indeed a rare horse. The horse also helped to save the life of Hong Hye Song, a woman revolutionary. She had gone through high-school education in the homeland, worked

underground along with progressive students and young people in Longjing, and then come to Wangqing which she regarded as the promised land, and was doing political work there.

Her father was a renowned doctor of traditional Koryo medicine. In the guerrilla zone, Hong Hye Song was able to draw on the medical expertise she had learnt from her father to give the guerrillas and the local inhabitants great help by treating scabies. This cheerful, sociable, courageous, and pretty woman political worker with a knowledge of Koryo medicine was warmly loved by the soldiers and people in the guerrilla zone.

One day I was riding on the horse, as I went with my orderly to the village of Xidapo in order to carry out political work among the villagers. When we were not far from the village, we heard a sudden gun shot. Suspecting an invasion by the "punitive" force, we hurried toward the place from which the sound had come. We found Hong Hye Song who was caught in an enemy ambush on her way back after her political work in villages and fighting against heavy odds. The enemy was shouting and threatening her with blank fire in an attempt to capture her alive.

I spurred my horse on towards her where on the brink of being taken prisoner, she was returning the enemy fire, and picked her up instantly. The horse, sensing my intention, shot off like an arrow and galloped for a couple of miles. Hong Hye Song was saved. After that the horse became an object of universal admiration to the people in the guerrilla zone.

If she had not been killed in the enemy's "punitive" action at Baicaogou, Hong Hye Song would now be gratefully sharing with me in my recollections of the white horse. I rode the horse to Liangshuiquanzi many times when I was building up a semi-guerrilla zone there. Our organizations were active in the villages of Nandadong, Beidadong, Shitouhezi and Kajaegol around Liangshuiquanzi and also in villages in the vicinity of Tumen, as well as in Luozigou, Sandaohezi, Sidahezi, Laomuzhuhe and Taipinggou.

If I say that I nearly gave up this wonderful war-horse, the reader will not believe me. It happened when, together with the men of O Paek Ryong's platoon, I was working among the people in the Gufang Mountains or a place nearby. Circumstances obliged me to decide to part with the horse. It was the time of the spring food-shortage, and the people were suffering from lack of food.

We attacked the enemy near that place on several occasions, capturing food and distributing it among the people. But the amount was too little to meet their need. We ourselves ate sparingly at each meal in order to save food grain for the people. In the circumstances, the horse's rations also had to be cut to the minimum. Even grain stalks to replace hay were scarce, to say nothing of oats, barley and beans, the nutritious feeds.

My loyal men spared no efforts to obtain feed for the horse. However difficult the situation, they worked hard to find oats and salt for the horse by going to neighboring villages and even visiting people in the enemy-held areas. Some of the men even went out to glean harvested fields. They threshed the gleanings and put the grain in their pockets to give to the horse when they came back. When they approached the

horse, he would poke his nose into their pockets.

They took loving care of the horse for my sake. Their devoted efforts were an expression of revolutionary comradeship and loyalty to me.

I was thankful to them for their friendship and loyalty, but I felt very sad and uneasy. Whenever I saw them working with such great enthusiasm to obtain feed for the horse or care for it, I was haunted by the thought that I should no longer put them to such trouble simply for my sake. I was not used to accepting such services from other people. If anybody were to ask me when I felt most awkward during the years of the guerrilla war, I would answer that it was when I was treated unusually well by my men.

Whenever special benefits or privileges were offered to me, I felt sorry and guilty rather superior or self-satisfied, as if I were being put to the test.

Although the aching muscle in my calf was not cured and I would have to suffer for a few months longer, I made up my mind to give my pet horse to a peasant so as to relieve my men of this burden. If the horse was used as a draught animal in a semi-guerrilla zone, it would not be exposed to the dangers of the battlefield. I thought at first of giving it to the old man who had once been a servant and had given me his white horse, but I dismissed the idea for fear that he might feel embarrassed and upset.

I summoned the duty officer and told him to prepare a special noon meal for the horse even if it used up all the remaining feed.

"Feed the white horse with the best of the provisions today. Take him to the chairman of the Anti-Japanese Association of the village beyond the mountain in the afternoon. The remaining feed should be sent with the horse. Tell the chairman to give the horse to the poorest peasant who has no draught animal."

"Yes, sir," answered the duty officer, but he hesitated to leave.

"Go and do as you were told." I urged him sternly.

When the duty officer was gone, I thought things over, and regretted having given such cruel orders to send the white horse away I went out of the room to bid farewell to him. As usual, I combed him and brushed him all over and stroked his nape many times. As I looked back upon the thousands of miles I had traveled with the horse, I felt as if my heart were breaking.

Then I was surprised to see tears trickling from his eyes as they were fixed on me. It was really astonishing that he should have a premonition of parting. The horse had evidently read my mind from my look.

For the first time in my life I realized that even in the world of beasts slaved under the lash, there were

beautiful emotions that would increase and enhance the beauty of the human world.

"Forgive me, my pet. Though I am sad, I must bid farewell to you. Though the pain of our parting is tearing me apart, I cannot afford the luxury of riding about on you any longer. All the sufferings and hardships you have gone through for my sake will live in my memory as long as I live," I thought, as I stood with my face buried in his neck for a long time. Back in my room, I felt lonely for the rest of the day and could do no work. I even wondered whether I had made a foolish decision out of too great concern for saving face. But it would be absurd to change the decision that was already made. I waited for the evening report from the duty officer, hoping that the white horse would be given to a hard-working and kindly man.

But the officer did not turn up at the appointed hour for the evening report. Instead, platoon leader O Paek Ryong brought me my evening meal as dusk was falling. Without any preliminaries, he simply begged me to forgive him.

"I have violated discipline, so punish me, please."

"Violated discipline?" I could not see what he meant.

"I have raided a lumber station, without obtaining your approval in advance."

He hastily explained why he had done it. The duty officer who received my orders in the morning, had gone to O Paek Ryong and told him about the orders, and that he would obey any orders from me except orders about the horse. He had asked him to discuss the matter. O Paek Ryong sympathized with him. He told the duty officer:

"Perhaps the commander gave the orders because he was sorry to see his men taking so much trouble over the horse. But how can we allow the horse to be taken away from our commander, when he is still suffering from the aching muscle in his calf? If we find plenty of feed and then beg him to withdraw his orders, he may reconsider the matter. You should keep the horse out of sight for a while, instead of sending it to the neighboring village. And I will go to the Qinhe lumber station to get feed. Don't tell the commander where I've gone." The lumber station was a little more than ten miles from Xiaowangqing. One of the foremen was an acquaintance of O Paek Ryong. They had probably got to know each other during the foreman's frequent visits to the guerrilla zone to fell trees.

The platoon leader went to the lumber station with a foraging party of several men. Saying that if he gave the feed to the guerrillas he might get into trouble, the foreman told the platoon leader to raid the lumber station instead.

Realizing that the foreman's suggestion was reasonable, O Paek Ryong arrested the sentry, then broke into the office where the other sentries and supervisors were gambling, and disarmed them instantly. The raiding party returned safely to base carrying with them four or five sacks of oats and beans.



I put aside my evening meal and went out of the room. The horse was in the stable, having been brought back from the hiding place.

He snorted, and nodded his head towards me as if in thanks.

I felt my nose tingle. I was glad to see the horse again. But how should I deal with the duty officer and O Paek Ryong who was reckless as a bear in Mt. Paektu and had plenty of guts, these men who had disobeyed their orders? How preposterous O Paek Ryong had been in thinking that his commander would withdraw his orders if plenty of feed was obtained, and how absurd ways his guts had led him to raid a lumber station! Though I was grateful to him, I was appalled at the thought of the catastrophe his recklessness might bring on us in the days to come, if it was not nipped in the bud.

The irony was that I, who never compromised with principle, could not assert principle at the moment. I brushed the horse lightly on the back, and, when I saw him nodding with tears in his eyes, I did not feel like rebuking the platoon leader for disobeying the orders. Moreover, his stubborn attitude made me disinclined to force him to send the horse away. "Comrade Commander, please punish me or demote me, but I hope you'll understand that the horse must not be sent away anywhere as long as I am alive."

Having pronounced his ultimatum, he snorted as if he just fought a major battle.

I suppressed the impulse to hug him and pat him on the back in a show of thanks. More than once had I been moved by the loyalty of this peerlessly courageous platoon leader who had not hesitated to plunge through fire and water for me. He had followed me and respected me as he would his own elder brother, saying that it was Kim Il Sung who taught him to read and write the Korean alphabet, and it was Kim Il Sung who had opened his eyes to the things of the world.

I had also loved him and cared lovingly for him as I would for my own brother. This platoon leader whom I myself had trained had now raided the lumber station at the risk of his own life in order to save the white horse for me.

But for all this, he had committed a gross violation of discipline by foraging without approval from his commander. If he was forgiven, he might commit even a graver mistake. What was to be done?

A commander needs to make a wise decision at such a moment.

"The soup is getting cold," he said worriedly looking down at the steaming bowl. "Please take your meal and punish me quickly."

I held back the hot tears in my eyes. I felt a lump in my throat at his staunch readiness to accept punishment.

When he was a member of the Children's Vanguard, O Paek Ryong had crossed to Onsong in the homeland with a matchlock pistol he himself had made, shot a policeman at the customs house and snatched a rifle from him. He had a audacious as that as a boy. He had experienced all the hardships of life; growing up in a family of seventeen, he had sympathized sincerely and passionately with suffering people from his childhood. For this he was loved by all his comrades.

From his days in the Children's Vanguard, he was eager to join the guerrilla army. His antics included an episode involving empty cartridges: He once heard that an applicant for the guerrilla army needed a trustworthy reference or a rifle the applicant himself had captured from the enemy, or at the very least a stick grenade as a substitute for a reference. So he went to a battlefield where fire had just been exchanged. He tied the bottoms of his trousers with string, and then he held the waist of his trousers open with one hand while he gathered cartridges, live and empty, with the other hand and filled the legs of the trousers with them. Then, he came to the guerrilla army base, sweating all over. As he untied the legs of his trousers, nearly a gallon of cartridges poured out.

"How about that?" he said, looking elatedly at the company commander. "Is this enough for me to be accepted?"

Instead of the answer he expected from the company commander, he saw the guerrillas burst into roars of laughter.

"Look here, Paek Ryong!" the company commander said, laughing. "What did you bring these empty cartridges for? They've already been used."

O Paek Ryong had thought that the empty cartridges could kill the enemy. When he realized his mistake, he sorted the live cartridges from the useless ones. The number came to hundreds.

So, the cartridges did serve as a reliable reference for him to join the guerrilla army. Since enlisting he had fought courageously to take vengeance on the Japanese "punitive" troops for the deaths of his parents and brothers. As a raw recruit, he had many distressing experience. Once, while cleaning his rifle, he had let off an accidental shot and been punished for it.

The political instructor who punished him was an enemy spy. He had got himself promoted to company political instructor by worming his way into the confidence of factionalists who held important posts in the east Manchuria ad hoc committee and the county party committee, and was doing everything possible to undermine the guerrilla army.

The punishment he meted out to O Paek Ryong for the accidental shot was brutal and barbarous in terms of the code of discipline and morals of the revolutionary army. As punishment he sent O Paek Ryong to the walled town of Mudan, where a company of the puppet Manchukuo army was stationed, with orders to take down and bring back the Manchukuo flag flying in the center of the town. The orders, in fact, were intended to get him killed during this adventure in the enemy's den. His comrades-in--arms had all

been worried that he would never return alive.

O Paek Ryong, however, went off to the town, which was 25 miles away from his company, and came back safely with the flag. After that the spy in the guise of political instructor watched for a chance to do away with O Paek Ryong. He even went so far as to start an argument with the men who ate their rice in water. He preached that soldiers should eat solid food, without soup. Once the company butchered a cow. The men, tired of eating "dry food," were delighted at the thought of eating their fill of beef soup that evening.

That evening, however, the dastardly political instructor had appeared again and said that if the men ate beef soup when they were not used to it, they would have loose bowels, and ordered them to eat only rice and meat, not the soup. So the men were denied the chance of eating the soup which they had been looking forward to.

Only O Paek Ryong and one other man disobeyed the orders and ate the soup. The wife of O Paek Ryong's second eldest brother, who was a cook, brought them the soup in secret. As bad luck would have it, O Paek Ryong was caught by the political instructor in the act of eating the soup behind a stack of firewood in the yard of the barracks. This incident gave the spy a pretext for labeling him a "Minsaengdan" member. Had it not been for the references given by his comrades-in-arms, O Paek Ryong would have been executed on the false charge of belonging to the "Minsaengdan."

The spy's identity was later discovered and he was executed by O Paek Ryong. O Paek Ryong had virtually been condemned to death penalty and it still rankled in his mind. If he was subjected to another penalty, wouldn't it leave an even worse scar? "Comrade O, I am grateful to you for taking the risk of raiding the enemy camp for the sake of the white horse. But your breach of discipline is a grave error that must not be repeated by a commanding officer. This sort of thing must not recur. As I understand your feelings, I will not send away the white horse. Well, are you satisfied?"

"Yes, I am satisfied," the platoon leader replied with a grin on his face. Then he scampered off to his quarters like a child.

I settled his case with these few words of remonstrance. In the years that followed, the white horse served me as faithfully as ever. I still remember an event that took place when the battle to defend Xiaowangqing was raging. At that time the enemy was invading Hwanggarigol at the end of the valley of Lishugou and killing the people in the guerrilla zone. The mountains and fields were littered with dead bodies, and the houses were reduced to ashes.

I spent every day galloping about on my horse, commanding my men in the battle, in the thick of the fire. One day I organized the defenses on Mt. Ppyojok, the next day I halted the charging enemy on Mapanshan, and the next day I provided covering fire for the evacuees from the hill behind Lishugou. In the course of this whirlwind of battle, I went through many hair-raising incidents.

In the barrage of fire, even the fur lining of my overcoat caught fire. The flames could have enveloped me in an instant, but I did not notice it. As my horse was galloping against the wind, the flames on the skirt of my coat flew out behind me. It was only when the horse began to run with the wind that I discovered the flames on my coat. I had no time to pull it off, and if I jumped from the rushing horse, I might collide with a rock and kill or seriously injure myself.

At this critical moment, the horse slowed down in front of a snow-covered depression and then slid into it sideways, with his forelegs folded in. I stumbled into the snow, and the fire on my coat was put out as I rolled over in it. The horse's two legs were bleeding. Had it not been for the horse, I would have suffered fatal burns and not survived to tell the tale.

I marveled at the horse's seemingly supernatural powers. How could he sense that I was in a fire? It still remains a mystery to me. His unusual clarity of judgment might be attributed to animal instincts, but to what can one attribute his loyal devotion, the self-sacrificing devotion which led him to save his master, while injuring his own legs? The expression says "a faithful dog and a pet horse," but I would rather change the word order and say "a faithful horse and a pet dog."

The white horse became a legend, beloved of all the people in the guerrilla zone. The story of the horse spread to the semi-guerrilla zones around Xiaowangqing and even to the enemy-ruled areas. Wu Yicheng, too, heard the story and coveted the horse.

"Commander Kim, wouldn't you exchange your white horse for fifty war-horses?" he asked when I was at Luozigou negotiating with him for the formation of a common front with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist forces. I do not remember what I said to him in reply. I only remember that I returned to Macun on the same horse after the negotiations.

The white horse that had carried me over thousands of miles of wet and dry trails for nearly two years, with his shoes changed only occasionally, died at Xiaowangqing in the winter of 1934. When I returned from the first expedition to north Manchuria, I found the stable empty. They led me to the horse's solitary grave, where the earth had been mounded up by my comrades-in-arms. I did not know how to express the depth of my sorrow.

Seeing how grieved I was, my men suggested firing gun salutes to the horse. But I declined, asking what was the use of a gun salute, for the horse had lived among the roar of guns all his life, so he should be allowed some peace at least in his grave. The grave is somewhere in Wangqing.

One day in the early 1960s, when O Paek Ryong was the head of the General Bureau of Guards, he and I went for a casual ride, and we reminisced about the white horse. Even though several decades had passed, the former leader of a guerrilla platoon could recall every detail of the horse's story.

Somehow the story became known to writers, Song Yong and Lee Ki Yong. An officer is said to have asked them to write about the white horse, but I am not sure how the matter came up and how it was

settled.

The white horse that was born of the flames of the war against the Japanese and lived through fire all his life appeared on a small piece of canvas in the Korean Revolution Museum. The legendary anecdote of the white horse came to the attention of the artist Jong Kwan Chol perhaps through Lee KA Yong or Song Yong. Jong Kwan Chol painted the subject in oils. I discovered the picture when I visited the museum at the suggestion of O Paek Ryong. It depicted me and the white horse.

The canvas reminded me of the orderlies and O Paek Ryong, who had shared the horse's loyalty to me. I suggested that it would have been even better if these comrades had been shown together, and the artist changed the picture, following my advice, to include two orderlies. That is the picture now on exhibition in the museum.

Whenever I missed those loyal orderlies and the white horse, I used to go to see them in the museum.

Nowadays, at the age of eighty, I occasionally picture them only in my memory. The image of my faithful white horse still moves as vividly before my eyes as he did sixty years ago. If he had been a human being he would have won higher commendation than the most loyal of men.

## 8.1. Lee Kwang

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I made friends with Lee Kwang in Jirin. One day Kim Jun and his company from the General Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria brought a young man to me and introduced him. He was Lee Kwang.



*Photo: Lee Gwang. Ed. Lee, Rhee. Li and Lee are equivalent.*

Our comrades had assumed from his appearance in Jirin that he had come either to study, to get in touch with an organization, or to learn how the student and youth movement was progressing. Kim Jun hinted to me that Lee Kwang seemed to have come to Jirin to attend a secret provincial meeting of teachers.

My first impression of Lee Kwang was that he appeared intelligent and magnanimous, but reticent. In the course of repeated contacts thereafter I learned that he was indeed a young man of exceptional sensitivity, with a kind heart and the ability to form strong friendships.

My comrades were charmed when they met Lee Kwang, and they tried to persuade him to settle in Jirin, even suggesting to him that the Wenguang Middle School would be good for developing his knowledge, that the Law College would give him an ideal start in life, and that the Yuwen Middle School would be best for a man who wished to become a revolutionary.

Lee Kwang himself did not wish to leave Jirin. He said that, in his primary school days at Guchengzi, Yanji County, he had visited Jirin several times on errands for leaders of the Independence Army, that the life of the young people and students had now changed beyond recognition, and that the city was now buzzing with the social campaigns organized by students, whereas in previous years the young people had been so lethargic that their campaign had gone almost unnoticed. So Lee Kwang stayed and attended Middle School No. 5 in Jirin for some time.

In his early days Lee Kwang had been influenced mostly by the Korean Independence Army leaders, such as Hong Bom Do, Kim Jwa Jin, Hwang Pyong Gil and Choe Myong Rok. The headquarters of an Independence Army unit had been billeted on his wife's parents' house at Guchengzi for a long time, so he had met many leaders of the nationalist movement. Lee Kwang was sharp-eyed, quick-witted and modest and he attracted the attention of the Independence Army leaders. They seemed to have tried to make him heir to the cause of the Independence Army, just as O Tong Jin and Lee Ung had tried to make me their successor.

During his boyhood Lee Kwang had learned Chinese characters at the village school which was run by his mother's father. As his father's health was poor, he had given up the idea of going to secondary school, and at the age of 14, he began to help his father support the family. At the tender age of 16 he

began to manage the household affairs as effective head of the family, and his modern schooling was therefore delayed. After graduating from school he taught at primary schools in Yanji and Wangqing for some time.

Until that time he had been known by his real name Lee Myong Chun. But from the time he started teaching at Beihamatang in Chunhua Sub-county he was known by the nickname Lee Kwang. In those days eight schools at Beihamatang and its neighborhood used to hold joint debating contests and athletic meets as part of the enlightenment movement, and RI Kwang who was working underground, used to compete for the football team of Hamatang, using his nickname. From that time onwards everybody called him Lee Kwang.

"It was the Independence Army that guided me to nationalism and it was the independence movement that led me to communism," he said to me when we first met, recollecting the days in Guchengzi. His words sounded very strange to me.

"How could that be, did the old men of the Independence Army teach you two thoughts at a time?"

"No, I wasn't exactly taught. How can I explain? I should really say that they influenced me, and there were both nationalist and Marxist-Leninist influences."

"The old men must have been double-dealers?"

"I would say they were seeking a shift of direction, rather than double-dealing. While leading the Independence Army movement, they read communist books in secret. When I visited the house of my wife's parents, I saw in a corner of a room lots of the books the old men were reading. So I began to read them, too, to kill time - but now I simply enjoy reading them."

I squeezed Lee Kwang's hand, and said. "I am glad to meet a man who espouses communism."

Lee Kwang waved his hand in a hasty gesture, saying:

"No. I am not yet a communist. There are quite a few concepts I cannot understand among the communist principles advanced by Marx and Lenin. To my simple eyes, the communist ideal appears somehow too fantastic. You may feel sorry to hear this, Comrade Sung Ju, but I hope you will understand that I am speaking frankly."

I liked his candidness during our first conversation. It was this, more than anything else, which attracted me to him.

At the time Lee Kwang was neither a nationalist nor a communist. In short, he was in the process of changing his direction. In the course of his association with us in Jirin he became a communist, but he did not join the Young Communist League or Anti-Imperialist Youth League which we had organized.

An informed source states that when he was coming to Jirin, Lee Kwang mortgaged some of his school's ten hectares or so of land for 400 yuan for travel expenses, but I am not sure this story is authentic. The school lands had been allocated by the state for the running of educational institutions. So if it is true that he took the risk of mortgaging such public property, he must have been very ambitious. In a letter to his brother-in-law which he sent after he left home, he is said to have expressed the following grim resolve:

"I think I must find a true patriot even if I have to comb the whole of Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. It may take me ten years or twenty years to do this. However, I pledge myself not to return to my paternal home until I succeed."

His determination gives us a glimpse of his character, and explains why he left his home and traveled round all the major cities and political centers of Manchuria.

Lee Kwang was honest, meticulous and resourceful. He spoke Chinese as fluently as a northeastern Chinese. Therefore, he was competent to perform the job of a headman of ten households, a hundred households, or even of a sub-county in the later days.

It was from him that I, who come from a northwestern province of Korea, learned the customs of Jiandao and Hamgyong Province.

While in Jirin, for some unknown reasons Lee Kwang did not wish to join us in the organizational life. He was probably in the mood of a traveler who was only stopping over at Jirin. However, he frequently kept company with me. Later, through me, he became a close friend of my mother.

He met my mother when he was returning to Jiandao after studying in Jirin. Before his departure he came to see me and as he took his farewell, he casually said:

"Sung Ju, when I return to Jiandao I wish to drop in at Fusong to see your mother. Do you mind?"

"No. It isn't like you, Lee Kwang, to ask about such a thing. If you want to see her, you should go to see her. Why should you need my permission?" I was grateful to him for his suggestion.

"So you agree. Good! I will see your mother as I have decided to. Everyone follows your mother's lead and calls her 'our mother,' but I haven't even made a courtesy call on her. How impolite I have been! Why should she be mother only to Kim Hyok and Kye Yong Chun, and not to me?"

"Thank you, Lee Kwang! Now my mother will have another son. From today we are brothers." "Then, we should drink a toast together, or at least make a visit to the noodle shop together, shouldn't we?"

Needless to say, we did both.



He paid a visit to my mother at Fusong, spending a few days in her company, before going to Wangqing. In those days his family was living in Wangqing County, not at Yilangou in Yanji County.

After Lee Kwang left Fusong, mother sent me a letter, telling me a lot about him. The letter said:

"Sung Ju, Lee Kwang left today for Jiandao. I saw him off at the ferry on the River Songhua. I feel so lonely, just as I did when I said goodbye to you, that I don't feel like working today. He is so affable! Strange to say, I feel as if he were one of my own sons. He himself said that he felt as if I were his own mother. My heart overflows as I think of taking more and more sturdy boys under my wing as the days pass by. Can there be any greater pleasure than this in the world? You have introduced a really fine boy to me. He took Chol Ju with him to Yangdicun, paid obeisance at father's grave and cropped the weeds on the mound. Many of your friends have been to my home, and I know many young men, but this is the first time I have met such a lovable boy as Lee Kwang. I hope your friendship will thrive like the green pines on the southern hill."

On the day I received the letter I walked in buoyant mood on the bank of the River Songhua all day long. The joy my mother expressed in every line of the letter affected me greatly. If she was happy, I was happy; and if she was satisfied, I was satisfied. If meeting Lee Kwang gave her such great satisfaction, I was equally delighted.

After Lee Kwang left Jirin, I received a money order from the post office.

Many people assisted me financially while I attended the Yuwen Middle School in Jirin, as I have mentioned on various occasions. Those who gave me money for my school expenses were mostly my father's friends such as O Tong un, Son Jung Doh, Yang Se Bong, Jang Chol Ho and Hyon Muk Gwan, who lived in Jirin or came frequently to report to the headquarters of the iongui-bu from the bases of the independence Army, for instance, from Liuhe, Xingjing, Fusong and Huadian.

My patrons in my Jirin days included members of the Young Communist League and the Ryugil Association of Korean Students in Jirin. Sin Yong Gun, who was working as an activist of the Young Communist League while attending the Wenguang Middle School, also contributed to my school expenses, though he was far from rich.

As I have already mentioned, in those days my mother earned only five to ten fen a day by taking in sewing. If she earned ten fen a day on average, her monthly earning was three yuan, which was just enough to pay my monthly school fees at the Yuwen Middle School. She did not send me the school expenses by post, in order to save the cost of postage. She used to save her daily earnings until she had enough for the monthly school fees and then send them with someone she knew traveling to Jirin. This saved me the trouble of calling at the post office.

I used to accept the money from my mother with mixed feelings. There was a feeling of relief at not having to worry about being disgraced by failing to pay my school fees; but there was also a feeling of

concern for my family, who would have to get by without any money.

In fact, three yuan was a trifling amount, scarcely enough for a rich man's son to buy himself lunch. Most of the students at the Yuwen Middle School came from rich families. Sometimes scores of money orders, which we called "slips," would arrive for the rich men's sons at school in a single day. On these occasions the children of poor people like myself, who scarcely knew what a money order looked like, went about in low spirits. In this context, the arrival of ten yuan for me, one of the poor students, was a great event.

As I took the money order to the post office, I tried to guess who might have sent it. But I could not think of any relations or acquaintances who could send me so much money at one time. The only person who might send money to me at Jirin was my mother, but it would be impossible for her to send so much. I thought the money might have come to the wrong person because of a mistake by the clerk at the post office, but such a mistake seemed very unlikely.

If a person who received a money order could not name the sender at the post office, the clerk could refuse to pay. On that day, however, the clerk paid without even asking me the sender's name. Instead, I asked the clerk who had sent the order. "It is from Lee Kwang!" the voice behind the partition replied. I was surprised: I had many closer friends than Lee Kwang, even though we had become close friends by the time he left Jirin. I had never imagined that he would send me money.

I was deeply moved by his generosity.

While he was in Wangqing, Lee Kwang frequently visited my home, bringing many packages of medicine and money for my mother who was living at Xinglongcun, Antu County. The money was his monthly savings from his wages as the headman of a hundred households. He was extremely kind-hearted and charitable to the needy.

He used to stay at my mother's for several days, helping her around the house, and then returning to Wangqing. He became a welcome regular visitor to my family.

Whenever I received financial support I regretted my inability to return the kindness. My family was too poor to pay the money back. I resolved to repay my friends and colleagues by becoming a loyal son of the country and a faithful servant of my fellow people.

In the winter of 1929, Lee Kwang took a train from Dunhua to Jirin in order to visit me. I was in prison at the time. He had timed his journey badly.

Instead of meeting me, he made the acquaintance of Kong Suk Ta, a waitress at the inn where he was lodging, and from her he learned the details of the youth and student movement in Jirin, including the way in which the leaders were guiding the movement. While assuming the guise of a waitress, Kong Suk Ja, on assignment from the Young Communist League, maintained a liaison between us and the young

men who came to Jirin to visit us. She later became Lee Kwang's second wife as a result of their acquaintance at the inn. His first wife, Kim Orinnyo, died of illness.

Lee Kwang was determined not to marry again, so deep was his grief over his wife's death. He believed that no woman would make a better wife than her because they had been devoted to each other. Within a year of her death, many women had offered him their hands, but he would not even glance at them.

Whenever we met him, his friends and I tried to persuade Lee Kwang to get married, at least for the sake of his infirm parents and his little son. Dissuading him from his resolution proved more difficult than pressing resin from dry wood. It was only after three years of mourning for Kim Orinnyo that he accepted my advice. His second wife Kong Suk Ja was good-natured, wise and virtuous. She raised the orphaned child with such great care that she won everyone's admiration. The child, too, regarded her as his own mother. Unfortunately, Kong Suk Ta had no children of her own.

Although he could not meet me when I was in prison, with the help of Kong Suk Ta Lee Kwang made close friends with young people attending the Yuwen Middle School and the Normal School in Jirin who were committed to the movement. The Jirin organization convinced Lee Kwang that all the patriotic forces must first be united in the cause of national independence, and that in order to unite the patriotic forces there must be an idea and a line which would serve as their common banner, as well as a centre of unity and cohesion. He returned to Jiandao convinced of this.

Lee Kwang's stay in Jirin was a turning-point in his revolutionary activity. As a result he was put under surveillance by the secret agents of the Japanese consulate and the Manchurian police, but he was never afraid of them and continued courageously along his new course of action.

The autumn and spring struggles were important events which proved the correctness of the lessons he had learned in Jirin. His world-view made a leap to still greater heights as a result of these struggles.

After he moved to Wangqing, Lee Kwang worked as the sub-county head at Beihamatang. The fact that a man who had declared his commitment to the great cause of revolution and regarded it as his exclusive ideal, was appointed as an official at the lowest rung of the enemy's administrative hierarchy was an event worthy of considerable interest.

I met Lee Kwang again at Mingyuegou in December 1931.

At that time he was occupied with providing bed and board for the representatives to the meeting at Mingyuegou that winter. When I saw him appear at the meeting place with a knapsack full of foxtail millet and with five pheasants hanging over his shoulders, I was moved to admiration, and thought that he was a man worthy of his name. The starch noodles, a specialty of Jiandao, with a sauce of minced pheasant and chicken were so delicious that we could not resist the temptation of asking for a second helping. After Lee Kwang and I each ate two bowls of noodles at the same table, we lay in the front room of Lee Chong San's house with wooden pillows under our heads, talking through the night.

First of all, I thanked him heartily for helping my mother in her household affairs and also for sending me money for my school expenses.

"While I was eating the noodles tonight, I thought a lot. The efforts you put into preparing the meat sauce moved me to tears. While I was studying in Jirin you often took me to restaurants. I don't know how I can repay your kindness...." When he heard me say this, he tapped me on my shoulder.

"Don't mention it. I have helped your family out of my desire to contribute to the independence movement to which your father dedicated his whole life. How hard you have been working directing the youth and student movement! It's only natural to contribute a little money to such a patriotic family as yours.... Don't mention it again."

He pretended to be angry, and gestured threateningly at me with his hand.

This made me keenly aware of another aspect of his beautiful character.

"Lee Kwang, don't be too modest. Kindness should be repaid. I must thank you again, and also on my mother's behalf. Frankly, I had no idea you would give us such wholehearted support." "I didn't suppose you would. But Sung Ju, I have my reasons for doing it."

"What are your reasons?"

"One day your mother told me how she was married to your father, as if it were an old folk tale. She said that arranging the marriage had been by no means easy.

"I know that. My two brothers and I heard about it from my mother after her husband passed away. It was a really tearful story."

This story takes us back to the years before the "annexation of Korea by Japan." A distance of about two miles lay between my mother's home at Chilgol and father's home at Namri, with a low hill standing between the two villages. Travelers from Namri to Pyongyang had to go by way of Chilgol. And those from Chilgol to Nampho had to pass by Namri. The people of the two villages were on good terms and visited each other frequently. This led to many of them being related by marriage.

My maternal grandfather was looking for a suitable person for a son-in-law from Namri and the first young man that attracted the old man's interest was none other than my father. When a matchmaker had begun to come and go between the two houses, mother's father came first to my father's house at Namri to see him. However, he returned to Chilgol undecided, because the young man's family was living in dire poverty, although he thought the young man himself was acceptable. If his daughter was married to such a poor family she would have to suffer hardship all her life, the old man thought. But even after that he visited my father as many as five times.

My father's family, being destitute, were not able to serve a proper lunch to this person who might become an in-law, on any of his six visits.

Only after the sixth visit did my mother's father consult with his wife and send a letter agreeing to the engagement.

"Sung Ju, this story has given me a better understanding of your family. You will be surprised if I tell you that I knew of the crab incident, won't you?"

I was, indeed, surprised to hear Lee Kwang mention the crab affair. This was an old family event of which only a few members including mother, grandfather Po Hyon, and I myself knew. "Oh! How do you know about that?"

"Surely you can guess how close I have become with your family members, can't you?" Lee Kwang pretended to be elated at seeing me so surprised.

At the age of six or seven, during the childhood days I spent at Mangyongdae, I began catching crabs. My grandfather used to catch a lot of crabs to eke out a poor living. The Sunhwa River, a tributary of the Taedong River, was teeming with crabs, and whenever he went catching crabs, grandfather always took me with him. Perhaps he wanted to teach me the skills needed to eke out a living from childhood. Although they were despised by rich people, to us these crabs were delicious when they were salted.

Crab catching was a quite simple and monotonous task. You just needed to lower well-boiled ears of sorghum into the water and then pull them out some time later; we found clusters of crabs clinging to the ears. We used to catch scores or hundreds of them a day, and no words could tell how happy we were as we returned home carrying the catch in mesh bags.

The crabs improved our meals a lot. Whenever we had a guest, my grandmother would take salted crabs out of a jar to serve the visitor. On such occasions I used to think how good it would be if we could serve them to my mother's parents. For me my mother's maiden home in Chilgol was a mysterious world, a focus of infinite love and sympathy. I liked the homely smell of the boiled cattle fodder steaming in the stable, and I loved to hear the twittering of the birds on the branches of the jujube trees in the garden. I also was fascinated by the old tales that were told on the straw mats, as I sniffed at the scented smoke of the moxa, burning to keep away mosquitoes on summer nights.

My mother's sister would tell me not to forget Chilgol because I was born there. Perhaps my mother spent some time at her maiden home before she gave birth to me. But my grandparents always said that my birthplace was Namri. They said that my mother stayed for several days at her parents' home at about the time I was born, but that was no reason for me to be known as a boy from Chilgol. A woman might give birth to a baby away from home, they said, but according to ancestral law the home of the child's father should be considered to be its birthplace.

In any case, I liked my mother's maiden home as much as my father's home, and I felt this very strongly when I was catching crabs.

When I was studying at the Changdok School at Chilgol, I would return to Mangyongdae on Sundays to go crab catching with my grandfather. One day I hid half of the catch in a nearby bush before I showed the mesh bag to grandfather. He was saddened by the small catch, but I pretended not to hear his expressions of regret.

Of course, I should have told him the truth, that I had put aside half the catch for my mother's side of the family. But I was not sure whether he would like it or not, so I hesitated. After I took the mesh bag home for him, I went to the Sunhwa River again and took the other half of the catch to Chilgol. My maternal relations were glad to see the crabs, and thanked me for the present. I told them that thanks were due to grandpa Po Hyon, who had caught the crabs.

One day my maternal grandfather came to Mangyongdae and thanked grandpa Po Hyon for the crabs, which he said were delicious.

At first grandpa Po Hyon was embarrassed by the unexpected thanks, but when he heard the whole truth he was pleased.

Later he praised me for being a very considerate boy.

This was the incident mentioned by Lee Kwang, an anecdote of poverty and a drama of kindness.

However, Lee Kwang seemed to have interpreted this story in a different light, not as an act of kindness.

"After I heard the stories of the marriage and the crabs, I began to feel sympathy for your family," Lee Kwang said.

I was deeply moved by his consideration.

"Lee Kwang, how do you like the job of sub-county head?"

I had wanted to know this ever since I had come to central Manchuria. A report from the political workers in the Jiandao area, whom I had sent to east Manchuria, said that Lee Kwang, in whom I was most interested, had been working as a sub-county head in Wangqing. He smiled at my question.

"It is irksome, but I've done quite well at it. Last autumn some of our comrades were held in custody at Hamatang by the defense corps, but they were released when I gave them a reference. The authority of a sub-county head seems to have been effective." He said jokingly that if he were allowed, he would like to be a sub-county head all his life.

I talked proudly about my home village, and Lee Kwang joked.

"If Mangyongdae is such a beautiful place, I will follow you there with my family after the country becomes independent."

"Not to Jongsong? I heard that you come from Jongsong."

"I can make myself at home anywhere so long as I feel attached to a place, even though I was not born there. Anyway, if I do go there, please help me to find a place where I can teach primary schoolchildren. You'll be a schoolmaster and I will work under you as a teacher."

"Oh, my! I hate teaching at primary school...."

"Oh, really! I heard that you taught at Antu or Guyushu. And your father was a teacher for many years, I heard."

Our friendship grew deeper when we were organizing the special detachment.

Immediately after he organized a special detachment at Wangqing on our advice, Lee Kwang came to Xiaoshahe to see me. The hostile activities of the national salvation army against Korean communists and young patriots were a great obstacle to the efforts of our comrades in Wangqing to prepare for the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Even after he had organized a special detachment, Lee Kwang was still left in suspense, unable to decide the future direction of his activities.

At that time I told him about my views on matters of principle and the means of forming a united front with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units, and I discussed about the goals and methods of the special detachment's activities with him in detail. He accepted my proposals with an open mind.

Foxtail millet mixed with sorghum, bean paste soup, and dry wild vegetables were the only food that my mother could afford at that period, but she still accorded him cordial hospitality. And he respected my mother greatly, too. Mother's warm love moved him and his youthful enthusiasm and his simple and honest mind were a comfort to my mother.

It was while Lee Kwang was staying at Xinglongcun that we founded the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Though she was ill, my mother came with Chol Ju to see the guerrilla army. Stroking the rifle which Lee Kwang was shouldering, she said; "With these weapons you can fight in real earnest now. How can the Independence Army fight the Japanese with outmoded weapons? Now as I see your army and the weapons on your shoulders, I feel as if my life-long grievances had been resolved. How glad your mothers would be to see you as you are now! Mothers' hearts are broken and they weep if their sons act like fools or behave badly, but they would be delighted and moved to tears if they could see their sturdy sons under arms ready to fight for their country."

Back at Wangqing, Lee Kwang worked hard with the national salvation army.

Our success in achieving cooperation with Commander Yu at Antu provided valuable experience in work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units. At first this work went comparatively smoothly and successfully.

Many of these anti-Japanese units were enthusiastic about forming an anti-imperialist united front with us.

We communists took the initiative in forming the united front.

However, the Leftist elements obstructed this work. Their adventurism motto "Down with the upper stratum and win over the rank and file!" was a provocation to the higher echelons of the anti-Japanese units, leading to bitter resistance and resentment, and many of the commanders of these units began to take measures against the communists, repressing or even killing them.

It was something to be wholeheartedly welcomed in this situation that Lee Kwang started working among the anti-Japanese units.

In order to work with these units, Lee Kwang moved from Beihamatang to Taipinggou. In those days I often visited his house at Taipinggou. The village of Taipingcun, with about three hundred peasant households, was located at the geographical centre of a delta connecting Xiaowangqing, Yaoyinggou, and Laoheishan. It was not far from the Soviet-Manchurian border. From this village it was about six miles to Luozigou. All of the major assembly areas of the national salvation army units were located near Taipinggou. Lee Kwang's special detachment was at Jianchanggou, a little more than one mile from the town of Luozigou.

His house was perched on the sloping river-bank, isolated from the village of Taipinggou. There was an imposing well with a large water dipper by the house, which was known as the house with a dipper. I drank from this well on several occasions. When we appeared in front of the house on hot summer days, streaming with sweat, Lee Kwang used to fetch a bucketful of cool water from the well and offer the water to me. The water was most refreshing.

Whenever I went to Luozigou, I used to drop in at Taipinggou to inquire after his parents. At this house, together with Chinese communists such as Zhou Bao-zhong, Chen Han-zhang, Hu Jin-min and Wang Run-cheng, we held the last meeting of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee which discussed the question of a united front with the national salvation army. In the battle in defence of Xiaowangqing and many other large and small battles, Lee Kwang demonstrated distinct ability and capacity as a commander. The practical example he set influenced the soldiers of the national salvation army, and he became renowned as a military and political worker among the broad masses of east Manchuria.



Wu Yi-cheng, who regarded Lee Kwang's special detachment as a genuinely anti-Manchukuo and anti-Japanese armed force, appointed him commanding officer of the security squad under the forward headquarters of the national salvation army, and even gave him bodyguards.

After that Lee Kwang established contact with Tong Shan-hao in order to develop further cooperation with the national salvation army against the Japanese.

Though he had taken up arms to fight the Japanese, Tong Shan-hao had degenerated into a bandit. In those days, many people identified the bandits with the mounted rebels as, indeed, they still do.

There had been many mounted rebels in Manchuria. When a large number of people of the Han nationality flowed into Manchuria through Shanhaiguan from China proper in the closing years of the Qing dynasty, the Manchurian people began arming in self-defense to protect their farmland and their ancestral heritage from the plundering immigrants. This was the origin of Manchuria's righteous rebels, whom the Japanese called mounted rebels.

Unlike the scattered bands of sordid highwaymen, the mounted rebels regarded themselves as just soldiers, acting in accordance with their own code of conduct and refraining from plundering people's property. The mounted rebels' society was an insurgent society, far removed from the central political authorities.

The life of the mounted rebels was inconceivable without arms. They had lived by carrying arms for a long time, and such a life inspired feelings of envy and admiration. The people in Manchuria would say openly, "Going on the streets is for women and rebelling against the authorities is for men."

Naturally, the rebels did not always in fact abide by their own strict code of conduct. Many mounted rebels degenerated into bandits in the course of their outlaw existence. There were many groups of mounted troops, which were difficult to identify as either righteous rebels or mere bandits. Many bandits behaved as if they were righteous rebels. Groups of bandits in the guise of righteous rebels accepted political bribes from imperialist aggressors and warlords, murdering people and committing atrocities beyond all imagination.

When many commanders of the national salvation army became indignant and hostile to the communists because the Leftist tactics of "down with the upper stratum" were applied in work with Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units, the strategists of Japanese imperialism understood this fact very quickly and used it to sow discord among the anti-Japanese forces. They were skilled in the notorious method of getting the anti-Japanese forces to fight among themselves, sniping at and destroying each other.

The Japanese imperialists employed this method when they urged Tong Shan-hao to massacre all the members of Lee Kwang's special detachment.

At first, they tried to get him to surrender. They put up notices everywhere stating that the person who

captured Lee Kwang would be rewarded with lots of money, and that if Lee Kwang himself surrendered he would receive an important appointment. In their judgment, in order to disband Wu Yi-cheng's army it was imperative to check the influence of the communists on it, and Lee Kwang was the man who wielded that influence. Lee Kwang's special detachment was regarded as a united-front shock force operating in the heart of the national salvation army.

Thus the Japanese intelligence service was aware of his true significance and role. Tong Shan-hao, the worst of the bandits, was politically an obtuse, brutal and capricious man, and was easily bribed by the Japanese strategists. Knowing the views Lee Kwang supported, he baited a trap by proposing negotiations for a joint operation at Laoheishan, in accordance with a script prepared by the Japanese imperialists.

Lee Kwang made the mistake of taking the bait. Not knowing that Tong Shan-hao had become a running dog of Japanese imperialism, he set out for Laoheishan with more than ten members of his special detachment, including Wang Cheng-fu, the chief secretary of the forward headquarters of the national salvation army. The party organization warned him against the danger of dealing with a blind and brutal bandit commander. Lee Kwang, however, insisted on going to negotiate, even at the risk of his life, saying that if the line of the anti-imperialist united front was not implemented, it would be impossible for the revolution to advance any further.

Tong Shan-hao held a banquet for Lee Kwang's party and then massacred all of them except one, who narrowly escaped death. When the bandits fled, they left him at the site of the massacre, thinking he was dead like the others. When we got there we saved him. But he, too, died in battle later, in the woods between Luozigou and Laoheishan.

Lee Kwang was killed at the age of twenty-eight in a mountain hut near Laoheishan. His error was lack of vigilance. In order to form a united front with Tong Shan-hao, he needed to transform him ideologically. But he tried to effect a united front merely by making friends with him.

I grieved over his death.

I was on fire with the desire to take immediate revenge on the Tong Shan-hao clique. Had it not been for the voice of reason which told me that organizing a common front with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units was the duty of the communists at that time, their primary task and general strategy, I would have given way to the impulse and plunged into a bloody battle of vengeance.

The whole of east Manchuria condemned the nefarious crime committed by Tong Shan-hao, and cried out for justice to be done. Leftist hooligans complained that the army did not retaliate against the class enemy who had murdered Lee Kwang. Some people claimed that it was a Rightist deviation not to strike against Tong Shan-hao.

Lee Kwang's death was an irretrievable loss to the communist effort for an anti-imperialist common

front. We lost a precious comrade worth more than a thousand enemy soldiers. The enemy had taken away from me yet another prop and mainstay of the Korean revolution.

I felt as if my own flesh had been torn away. I bit my lips to suppress my cries, I was obsessed by my thoughts. In the year since we started the war against Japanese, how many comrades-in-arms had already been taken from my side! Why had my friends departed one after another, never to return, as soon as we became attached to each other? Was this the work of destiny?

As I strode with clenched fists, up and down the bank of the River Xiaowangqing, where Lee Kwang and I had discussed the strategy of the great anti-Japanese war, I cursed again and again the cruel fate that had driven me into this abyss of grief. Then I came to a decision:

Lee Kwang's death must not be pointless. If I succeeded in establishing the united front with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units to which he devoted such great efforts and so much energy, then he too would be delighted, though in his grave.

Lee Kwang's death drove me to speed up the negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng. It did not make me flinch from the path to the united front, but urged me on along it.

I had to visit Wu Yi-cheng! If I could succeed in negotiations with him, I would be able to avenge Lee Kwang's death.

With this in mind, I speeded up the daylight march to Luozigou. I dropped in at Taipingcun to console Lee Kwang's bereaved family. His wife Kong Suk Ja spread her arms wide to stop me.

"General, you must not go there. It is not the place you should go to. My husband went there and.... General, please don't go there for God's sake."

But strangely enough, her tearful warning only urged me on to complete the daylight march. The woman's shoulders heaved up and down as she held a seven-.or eight-year old boy in her arms, and wiped the tears from her eyes.

The boy in her arms was Lee Po Chon, Lee Kwang's own son. The boy also stared at me with his eyes brimming over with tears. Whenever I went there, Lee Po Chon, who would be playing on the porch, used to call out to me "Uncle Sung Ju!" and come out of the gate. One day he pestered me with a request to make a grasshopper for him.

When I saw Po Chon run out to the road led by her mother, I regretted that I had not done this for him. How good it would have been now if he had clung to me, asking for the grasshopper as he had before!

How much happier I would feel even if the boy had not dared to ask, but simply climbed up on my shoulders like the innocent child of former days, who used to call me "Uncle" and beg me to let him ride

on my shoulders!

But Po Chon was weeping silent bitter tears. Lee Po Chon at my side was not a friendly, cheerful and mischievous boy, but a downcast and fearful child suffering great distress, a person who had bid farewell to his boyhood and its rainbow illusions. His father's death had destroyed the boy's world of playful fancy in which his greatest desire was for a grasshopper. In this way, Po Chon lost both his parents before he was ten years old. Po Chon would never again ask me for the grasshopper. His tender soul was grieving over the tragic death of his father.

I gazed into his face helplessly.

The words were on the tip of my tongue: "Po Chon, good-bye! I will return soon when I take vengeance for your father on his enemy."

Instead, I said, "Po Chon, I'm thirsty. Whenever I came here your father used to bring me a bowl of cold water, but today you can do it for your father, can't you?"

At that moment, his dreamy eyes suddenly became animated and he darted off like the wind, reappearing just as swiftly with a brass bowlful of water from the well with the large dipper. This small event seemed to transform his mental state.

The rippling water in the brass bowl revived Lee Kwang's image in my mind. The intermingled images of the boy and his father reflected on the surface of the water moved me to tears. Mentally thanking the boy I gulped the water until the bowl was dry.

Po Chon wiped his nose and glanced at me lovingly as he held the bowl in his hand. I felt a little light-hearted as I ordered my men to resume the march.

Just as I was about to take my leave, Po Chon darted towards his house. I wondered where he was going.

He ran back quickly, and held out a handful of oats to my white horse. This silent gesture released the tears that I had been holding back.

Po Chon stood there on the riverside as we crossed the river and moved far away. When I turned my head as I sat on the saddle all I could see was a flickering white dot. "Po Chon, you must grow up to be a revolutionary like your father!"

I held my hand up in salute from afar, wishing him a bright future. Later, when the guerrilla zones were dissolved and the second expedition to north Manchuria was begun, I stayed at Lee Kwang's house for about one week and discussed Po Chon's future with Kong Suk Ja.

Po Chon grew up into a revolutionary as I had wished. When he was working at Linkou as a railway

worker, he attacked a Japanese military train, but he was captured and served a two-year prison sentence. This was all before he was twenty years old.

With the liberation of the country in 1945 he was released and traveled to the land of his forefathers via Dandong in the autumn of the same year, craving to see his native land and sky and water. He travelled as far as Pyongyang and Seoul, and then returned to Linkou. That journey left vivid impressions on the mind of Lee Po Chon, a sensitive twenty-year old with a bright future.

Feeling an irresistible desire to devote himself heart and soul to the construction of the country of his father's friends, he crossed the railway bridge over the Yalu River with reluctance. In the motherland there was the new world of which his father had dreamed, the promised land which he himself had longed for since his boyhood.

But this promised land was engulfed in the flames of war five years later, as the young Republic fought a decisive battle for survival.

At the news of the war that was raging far away, Lee Po Chon, now a company commander of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, volunteered for action and joined the Korean People's Army on the Korean front. To our great sorrow he fell in battle in the autumn of 1950 while fighting as a commanding officer in a mechanized army division.

Later, in the 1970s, Kim Jong Il, Secretary in Charge of Organizational Affairs, who took a particular interest in Lee Kwang's fiery career and his revolutionary activity, instructed film workers to produce a film entitled *In the First Armed Unit*, based on Lee Kwang's life. Since then Lee Kwang's name has been known to the entire country. Kong Suk Ja, Lee Kwang's wife, died while fighting as a member of the sewing unit in the guerrilla army.

Lee Ju Phyong, Lee Kwang's father, who worked in support of the revolutionary army with an enthusiasm fuelled by grief over the death of his son, and Lee Pong Ju, Lee Kwang's elder sister, died of illness induced by enemy torture.

We must be grateful that Lee Po Chon left his son with us before his death. The son is advancing stoutly along the path that was pioneered by his grandfather's generation and transformed into a broad highway by his father's generation.

Lee Kwang's family has thus been serving in the revolutionary army for three generations. For a family to have fought under arms for three generations is just cause for noble pride. We must admire Lee Kwang's grandson for choosing to wear military uniform as heir to his grandfather and father, instead of working in other fields.

When this young officer, whose face, bearing and gait so resembled his grandfather's, first appeared before my eyes, together with his mother, I felt a lump rise in my throat, for it seemed as though Lee

Kwang, who left our side 60 years ago had returned to visit me. Lee Po Chon's wife, who lost her husband at the age of 25, has brought up her son, trusting for more than 40 years that he would be a stalwart heir to Lee Kwang's cause and his revolutionary spirit. Her devotion merits everyone's highest commendation.

At his meeting with me Lee Po Chon's son said that he was resolved to dedicate himself and his son and daughters to me and Marshal Kim Jong Il, that they would serve with loyal devotion in military uniform. I know very well that this will not prove to be empty words. Lee Kwang's family does not use words idly.

What great work Lee Kwang would have done if he had returned alive to the liberated motherland!

Even now I occasionally ponder on this. Lee Kwang's social activity began, of course, with teaching and at Lee Chong San's house, at the time of the Mingyuegou meeting that winter, he also expressed an ambition to become a teacher.

But I think that if he had survived, to return to the liberated homeland in triumph, he would have become a soldier like Kang Kon and Choe Hyon. He was a devoted communist who always chose a difficult job.

## 8.2. Negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng

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One of the most serious and pressing problems we faced in our activities after we moved to Wangqing was sharp confrontation with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed forces. In the year 1933, the Japanese imperialists' persistent machinations, intended to sow dissent, the frequent vacillations on the part of the leaders of the Chinese nationalist armed forces, and the harmful effects of the Leftist Soviet line, brought the relations between the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the national salvation army again to the brink of armed conflict.

I have mentioned before that the communists of Korea and China invested great efforts in the work with the Chinese nationalist units in Manchuria after the September 18 incident. Thanks to these efforts the Wangqing guerrilla unit was able to maintain intimate relations with those Chinese nationalist units in the early days. To cite an admirable example, on one side, two armed units - the AJPGA and the self-defense corps - and, on the other side, Commander Guan's battalion concerted their efforts to repulse an attack by Japanese garrison troops at Tokgol in the spring of 1932.

At that time the Japanese garrison troops in Daduchuan had moved scores of carts towards Tokgol in order to transport timber that had been cut during the reign of the Kuomintang. There were large stockpiles of timber in the valleys of Dawangqing and Xiaowangqing. That day our forces lured the enemy into an ambush, killing most of the force of 40 to 50 garrison troops and capturing many weapons.

The battle at Tokgol marked a turning-point in the work to improve the image of the communists in Wangqing, where anti-communist feelings were deep-rooted, and in the development of relations with the NSA from hostility to cooperation. The battle paved the way for the Korean communists to infiltrate into the NSA. After the battle Kim Un Sik, Hong Hae Il, Won Hong Gwon, Jang Ryong Sam, Kim Ha Il and others joined Guan's unit. Kim Ha Il, a crack shot, was appointed communications officer and Kim Un Sik, a man of knowledge, was appointed chief of staff soon after that.

As they had done in the past the people of Macun washed the clothes of the men and officers of Guan's unit after the battle, and sent them toothbrushes, tooth powder, soap, towels and tobacco pouches as gifts; moreover, they frequently organized artistic performances by Children's Corps members. The Young Communist League members conducted political work among them with propaganda leaflets.

In general, the NSA soldiers seldom called the communists "ton gzhi (comrade); however, the officers and men of Guan's unit always called our guerrillas "ton gzhi" whenever they met them.

The guerrillas who joined Guan's unit were all qualified at least for district party committee members, so they were efficient in working among the officers and men of the NSA unit. Battalion Commander Guan was charmed by the communists' personalities and qualifications. Winning him over was an event of

great significance for the improvement of relations with the other units of the NSA.

The anti-Japanese guerrilla unit in the Hunchun area exchanged information with the NSA units, and they cooperated even in the struggle against the enemy's lackeys. The guerrillas in Yantonglazi armed themselves with weapons provided by a NSA unit.

The prevailing situation favoured the communists: this turning-point meant that they could establish a united front with the NSA if they worked harder.

However, the "Kim Myong San incident" provoked by the Leftist adventurisms had nullified the friendly relations with Chinese nationalist units which had been established with so much effort. This incident resulted in Battalion Commander Guan's surrender to the Japanese imperialists and in other NSA units breaking with the communists. At about the same time the guerrilla unit led by Choe Hyon opened fire with a machinegun on the soldiers of a Chinese nationalist unit in Yanji County as they defected to the enemy; this incident further complicated relations with the NSA.

In its early days the Wangqing guerrilla unit made quite a few mistakes in its relations with the NSA. Swayed by his desire to obtain a few rifles, Yang Song Ryong, who was in charge of the battalion, did not implement the line of the united front to the letter. He had a fine personality and was a competent officer who commanded skillfully in battle, but his ingrained military routines and adventurism led him to slight the united front. We criticized him severely for this.

Only Kaoshan unit, which had been under our constant influence, did not follow the example of Battalion Commander Guan; this unit maintained a lasting alliance with our anti-Japanese guerrilla army. On the Tano day or the fifth day of the fifth lunar month of 1933 the unit, in cooperation with the self-defense corps in Jattogi (the present Taipingcun) which was led by Park Tu Song, repelled an attack of the 300-strong Japanese garrison troops and the puppet Manchukuo army, when they invaded Shiliping via Dongnancha from their base in the Dongning county town. Many of the invading troops were killed.

The NSA units neglected long-range observation, posting sentries only directly in front of their headquarters; so the Anti-Japanese Self-Defense Corps maintained long-range observation posts for Kaoshan unit. When he had to send important, urgent messages to other Chinese units, Kaoshan would often ask the paramilitary organizations in Shiliping for help. The members of the Children's Vanguard were extremely responsible in the way they transmitted these messages for him.

However, this friendly relationship did not extend to other units, and the reckless Leftist tendency prevalent in the guerrilla zone threatened it in this case. The Leftist Soviet policy helped to accelerate the corruption and degeneration of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units which only recently had been our allies or sympathizers.

The Leftist opportunists conducted their work with the Chinese units in an ultra-Leftist fashion. They indiscriminately promoted such slogans as "Down with the officers from the landlord and propertied



class!" and "Soldiers should mutiny and come over to the guerrilla army!" claiming that we should "establish a united front only with the rank and file" and "make the soldiers of the NSA kill their commanders and rise in revolt." The only result they produced was the harmful one of destroying our unity with the upper echelons of the Chinese units.

The Chinese nationalist units killed Korean people, saying that they were "Japanese puppets" and "laogaoli gongchandang" ("Korean communists"). The Japanese imperialists took advantage of this situation to launch an all-out offensive to drive wedges between the Korean and Chinese peoples, between the Korean and Chinese communists and between our Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the Chinese nationalist army. From the first day of their occupation of Manchuria, they made desperate efforts to gain control over the NSA units which had broken with Zhang Xue-liang's former Northeast Army and fought under the anti-Japanese banner. What they feared most here was the alignment of our guerrilla army and the NSA. They were well aware that such an alignment of communists and NSA units would produce a formidable force that would undermine Japanese imperialist rule and be a stumbling block in their path of aggression across the continent.

Japan's skill in sowing dissension was clearly revealed in the Wanbaoshan incident, the Longjing incident (an abortive scheme), and the Fushun incident. The Japanese strategic intelligence service, which was skilled in underhand subterfuge, did not hesitate to invent such a murderous drama as the Fushun incident, at which even a beast or a stone Buddha might feel shame, in order to weaken the good-neighborly relations between the Korean and Chinese peoples.

The Fushun incident involved the murder of an innocent Chinese in Fushun by a Japanese who was ordered to stab him with a dagger provided by the Japanese intelligence service. The murder was committed but the scheme failed to create bad blood between the Korean and Chinese peoples even though the plotters had disguised the murderer in a Korean overcoat to reinforce the rumour that it was a Korean who had murdered the Chinese and escaped. He was identified as a Japanese when his Japanese clothes were spotted under the Korean coat.

A number of such incidents culminated in the Liutiaogoti incident and the Lugou Bridge incident. The method Japan applied every time she hatched a plot was equally primitive and brutal. However, many people were easily deceived by these put-up jobs, even though they themselves often suffered because of the Japanese imperialists' dastardly methods in cooking up their shams.

While spreading rumours, such as "The Korean people will lay claim to Manchuria," and "The communists are going to disarm the NSA," the Japanese imperialists gave the reactionaries belonging to the "Minsaengdan" a reason to clamor for Korean autonomy in Jiandao, that is, for the establishment of a "Korean autonomous region in Jiandao" and a "Korean legal autonomous government," so playing the Korean people off against the Chinese people. At other times they would set fire to Chinese houses and spread the lie that the Korean guerrillas had done it. Another reason for the collapse of the united front was that the Japanese imperialists laid schemes for the surrender of the leaders of the Chinese anti-Japanese units, which resulted in the degeneration of the latter's anti-Japanese consciousness.

in January 1933, Wang Yu-zhen, who was in Tumenzi, Hunchun County, surrendered to the enemy with his soldiers. Hundreds of them were restructured into a special guerrilla unit fighting against us. In February, half of the soldiers of Guan's unit in Xiaowangqing capitulated and joined the defense corps and the public security bureau of Manchukuo; in the same month scores of the officers and men of the Ma Gui-lin's unit which was appearing frequently in the vicinity of Dahuanggou, capitulated and joined the self-defense corps in Hamatang. The officers and soldiers of the Chiang Hai's unit in Erchazigou, Wangqing County, and of the Qingshan unit in Huoshaopu offered to surrender.

The Japanese imperialists bribed the notorious bandit leader Tong Shan-hao, who was holding the Luozigou area, and instigated him to murder all the guerrillas of Lee Kwang's special detachment. The situation was so bad that the guerrilla army, afraid of the NSA's violence, had to march by night. The Koreans would not be able to keep their heads above ground unless relations with the NSA were improved. Reversing the hostile relations with the NSA and developing an alliance with them was once again a vital task for the Korean communists if they were to continue the revolution.

I made a firm decision to pay a visit to Wu Yi-cheng, the forward area commander of the NSA. Since Wang De-lin left Jiandao, Wu Yicheng held the real power in the NSA. I felt confident that if I prevailed upon him, I would be able to put a stop to the difficulties created for guerrilla activities in east Manchuria as a result of the "Kim Myong San incident" and the massacre of Lee Kwang's special detachment, and at the same time I could possibly break the deadlock in which our revolution found itself.

I had a serious discussion with Pan, the provincial party committee member, about negotiations with Wu. Pan acknowledged that my decision was reasonable, but he advised me not to go to Wu in person. He was of the opinion that it would be difficult for a Korean, rather than a Chinese, to persuade him, for he was too self-important and too prejudiced. He added that in order to win over Commanders Wu and Chai we would have to prevent Lee Chong Chon, the latter's adviser, from interfering in the negotiations, and that this was a problem.

I insisted on going to negotiate in spite of all the difficulties Pan had pointed out. I said, "Lee is a Korean; even though he is anti-communist, he will not place obstacles in our way if we argue persuasively. He is an old acquaintance of mine. I spoke with him several times during the meeting on the merging of the three nationalist organizations in Jirin. My father was also close friends with him."

Pan tried his best to prevent my making an adventure, saying:

"What difference does it make now whether someone is an acquaintance or a stranger? Do you think they will treat acquaintances differently from strangers? Worse still, they say Wu is a die-hard. The odds are against us.

"I once managed to win over Commander Yu in Antu. So why not Wu Yi-cheng?"

"When you were negotiating with Yu, Mr. Liu Ben-cao was his chief of staff. That gave you a good

start."

"I could have a good start in Wu's unit, too. Chen Han-zhang is working as chief secretary in the unit. The chief of staff, Hu Jin-min, is one of our operatives, too."

This remark threw myself into consternation. Only a few days before I had received a letter from Chen, whose role as a powerful support I always emphasized, requesting me to take decisive measures to assist him. On the grounds that it was almost impossible to effect an alliance with Commander Wu through his own efforts, he wrote that he "would like measures to be taken by the organization as soon as possible, for only Comrade Kim Il Sung will be able to find a solution to this problem." Pan, too, knew about this.

"The revolution has a long way to go, and you should not engage in such an adventure. Please think about it carefully, for mercy's sake," Pan implored. "You must not regard yourself as your own property. One slip and you could become another Lee Kwang. Don't forget that. Even if we all die, you must survive and fight to the last for Korea on behalf of all of us."

Pan's remark moved me, but I could not abandon my commitment to an allied front.

After Pan had left for Hunchun County delegates from guerrilla units in every county of east Manchuria gathered in Wangqing and held a meeting to discuss the question of a united front. The main agenda item was the formation of an alliance with the NSA, in other words, who should go to lead negotiations at Luozigou, where the NSA units led by Wu Yi-cheng, Chai Shi-rong, Shi Zhong-heng and others, were concentrated.

I insisted that I should go. The meeting decided that my journey to Luozigou would be possible only with an escort of 100 guerrillas, and granted permission. The journey to Wu Yi-cheng was no simple one as we have already seen.

In order to negotiate with Wu, I had to find out about the situation there through such people as Chen Han-zhang and Hu Jin-min. However, Chen was Wu's chief secretary and a serious man; he would not play games, shut away in his office. And if he showed himself outside, he could be misunderstood if he made a contact with Koreans. Nevertheless, he was sure to help me in my work no matter what the risk because in former days he had been a member of the Young Communist League organization in which I had had a part, and we had pledged loyalty to one another at that time.

After writing to Chen and Hu, I sent letters to Wu Yi-cheng and Chai Shi-rong, explaining the purpose of our journey to Luozigou. To make the letters more formal, we stamped a large, square seal beside the name of the sender.

After dispatching the letters we inquired into the reaction in Wu's unit through the revolutionary organizations in Luozigou, and the reports were good. The underground organizations even informed us of the fact that the NSA had set up a placard with the words "Welcome to the Korean Anti-Japanese

Guerrilla Army!" at the entrance to the town. I left for Luozigou with 100 selected men. As they marched along in new uniform, and with new rifles and leather kit-bags over their shoulders, they were a spectacular sight. I rode on a white horse at the head of the column.

On arrival at Taipinggou we issued a statement on the AIPGA's entry into Luozigou and dispatched an orderly to Wu's unit; then we settled in for the night, waiting for a reply. The following day we received notice from Luozigou that they had agreed to the proposed negotiations. Chen Han-zhang's assurances had proved effective in persuading Wu to accept our proposal. When he received my letter he recommended Commander Kim to Wu as someone he knew well, and said I was a very good-natured man.

As he listened to his recommendation Wu asked him, "He is a communist, how is it that you know him so well? Are you then a communist, too?"

Chen replied that Commander Kim was his schoolmate and an old acquaintance.

"If he is your schoolmate and a good fellow, then I will talk to him over luncheon." We posted a company from Hunchun in the lower village of Taipinggou so that they could support us in case the NSA should detain us or do us harm; then our remaining 50 men entered the town of Luozigou in an imposing array, flying a red flag and sounding a trumpet.

Chen Han-zhang, who came to greet the guerrilla army, guided me to the headquarters of the NSA. JO Tong Uk and Lee Song Lim, my orderly, who were to assist me during the negotiations, followed Chen, with wooden-cased Mausers at their sides. There were several aides of Kuomintang origin in the headquarters.

Wu Yi-cheng was a man of fine presence with a long beard. I had heard a rumor that he was so arrogant he would not stand up even when a visitor called and would talk to him, sprawling on a tiger skin and drinking tea; but on that day he greeted me with all due formality. However, he did not maintain the Chinese custom of offering his guest tea. At first I greeted him in a humble manner, saying, "We highly appreciate the patriotism of your unit's joining the anti-Japanese struggle when many units from Zhang Xue-liang's former Northeast Army were surrendering to the Japanese army.

My greeting brought a smile to the corners of his lips and he ordered his aide to bring tea.

"I have heard reports that you, Commander Kim, are fighting well against the Japanese. Your army is not great in numbers but you know how to fight; we are not like you, even though we have many soldiers. My men say the soldiers you brought with you have brand-new rifles; will you not exchange some of them for our old ones?"

The negotiations thus began with his words of greeting, which were somewhat perplexing. Facing Commander Wu as he tried to fathom the other party's thoughts by praising him on and at the same time

requesting something difficult to comply with, I judged that he was a competent diplomat and shrewd man who had known both sweetness and bitterness in his life. I did not think that a forward area commander, the leader of thousands of soldiers, would make such a request at the first meeting without forethought, simply out of greed for a few new rifles.

"You say exchange? We can give them free."

I satisfied his request without any fuss and added in a casual manner, "Is there any need to deal in such petty matters? We'll have plenty of them if we fight a battle with the Japanese. But since you request it, we will give them as a gift."

Wu stroked his beard down and then approached me from a different angle, "Well, what is your communist party? That man, Chen Hanzhang, says the communist party is not bad, but I can't believe him. Zhou Bao-zhong is also a communist and when he was my adviser, I found him not to my liking, always wasting time for some reason, I don't know why. So I got rid of him. By the way, I heard that you communists destroy the mountain shrines when you pass by them."

"Why should we destroy the shrines? It is a lie told by wicked people to discredit the communists."

"Then, do you, Commander Kim, pay tribute at the shrines?"

"I neither destroy them nor pay tribute to them, for it is nothing to do with me. What about you, Commander Wu?"

"Neither do I."

"Then both of us are the same in that neither pays tribute."

Dumbfounded, he stroked his beard once again with a smile on his face.

"That's right. By the way, they say that communists, men and women alike, all sleep under one quilt and they plunder the people of their property. Is this true?"

I realized that the success of the negotiations depended on how I could manage this question and that I must give him an appropriate answer which would give him a correct understanding of communists.

"That is another fabrication of the bad elements. It is true that some alleged communists have deprived landowners of their lands, regardless of whether they are pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese, but we don't regard it as a good thing. However, the landlords should have had the generosity to give the sharecroppers who were dying from hunger, some grain. Can it be right that they regard them with indifference while they feather their own nests? Why should the poor peasants revolt if they are given food grain? Hungry people have no way to survive but by fighting. I may be wrong but I believe the

Taiping Rebellion took place in China in the last century for the same reason.

Wu Yi-cheng nodded his head.

"That seems right. Those who wish to eat their fill and live comfortably by themselves are evil-doers in this chaotic situation."

Grasping my opportunity, I continued:

"That men and women sleep under one quilt is a lie the Japanese invented to insult the communists. There are many woman soldiers in our guerrilla unit, but such a thing never occurs. If they fall in love, they get married. Our discipline between men and women is very strict."

"That's what I mean. It must never happen that several men sleep with one woman in turn." "Of course not. There are no men in the world more decent-minded than us communists." When our conversation reached this point, Wu began calling me "Commander Kim" and stopped using awkward words.

"Ha, ha! Commander Kim is trying to make a communist of me."

"I have no thought of making you a communist, Commander Wu. A man cannot be made a communist by someone else. However, I think it advisable to unite our efforts to defeat the Japanese imperialists."

Wu Yi-cheng gestured nervously with his arm.

"We don't collaborate with the communists, even if it means fighting on our own.

"Surely it is good to fight the Japanese in cooperation when we are not strong enough alone?"

"I still don't need favours from the communists."

"No one can predict his future. Some day you may ask a favor from us.

"Well, that may well be possible. God only knows what awaits a man. By the way, may I ask a favor of you? Won't you join jiajiali ? It is better than the communist party, I think," he said casually.

Seeing me hesitate, he looked at me in amusement.

I was perplexed to hear the word jiajiali in that context. Commander Wu had puzzled me completely.

Jiajiali is a Chinese word meaning "one family." It is an organization of the Chinese people which was also called Qinghongbang. It was formed as a union against the emperor by the workers who dug canals

and hauled boats, when they could no longer endure their hardships. There was no private property in this organization, and it was a large one for that time.

When people swear brotherhood, they become elder and younger brothers, but people joining jiajiali become fathers and sons. A man who wishes to find a father could join it, but not a man who wishes to find sons. The higher the caste of the jiajiali was, the more dignified its members were and the more authority they possessed. A ceremony was held when a man joined. Kim Jae Born (alias Kim Phyon), who had joined a jiajiali of the 24th generation on our instructions, had said that

the ceremony was spectacular. A new member had to bow hundreds of times to those who were to become his fathers and seniors.

Now I had received an embarrassing invitation to join such an organization. If I declined, the negotiations which had gone smoothly so far might be deadlocked; but if I accepted, he would take me to a Buddha and make me bow there and then, which would mean making myself subordinate to Wu Yicheng. When preparing for the negotiations, we had not anticipated this kind of situation. Anyway, I had to resolve the dilemma.

"It would be a fine thing for you and I to enter a jiajiali, but before we join another organization we are obliged to obtain permission from the party organization. If it is not granted, I can do nothing. Let us leave the matter until I obtain permission from our organization."

"Ha, ha! Then, it seems you are a half-baked commander, not a fully-fledged one." Commander Wu looked at me with a slightly dissatisfied expression on his face and all of a sudden asked me, "Do you drink, Commander Kim?"

"I can drink, but don't even if I want to, lest it hamper me in fighting against the Japanese."

"Your communist party is agreeable to me. I wish to cooperate with you but I am afraid I would have to imbibe Marxism. Spreading communism among our people is not good."

"Don't worry about it, Commander. We have no intention of propagating communism. We will only carry out anti-Japanese propaganda."

"Your party is very gentlemanly for a communist party. But it was wrong of the communists in Wangqing to disarm Commander Guan's battalion. What is your opinion of that incident?" "What more is there to say about it? It was the most serious mistake of all possible

mistakes. So we severely reprimanded the Wangqing special detachment last year." "Commander Kim, you are a fair-minded soldier. By the way, some people say that the communist party is right in everything it does. How could that be?"

"A communist is also a man. So how could he make no mistakes? I, too, make mistakes now and then, for I am not a machine, but a man. When one tries to do a great deal of work, one is bound to make mistakes sometimes. So we study hard and improve ourselves so that we shall commit fewer errors.

"You are right. Lazy men who do nothing will make no mistakes. The communists do many things and this we appreciate. In general, it is amusing to talk to you, Commander Kim. You are candid, so we do understand each other."

Saying this, Wu wound up the negotiations for the moment. He took me politely by the hand and then released his grip. I was sure the negotiations were going well. On the spur of the moment he said good humouredly that Chen Han-zhang, a friend of Commander Kim, helped him with his writing and that without him he was as good as blind.

Wu asked me whether I knew Hu Jin-min. I answered that I did not know him, for I was afraid the nature of our relations might be revealed if I answered in the affirmative. He called Hu Jin-min and politely introduced him to me. Hu and I said, "How do you do?" to each other as if we were strangers. Chen Han-zhang told me that it was very rare for Wu to introduce his staff officers to visitors in this way; he said confidently that I could regard the negotiations as successful.

That day we agreed with Wu Yi-cheng to establish a standing body called the Joint Anti-Japanese Army Coordination Commission which would keep the AJPGA and the NSA in touch with each other and coordinate their actions. We also discussed the membership of the commission. Wang Run-cheng, a Chinese, was appointed a representative of the Chinese units and Jo Tong Uk, a representative of our unit. We decided to set up the commission's office in Luozigou, near Commander Wu's headquarters.

Wu Yi-cheng invited us to luncheon. Chen Han-zhang informed me that this also was special treatment.

The conversation over luncheon also took place in a friendly atmosphere. Whenever the Japanese imperialist occupation of Manchuria came up, Wu would frown indignantly, twitching his thick eyebrows. He was also indignant at the murder of Lee Kwang by Tong Shan-hao. "They are indigenous bandits, not our sort. That Tong Shan-hao was certain to become a cat's paw of the Japanese! That his ilk has harmed your army is a cursed crime. I am ashamed that such a devil can be one of our Chinese nation."

This remark gave me a glimpse of another side of his personality.

I was satisfied with the result of the negotiations and Wu Yi-cheng's hospitality. Wu put on airs, and he was tainted with the ideology of the Kuomintang, but that was not the fundamental point. What was important was his exceptionally strong anti-Japanese spirit and his great commitment to national salvation. Cooperation would have been inconceivable if only our distinctions had been asserted, the ideology, class and nationality which separated us. The goal of an allied front permitted us to scorn such limitations.



That same day I sent a liaison man to Xiaowangqing with a letter saying that cooperation with Commander Wu had been successfully arranged, that the question of Chai Shi-rong was still outstanding, that we would try to approach him gradually, and that the unit should make full preparations for action because we needed to attack a large walled County town like Dongning in order to step up the united front.

After our success in the first contact with Wu Yi-cheng, we immediately tackled the work of winning over the unit of Chai Shi-rong, the most obstinate force among the NSA units, to the anti-Japanese united front. Chen Han-zhang said Commander Wu seemed to be quite determined, but Commander Chai posed a problem; he was anxious to find a way of expelling Lee Chong Chon. Commander Wu had only one brigade. Commander Chai had a larger force.

I suggested negotiations to Lee Chong Chon, but he declined. On the contrary, he incited Chai to disarm the communist army. But Chai, who would normally heed any advice from Lee, objected to that trick. He said that if he were not careful, he could get into serious trouble, since Commander Wu Yi-cheng had dined with Commander Kim and that, moreover, Commander Kim was in command of the Wangqing unit, which fought bravely. Lee Chong Chon worked so hard to incite Chai against communism that we could not even meet him face to face.

The only way of solving the problem was to separate Commander Chai's unit from Wu Yi-cheng. The method used to separate Wu Yicheng, who had agreed to cooperate with us, from Chai Shi-rong was to bring Shi Zhong-heng's brigade, Wu Yi-cheng's main force, under our influence. If we dealt with the brigade commander properly, we could further consolidate our initial success in the negotiations with Wu Yicheng.

I inquired about the composition of his brigade; most of the soldiers were of lower class origin. Shi Zhong-heng himself had been a swineherd for a landowner at the age of 9 and then joined the army to support himself. He had served under Wang De-lin in the Jirin field army; after the September 18 incident he had entered the national salvation army and led a platoon, a company and a regiment, and now he was a brigadier-general. He was a typical soldier who relished fighting.

I went to see Shi Zhong-heng with a letter of introduction from Hu un-mm on the day Hu wrote it. When I requested an interview, Shi complied without ceremony, setting all his other business aside. He treated me warmly, like a friend, saying that a visit to his unit by Commander Kim who fought the Japanese so successfully was an auspicious occasion. He was neither against communism, nor was he like a warlord; he was open-hearted and gentle.

Shi said that our unit's successive victories in the fight with the Japanese army were a source of pride to the people living in east Manchuria as well as to the Korean people. At that time we had already dealt heavy blows against the Japanese imperialists in the battles at Jiapigou, Liangshuiquanzi and several other places. Although the media had not reported them, the news of those battles had been spread widely throughout the Jiandao area. To my surprise, Shi was well aware of the details of the battles and

their results.

He welcomed my proposal for a joint attack on the Dongning county town. He said, "I had long wished for a strong neighbor and friend such as your army, Commander Kim .We are brothers from today. Your enemy is my enemy and your friend is my friend."

We embraced each other warmly in celebration of the success of our negotiations. From that day we were brothers and comrades-in-arms who shared the days of fierce battle like brothers. Our close friendship remained unchanged until he fell in battle as the commander of the 2nd Independent Division.

The outcome of the negotiations at Luozigou removed the greatest obstacle in the way of the anti-Japanese revolution. While cooperation with Commander Yu was the starting-point of the allied front, the negotiation with Wu Yi-cheng was a historic step towards extending that initial success gained to the whole area of east Manchuria; it was a stunning event which put an end to the meaningless confrontation and bloodshed occurring between the Korean and Chinese nations since the May 30 Uprising and the Wanbaoshan incident and merged the fierce anti-Manchukuo and anti-Japanese tendencies into one raging torrent.

Through the negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng and Shi Zhong-heng we realized quite clearly that a united front was possible only when our own forces were strong. Had we not displayed our military strength to the full through the campaigns in south and north Manchuria in 1932 and through the large and small battles in 1933 in and around Wangqing, and had we not developed the guerrilla army into an indomitable armed force, Wu Yi-cheng would have turned us away from his door. The alliance with Wu Yi-cheng was established so smoothly because we were strong, because our politics and morals were superior to those of the NSA, and because our ardent patriotism international fraternity and unshakable faith in the validity of our cause won his sympathy.

Since the day I achieved cooperation with the NSA I have regarded it as axiomatic that the best resources for an allied front are one's own forces and that one cannot fight in cooperation with any friendly army or country without fostering one's own strength, and I have devoted my entire life to consolidating the motive force of the revolution.

Wu Yi-cheng and Chai Shi-rong also agreed with my idea of attacking the Dongning county town. We held a joint meeting in Luozigou with Wu Yi-cheng, Shi Zhong-heng, Chai Shi-rong and other commanders of the NSA, and mapped out a detailed plan of operations for the battle; then I wrote to our headquarters in Wangqing once again.

Thanks to the successful negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng and victory in the battle at Dongning county town, we became widely known to the guerrilla units of the Koreans, Chinese NSA units and other anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese forces. Cooperation with Wu Yi-cheng convinced me more than ever that strengthening the united front was essential to the survival of the anti-Japanese revolution as a whole and the key to promoting the revolution.

Even after I had left Jiandao and moved the theatre of operations to the Changbai area, I looked back with emotion upon the days when I strove to make the negotiations with Wu a success. Wu Yi-cheng, now as a member of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army, was fighting in those days on our flank, with Fusong and its district as his base. When I heard he was fighting nearby, I was reminded of our old friendship, sealed in the days of the common struggle.

With more than 100 guerrillas, I went to the woods east of Xigang where the secret camps of Wu Yi-cheng's unit were located. Wu rushed to the edge of the camp and embraced me. We hugged each other as warmly as childhood friends separated for scores of years.

No sooner did I feel Wu's coarse moustache smelling of gun smoke on my chin, than a lump rose in my throat despite myself. I could not understand why a meeting with this Chinese man whose character contained so much of the warlord, who was so very proud, should make me choke. Our friendship sealed in the days of battle was quite exceptional. I was greatly moved that Commander Wu treated me quite sincerely like his own brother, disregarding my nationality and age.

No friendship in the world can be more sincere, more ardent and more durable than friendship formed under the hail of fire. Is this not the reason why we call the friendship between the very closest of friends a militant friendship?

I could find no trace in him of the former haughty pride which led him to assess people's ability with his sharp eyes while lounging over a tiger skin. He looked like an old, generous villager rather than a hero of the green forest with thousands of soldiers under his command. He seemed to have lost weight and his eyes seemed less bright.

I stayed for two days in Wu Yi-cheng's secret camp before returning. As I was leaving Wu Yi-cheng offered to turn over 100 of his soldiers to me. When I declined, he feigned anger, saying, "You obviously lack or want nothing. However, Commander Kim, as a friend I must give you some assistance towards your preparations for a great campaign. Those 100 men must fight under your command rather than following me. As the saying goes - Mugwort grows straight on the hemp plantation."

I have not met Wu Yi-cheng since then. At the end of the year I heard that Wu had gone to the Soviet Union after entrusting his unit to another man; then I lost contact with him and heard no more of him.

Wu Yi-cheng was not simply a companion of convenience while we were putting together the allied front; he was an unforgettable comrade-in-arms who braved the hail of bullets shoulder to shoulder with us in battle. How Commander Wu spent the latter part of his life and how he met his fate still remain unclear. Worst of all, there is nowhere I can turn for reliable information.

If he remained loyal to the ideal of patriotism until the last moment of his life, then that is enough to satisfy me.

## 8.3. The Battle of the Dongning County Town

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After the negotiations at Luozigou, the Joint Anti-Japanese Army Coordination Commission worked hard among the national salvation army units. Members of the commission even infiltrated the mountain rebels and made strenuous efforts to draw them into the anti-Japanese united front.

Early in September 1933, this commission arranged a joint meeting at which we discussed with Wu Yi-cheng, Shi Zhong-heng, Chai Shirong, Li San-xia and other leaders of the Chinese nationalist units at Laomuzhuhe near Luozigou the plan for attacking the Dongning county town (Sanchakou) and finalized the plan of operations. On the recommendation of Commander Wu Yi-cheng the meeting unanimously approved the operation plan as we had drafted it.

We did not attack the town immediately after the negotiations at Luozigou; we allowed ourselves more than two months for preparation, because we attached special importance to this battle. We regarded this battle as a watershed in making our anti-Japanese guerrilla army fully legitimate; we also believed that an agreement on the united front with the NSA units would be brought into effect through victory in this battle.

Should we succeed in this battle the united front with the Chinese nationalist units would be put on a rock-solid foundation; if not, the positive outcome of the negotiations at Luozigou would be undermined, and the united front would collapse while still in the stage of formation. Failure in the battle would also stain the military prestige of our guerrilla army which we had built up in the course of bloody battles. It would also cause serious problems if the NSA complained that they had been crushed because of the united front.

This was indeed a tough test for us. Our reconnaissance and information from our local organizations confirmed that a 500-strong Kwangtung Army unit led by Ishida, a puppet Manchukuo army regiment commanded by Commander Qing, and puppet Manchukuo police and self-defense corps were posted in the county town. Worse still, the enemy was entrenched in an impregnable fortress which was armed with artillery and other modern weapons.

At that time some leaders of the Chinese units estimated the chances of occupying the town at only 30 per cent. At the meeting they even expressed concern that our forces were too small in comparison to the enemy, saying that internationally recognized war manuals stated that the forces of the attacker should be three times greater than those of the defender. However, Wu Yi-cheng and other people retorted that they had nothing to learn from such silly prattle, which could only make sense in the Japanese military academy that Lee Chong Chon had attended. They criticized such a passive attitude to the battle.

As the NSA had already failed once in an attack on the Dongning county town, it was no accident that some commanders overestimated the enemy's strength, fearing the Japanese army with its boasts of

"invincibility."

Once a plan was adopted at the meeting, the coordination commission, in collaboration with Hu Jin-min, allocated to each unit the number of troops which should participate in the battle.

We were to contribute three companies, one from each of Wangqing, Hunchun and Yanji to the battle, and we summoned them to Luozigou.

The company I had taken from Wangqing and the company which Paek Il Phyong, the battalion political commissar, led all the way from Hunchun, met amidst great emotion near Luozigou at the end of August 1933.

But to our regret, the comrades from Yanji did not arrive at the rendezvous, for the message had not reached them in time. The Yanji battalion had selected Choe Hyon's company, which was the strongest. Before starting the march Choe Hyon had ensured that every man was supplied with 150 rounds of ammunition and a new pair of shoes. The company left Beidong and arrived at Macun by forced march in the middle of September, when we were in Xiaowangqing after the battle on the Dongning county town.

As we entered Luozigou with the men from Hunchun, the men and officers of the NSA, together with the local residents, welcomed us enthusiastically. Quite a few peasants from neighboring villages came to welcome us too. Their warm welcome was a clear expression of the strength of the anti-Japanese organizations in this place.

Behind the crowd who were waving their hands and shouting for joy at our unit stood the able revolutionary Choe Jong Hwa. Though in the service of Manchukuo, as the head of the Anti-Japanese Association in Luozigou, he worked, in fact, mostly for the NSA in the capacity of a member of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee, and he publicized widely the correctness of our line of an anti-Japanese allied front in Luozigou. He encouraged people to supply the NSA units with food grain and cloth.

We lined up in the street where the Chinese people lived, and made speeches appealing for an anti-Japanese national salvation movement. Then we danced and sang in groups. Even the Chinese shopkeepers along the street suspended their business and came out in the street to enjoy the performance. As the guerrillas and the NSA soldiers mingled with one another the town of Luozigou became animated and festive. The whole town, both the Korean and Chinese streets, was enveloped in a holiday atmosphere.

Young people who had heard of us jostled each other to see Commander Kim. They were arguing over whether Commander Kim hailed from Phyongan Province, or Hamgyong Province, or Kyongsang Province.

The children were keen to touch the Model 38 rifles and cartridge belts. Each soldier wore three cartridge

belts, one on the waist and two across his shoulders. As one belt contained 100 cartridges, every one was carrying a load of 300.

Large numbers of women came and tugged at the guerrillas' arms, saying, "Men fighting for the country, join us for lunch."

Even women living several miles away from Luozigou brought lunch and served the guerrillas. On the day of our arrival at Luozigou, I, accompanied by those working on the coordination commission, paid a visit to Commander Wu Yi-cheng at his lodging.

As old acquaintances, we had an amicable conversation. It was a candid conversation between two men, not a conversation designed to fathom each other's thoughts, like the first one we had in June.

What had worried me most on my way to Luozigou was whether Commander Wu had given up the idea of fighting the battle or not in the meantime. I wondered whether such people as Lee Chong Chon, who were not pleased with the alliance, might not have persuaded Wu Yi-cheng to abandon the idea of the battle and set back the relations between the NSA and ourselves to the state preceding our negotiations. Those working on the coordination commission had informed me on several occasions of Lee Chong Chon's ceaseless efforts to get Chai Shi-rong to abort our cooperation. They had been apprehensive that this trick might affect Commander Wu.

But they need not have worried. His commitment to the allied front remained unchanged, and his determination to redeem his previous defeat through the attack on the Dongning county town was as firm as ever.

What Commander Wu felt was most ignominious was the blow he had suffered during the Japanese "mopping-up" operation in Luozigou at the end of 1932. At that time the Japanese had mobilized ten air force fighters and hundreds of troops and crushed the NSA mercilessly. Luozigou had been reduced to ashes and the NSA driven away to Chengnancun, Xintunzi and Shitouhezi.

"To be honest, our numbers were greater than the Japanese. But we abandoned Luozigou and fled to the mountainous area. Whenever I am reminded of the defeat we suffered at that time, I cannot sleep. Even though the Japanese ruffians who occupied Luozigou beheaded innocent people and hung their heads on the south gate, we remained entrenched in the mountainous area without so much as a thought of revenge. We were simply afraid of the Japanese army. What shame! I will make them pay dearly for it at Dongning."

As he said this, Wu frequently put his hand on the Mauser on his side. As I saw him burning with thoughts of revenge, I realized that his determination had not lessened. It was a good omen for the allied front.

That day I told him the story of my past life in outline, as I had done to Pan, the member of the provincial

party committee. In return Commander Wu told me his own personal history. Through the unceremonious talk of that day I learned that his native district was somewhere near Dongehang in Shandong Province and he had the nickname of Wu Jieheng. When we were holding our conversation two of our guerrillas stood sentry on the roof of Commander Wu's lodging. The NSA organized a strict watch around the headquarters that day.

That day Wu Yi-cheng talked as the rumors portrayed him, lounging idly on a tiger skin. He disliked talking formally, sitting cross-legged on a chair, probably because he was corpulent. So I had to talk to him while I lounged with my arm across a wooden pillow.

Wu Yi-cheng ordered his men to prepare delicious food for lunch as he had a distinguished guest. I told him I had brought my own food and there was no need to take the trouble to prepare lunch for me. The man who accompanied us and carried our meals in those days was a Chinese soldier with a pockmarked face. Wu was very interested in the fact that I was speaking fluent Chinese. The knowledge of Chinese I had acquired thanks to my father proved its worth in my work with Wu Yi-cheng.

In Luozigou, the Wangqing and Hunchun companies discussed on several occasions the tactics for political work among the people.

We stressed the following to the guerrillas; the future direction of the NSA depends on the result of this battle; if our guerrilla army fights bravely in the van the NSA will follow us; if we fail to play our part, they will abandon us; so you must always set an example both in everyday life and in the battle; we are going to fight this battle for the sake of the allied front rather than for a few rifles and sacks of grain; we are staking the future of the allied front on this battle; let the NSA soldiers win all the trophies; let us not care what they take, no matter what it is, even opium; but let us keep in mind that there will be no concessions in the political and moral aspects of our conduct.

Brigadier-general Shi Zhong-heng, one of the leaders of the Chinese nationalist units, supported the plan of the battle most actively. During our stay in Luozigou a friendship transcending nationality and affiliation sprang up between Shi and myself. When the large forces of our guerrilla army and the NSA units were marching towards the Dongning county town from Luozigou he tried to stay near our unit all the time. When bivouacking he tried to pitch his tents near ours and act together with our unit in the battle. During the march of a hundred miles from Luozigou to the Dongning county town, we came to understand each other on a deeper level.

The expeditionary forces which had left Luozigou in early September spent several days on the road. The march was a clear demonstration of the noble revolutionary spirit and sincere humane traits of the Korean communists. The political and moral differences between the AJPGA and the NSA were clearly expressed during the march and in our daily life.

Wherever we went, we behaved as an army of the people. We did not destroy the mountain shrines on our way nor lay our hands on the delicious foods offered in sacrifice; we did not give it a second glance.

When we stopped at Chinese villages we held parties, hung posters on the walls and conducted oral propaganda. Other units caused the villagers much trouble, but we helped them in fetching water, grinding grain, threshing and weaving cornstalks for fences. In the villages where Koreans were living we read to them from story-books.

Since we behaved in this way, the people made rice cakes and killed pigs for us, saying that our army really appreciated them. They said that other units were hopelessly bad-tempered and rude, but Commander Kim's unit was so gentle, affable and warm-hearted that they spared nothing in their efforts to please us.

Whenever he witnessed the sincere loving care we took of the people and the genuine support and welcome the people accorded us, Brigadier-general Shi Zhong-heng praised us profusely, holding his thumb up, and saying that Commander Kim's army was a unique gentlemen's army. On several occasions he instructed his men that they should follow the example of the communist army led by Commander Kim.

"At present some villains are disgracing the NSA in the van of our column. You should not follow their example. God will bless you only if your manners are noble. I hereby warn you in advance that if any unpleasant acts such as toying with women, laying hands on others' property or blustering at people should occur, the man will be strictly dealt with, whoever he may be."

Shi Zhong-heng's orders were effective in alerting his men to the need for good behavior. Some soldiers of the NSA took flight at the sight of grain stacks on moonless nights, saying that the stacks were Japanese soldiers. After this occurred several times we made our guerrilla army march in the van of the column and the NSA units were made to bring up the rear. This insignificant measure inspired the guerrillas to new efforts. They realized very keenly that victory in the battle did not depend on the NSA soldiers who confused grain stacks with Japanese soldiers, but on themselves, that they themselves were the decisive force driving the wheel of the allied front, and they speeded up the march. The guerrillas studied even on the march. They sometimes argued about serious political subjects.

"Hey, Comrade Kang, will you please explain the purpose of our attack on the Dongning county town clearly and wittily? When the Commander told us about it in Luozigou it seemed understandable but somehow it seems hard to grasp now."

The wily question came from a man at the tail of the Wangqing company as the expeditionary forces were nearing Laoheishan. He did not ask it out of ignorance; he wanted to test his understanding.

Kang, who had been asked the question, was also a wily man.

"Ah, look at him. Trying to roast his crab on someone else's fire. If you are so hazy about it, then I will tell you. If I must, I will sing it to the tune of the Ten-point Song." And he really did begin to sing it without giving the asker a chance to speak.



What is first? Realizing the allied front Even though the heavens collapse, This is first.

What is second? Expanding our unique guerrilla zone, the citadel, To the Soviet-Manchurian border; This is second.

What is third? Clearing the passage to the Soviet Union Which is welcoming even in chilly weather; This is third.

Park, who asked the question, was struck speechless and gestured in astonishment. "Your talent is worth far more than its weight in gold. The purpose is as clear as the full moon in a blue sky even to such a stupid man as me.

Kang, the talent of the Wangqing company, deserved this admiration. He was able to encapsulate in that song the complicated circumstances of World War I and the appalling course of political calamities beginning with the outburst of the September 18 incident to the foundation of the Kingdom of Manchukuo.

His song, which expressed the purpose of the battle poetically in simple words, spread in no time from the Wangqing company to the Flunchun company, to the brigade of Shi Zhong-heng and to Chai Shi rong's unit. Some of the NSA soldiers hummed the song on the march. The NSA soldiers tried their best to follow the example set by our unit.

But not all the officers and men of the NSA behaved in that way Many of them were expecting a windfall, dreaming of the trophies they would be distributing before long. I could seldom find the soldiers who were talking, with noble anti-Japanese sentiment, about expanding the area of operations to the border area of the Soviet Union and Manchuria or restoring Manchuria through a strong and secure allied front with the AJPGA.

One of Shi Zhong-heng's soldiers marching in the rear of our unit asked one of his companions, "Hey, will there be much opium in Dongning?"

"Well, it may be easily obtainable as there is a regiment of the pup? pet Manchukuo army there. They cannot exist without opium, can they? But why are you talking about opium all of a sudden when you don't smoke it?" said the other, glancing at him dubiously.

"Why! Opium is the same as money, and money is opium. They say you can fly to Yangzhou on a crane if you have a lot of money.

"You are right! They say one cannot see the sights of Hangzhou without money. You can go to Hangzhou and Xuzhou with opium which is worth a lot of money. All I want to get is a Japanese-made electric torch."

"Don't worry about a small thing like that. You can surely get one, since there are so many Japanese soldiers."

"Don't talk so big. Opium and electric torches can only be taken when the battle ends in victory. Do you think the town will be so simple to capture?"

This conversation I overheard weighed heavily on my mind. Would those soldiers of the NSA who were preoccupied with trophies fight hand to hand with "the warriors of the invincible imperial army"? Would they charge like human bullets at the enemy's battery, for the sake of the Republic of China?

There was something unsettling in their way of talking and their gloomy eyes. It was a bad omen.

In Laoheishan we held a joint meeting of the Wangqing and Hunchun guerrilla units and once again conducted political work to give them a clear understanding of the purpose of the battle and its military and political significance.

Afterwards we advanced to the area of Gaoancun and Wushegou near the Dongning county town, and there we reconfirmed the enemy's condition and decided upon the plan of battle. That night we located the underground party organization near Dongning. It was an organization Pan had formed in Dongning, Gaoancun, Xinlicun, and Laoheishan and which he had guided while he was working as the secretary of the Suming central county party committee. It had been exposed and tracked down by the enemy in the spring of 1932; some of its members had escaped to Wangqing and the others, remaining in Dongning, had gone into hiding. At that time Pan had sent not only party members and Young Communist Leaguers but also many guerrillas and civilians to Wangqing.

When leaving for Hunchun, Pan had asked me to locate and contact the party and YCL members hidden underground, re-establish their line of organization and take good care of them for him if I had a chance of going to Dongning. Faithful to his request when we announced in Luozigou the program of the political work among the people, I included an item on reconstructing the underground party organization in Dongning County through efficient political work among local population.

We restructured the underground party organization in Dongning County with some party members we found in Gaoancun and its vicinity, and re-established its line of organizational guidance in such a way that the underground party organization in Luozigou guided its activities. This organization furnished us with a lot of information. Thanks to its efforts we opened a passage to the Soviet Union without difficulty.

This organization continued to exist in good condition until the 1940s, implementing our orders for secret operations to the letter. Following the meeting at Xiaohaerbaling we frequently used this passage when the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was operating in small units from the secret camps around Mt. Paektu and training camps in Khabarovsk, the Soviet Union. Many small units used to travel through this

passage to the homeland and Jiandao and enter the border area of the Soviet Union and Manchuria from Mt. Paektu. Individual operatives who were sent to the homeland used this passage when traveling to the Maritime Province of the Soviet Union.

The small unit of Jon Mun Uk, which had been operating on a reconnaissance mission in the Soviet-Manchurian frontier region, also received much help from this underground party organization in Dongning. Ya. T. Novichenko, an internationalist soldier who served at that time in the army on the opposite side of Dongning County on the Soviet-Manchurian border, recalled that he saw small units of the KPRA making frequent use of this passage. The underground organizations in Dongning were active in harassing the enemy's rear at the time of the war against Japan, and rendered great assistance in the liberation of the county town.

From talks with the inhabitants of Gaoancun and the local area, and with members of the secret organizations, we learned that the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army was strongly anti-Japanese, even though he served Manchukuo, and that there was bitter discord between the puppet Manchukuo army and the Japanese garrison in spite of their apparently peaceful relations. They said that the regimental commander was on good terms with Chinese shopkeepers in the county town and he acceded to their requests. The members of the underground party organization were well acquainted with the shopkeepers. We ordered these members to bring influence to bear on the shopkeepers in order to get the regimental commander to agree to collaborate with us.

The battle of the Dongning county town began on the night of September 6, 1933, and ended at noon on September 7. I think there were not many instances of battles lasting for 2 days in our war against Japan.

The main thrust of our attack on the county town was directed against a two-storied fort built on a mountain ridge outside the west gate. Several heavy and light machineguns were mounted in the fort. They had constructed a secret underground passage and a deep communication trench between the fort and the command post of the Japanese aggressors' army unit, so as to counter the enemy's attack by continuously throwing in reinforcements as necessary. This fort was responsible for the NSA's failure in their attack on the county town.

I posted the Hunchun company which was to block the enemy's reinforcements at a place called Jjajakgol and ordered the Wangqing company to advance along the main line of attack and seize the fort.

At 9 p.m. a demolition party from our unit, which had approached the enemy's line by stealth, concentrated its fire on the fort when my shot gave the signal for the attack on the town. The enemy reinforced his troops continuously through the communication trench and the underground passage. The fierce engagement between our forces and the enemy lasted for hours.

I made the guerrilla unit which had stormed into the town through the west gate blockade the enemy's barracks while other forces bypassed the fort to the north so as to divert the enemy's fire; then I sent in the demolition team to seize the fort by means of a violent bomb attack. The fort abandoned resistance

and fell quiet near dawn. Our main force surrounded the barracks of the Japanese garrison in tight formation and mercilessly checked the enemy's desperate attempt to launch a counterattack. Some of the Japanese narrowly escaped through the north gate.

NSA units which had entered the town in advance in civilian disguise, and the other NSA units which had charged into the town through the east and south gates took up their specified places and fought the enemy.

The headquarters of the puppet Manchukuo army unit sent a representative to us to convey its acceptance of our proposal to attack the Japanese aggressors in joint operation. If the scheme had gone smoothly, the whole town would have fallen into our hands.

At that moment, however, some of Chai Shi-rong's units began plundering the shops under the control of the puppet Manchukuo army and robbing civilian houses; this caused the puppet Manchukuo army to withdraw from the agreement and instead launch an all-out attack on us. The Japanese garrison joined this attack.

Some of the NSA units, scared at the vigor of the enemy's attack, deserted the areas they had occupied and began to flee from the town.

Nevertheless, our unit, succeeding in pinning the enemy into a corner of the town, expanded the area we occupied by means of all-out street fighting. Encouraged by this, the NSA units then occupied the munitions factory and raided the munitions yards. The street fighting continued for hours.

Recognizing that the purpose of the joint operation had been largely accomplished, I gave orders to withdraw. Guerrilla units that had withdrawn on their own initiative provided covering fire for the withdrawing NSA units.

At this moment we were informed that Brigadier-general Shi Zhong-heng had been seriously wounded and was still in the town. His men had fled the town, leaving their commander in the jaws of death. His aide-de-camp had not assisted him, either.

In my mind's eye I saw the NSA soldiers who had been talking about trophies. When I heard them dreaming about opium and electric torches, I had been apprehensive of pillage and the effect it might have on the course of the battle. Such pillage had taken place during the battle. And then, to our surprise, the soldiers had deserted their commander. In general soldiers regard their superior officers as their fathers or mothers. So in a sense, the NSA soldiers had fled, leaving their parent in the jaws of death.

I had heard many stories of soldiers' conduct in war, but I had never heard of such dereliction of duty. There were links between the NSA soldiers' pillage and their faithless desertion of their commander. The greed for material wealth had been overflowed into an extreme of egoism and cowardice. A dipper that leaks in the house will also leak outside - how profound the truth of this proverb handed down to us by

our ancestors!

A battle may be regarded as an extension and concise expression of everyday life. Soldiers' success in battle is always determined in advance in their everyday life, not on the battlefield. A battle is no more than the epitome and reflection of that life.

History knows no case of an army with inferior moral fiber being crowned with victory. The Nazi army of Hitler's Germany trembled to defeat mainly because they were morally inferior, having abandoned moral principles and driven their caterpillar tracks roughshod over the good and beautiful. The main reason why the Japanese army, which boasted of its invincibility, met its end was also its moral leprosy. Japan could not avoid being smothered by the encirclement of the allied forces and billions of honest-minded people who condemned and hated the Japanese army as the most brutal and shameless in the world. Never in the history of war has there been such a barbarous army as the Japanese army which invaded other countries and slaughtered their peoples, even taking "comfort girls" with them to battlefields.

War is not only a contest of strength, but also a test of morality and ethics. An army that neglects the influence which morality exerts on the course of a war or regards it as an inessential adornment is no more than a heap of rubbish.

I ordered Choe Chun Guk to rescue Shi Zhong-heng.

Choe and his men risked their lives to carry out my orders. Carrying Shi, who had been rescued by our guerrillas on our backs and covering our withdrawal with fire, we withdrew safely onto a hill. The guerrillas abused Shi's men who had abandoned him as cursed cowards. The NSA soldiers deserved this abuse for their behavior. But the relationship between the NSA and ourselves was not damaged by this affair.

The battle of the Dongning county town was significant not only because we killed several hundred enemy soldiers. The important point was that after going through this battle the NSA had full confidence in the Korean communists. The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was able to act in east Manchuria as proudly and legitimately as before while flying a red flag. This battle implanted the true image of the Korean communists in the minds of the NSA soldiers.

Afterwards the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units would of their own free will beat those who attempted to harm our unit.

"September 7, 1933 is the day when I was born again. My life from that day was bestowed on me by Commander Kim, while my life until then was bestowed on me by my parents. I owe him my life; the AJPGA is the first brother of our national salvation army." These were Shi Zhong-heng's words when he regained consciousness.

His words spread a legendary tale to every corner of Manchuria, the legend that the AJPGA was a paragon of noble, self-sacrificing spirit and loyal comradeship.

On our way back from the Dongning county town to Luozigou, a journey of a hundred miles, I was constantly at the side of Brigadier-general Shi. All through the first day, we carried him on a stretcher. Even though they saw their commander was being carried by the guerrillas, the NSA soldiers dared not approach the stretcher and only watched him from a distance. His aide-de-camp and some of his men asked us to hand over their commander to them, but the guerrillas refused, and sent them away.

When his aide-de-camp approached our column for the third time, I ordered my men to hand over the stretcher. I persuaded the guerrillas by saying that the men had consciences, so they might feel sorry for their mistake, and even if we only granted the right to carry the stretcher, they would be able to atone for their crime to a small degree.

When we handed Shi Zhong-heng over, the NSA soldiers bowed to us graciously. Brigadier-general Shi greatly regretted the behavior of his men, and he apologized to us as a commanding officer for his subordinates' misbehavior.

"I am ashamed in front of you, Commander Kim, for these creatures of no account. It is because I have not educated them properly, so please blame me if you will, and have mercy on my men.

I was moved by his regarding his men's shame as his own. I would not have been so deeply moved had he given vent to his anger against his men or felt even a little bitterness against them. He was indeed a generous, fair-minded soldier. I said:

"As the Chinese proverb has it, even a sweet melon hangs on a bitter stalk. A man cannot always be perfect nor a flower be beautiful for a thousand days. You have regained consciousness following a serious Wound, and we are satisfied with that."

"Another Chinese proverb says that if a man wants to buy a horse he should study his teeth, and if he wants to make a friend he should know the other person's mind. I will take it as a godsend that I made your acquaintances Commander Kim, and treasure the gift for all my life."

Shi Zhong-heng, a dozen or more years older than I, became my blood-bound comrade-in-arms as we worked to establish the anti-Japanese allied front. After the battle of the Dongning county town he moved his unit to Xibeigou near Macun. We frequently visited each other as one visits relatives, and deepened our friendship.

I sent him various medicines for the treatment of his bullet wound, and exposed him to communist influence in an attempt to transform his ideology. As a result, he joined the Communist Party and became a commander of the people's revolutionary army.

He fought well in the anti-Japanese joint operations at Luozigou in June 1934, and rendered highly distinguished service as commander of the 2nd Independent Division after his unit was incorporated into the people's revolutionary army. In every battle he would lead the charge at the enemy's positions with a Mauser in his hand. This led his men to believe that he was the bravest commanding officer in the world. The soldiers of the other NSA units also respected and adored him. Quite a few of them transferred to Shi Zhong-heng's unit. He was fatally wounded in the abdomen while leading a charge at the battle of Laosongling. The bullet did not pass through him, lodging in the intestines. He went to the Soviet Union to have the bullet removed, but breathed his last there. When I heard others were mourning his death, I remembered him with aching grief.

Chai Shi-rong, who had joined us in the anti-Japanese front amid the flames of battle in the Dongning county town, was later transferred to the people's revolutionary army, becoming vice-commander and then commander of its 5th Army Corps. He made great efforts to maintain friendly ties with us when he was fighting under Zhou Bao-zhong in north Manchuria. I kept in close touch with him even as late as the early 1940s.

When the allied front between the AJPGA and the NSA had apparently become too strong to break as a result of the battle of the Dongning county town, an unexpected incident occurred which threatened to damage it.

The root cause was a remark by Wu Yi-cheng in praise of Chiang Jieshi. After returning to Luozigou we held a joint meeting to review the battle. Wu Yi-cheng spoke first. Speaking about the victory of the combined forces in the battle, he suddenly began to extol Chiang Kaisek and went on to say that the anti-Japanese war in the northeast of China would only be brought to a triumphant conclusion when Chiang sent guns and reinforcements from the south. This provoked the guerrillas to anger.

Paek Il Phyong, who was there as the commander of the Hunchun guerrilla unit, took the floor and accused Commander Wu, who had praised and supported Chiang Kaisek, of being a reactionary, asking how Chiang could possibly assist and lead us when the whole world knew that he was a running dog of imperialism.

In a blaze of anger Wu had him arrested and threatened to have him shot.

At this point, Paek's men rebelled. They protested: we did not lose a single rank-and-file guerrilla during the battle, and it is not logical to lose our commanding officer for the sake of the allied front; how could we possibly return to Hunchun after losing our commanding officer? We must save Comrade Paek Il Phyong even if it means fighting with Wu Yi-cheng to the last man of our unit. They were about to dash out with rifles in their hands.

The NSA soldiers had taken their rifles and were preparing to fire back.

In this hair-trigger situation a single gunshot would result in whole-sale deaths and the disruption of the

allied front which had cost so much effort. Wu Yi-cheng turned pale and pursed his lips.

I jumped up on the platform and argued with both sides, in Korean and Chinese, and tried to reason with Wu Yi-cheng:

"You may feel angry, Commander Wu, but be generous and set Paek Il Phyong free. It was most presumptuous of him to call you a reactionary, and impugn your dignity, but you, too, must think this matter over. Will others listen willingly to your praise of Chiang Kaisek when the whole China condemns him as a puppet of the imperialists? It was he who kept telling Zhang Xue-liang not to fight against Japan before the September 18 incident. If you kill Paek, the whole of Manchuria will call you a traitor to the nation, so please give the matter deep thought."

As I finished my speech, some of the NSA soldiers asked themselves, "Who is that man? Is he from the south? A delegate from the Kuomintang?" Others answered, "From the south? No. He is Kim Il Sung, the commander of the guerrilla army."

"I spoke as I did out of ignorance, please do not regard me as the same kind of man as Chiang Kaisek," Wu Yi-cheng said, and declared he would withdraw his order to have Paek killed.

However, two days later he still had not released him. The rank-and-file soldiers of the NSA accused their commander of foolhardiness, saying, "Why does not Commander Wu keep his promise to Commander Kim?" Some of Wu's men said, "Everything will be alright if we do not shoot him. Can he kill any man he wants?" Another said, "Our national salvation army will be cursed if we kill him."

While the masses of the soldiers were agitated in this way, the officers lodged letters and petitions with Wu Yi-cheng, urging the release of Paek Il Phyong. Paek was released from detention by Wu after 3 days.

The process of cementing the allied front with the Chinese nationalist army units was beset with many such painful incidents; perseverance and sacrifice were required. How could the two "organisms" with the different blood types be effectively combined without difficulties and distress? For three successive days the enemy cremated the bodies of the soldiers who had been killed in the battle. Meanwhile, we lost Hu Jin-min. He was killed by an accidental shot on our way back to Luozigou.



## 8.4. A Comment on Ultra-Democracy in the Army

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The Soviet line was a Leftist tendency in the establishment of government; military ultra-democracy was a Leftist ideological tendency which occurred in the command and administration of the army. It advocated absolute equality for every soldier, irrespective of his rank, in the command and administration of the army. In other words, it advocated excessive equalitarianism in all aspects of military activity, regarding it as an absolute. It was while we were directing the guerrilla army on our return to Wangqing from the campaign in south Manchuria that we first encountered the practice of ultra-democracy in the guerrilla army. At that time the tendency was at an incipient stage, and its effects were not serious.

As I acquainted myself with the work of the guerrilla army on my return to Wangqing after the battle of the Dongning county town, I realized that the ultra-democracy which had barely been germinating had now assumed definite weight in the command system of the army and was paralyzing that system.

The alarm was first raised concerning the danger of ultra-democracy in Dahuanggou, Hunchun County, in the autumn of 1933. Dahuanggou was a central guerrilla zone in Hunchun. Pan, the inspector from the Comintern, was murdered there by Park Tu Nam. At the same place, 13 soldiers of the Hunchun guerrilla unit who had fought in the Dongning county town were all killed in a single incident, bringing grief to all the people in east Manchuria.

A group of guerrillas who had returned to the guerrilla zone after the review of the battle held at Luozigou broke the fatigue of their journey for a while at a solitary house, celebrating Chusok or the day of the Harvest Moon. They relaxed the following day and the day after that, with a guard posted. A Japanese garrison discovered them and surprised them by surrounding the house by night.

The wisest thing to do in such a situation would have been to strike at the enemy's weak point and quickly fight a way through the enemy's encirclement. To do this the commander needed to judge the situation properly and make a prompt decision. But the company commander had no right to make a decision. One of the men was O Pin, an experienced soldier, but his words carried no weight because he had been demoted by the Leftists from the post of head of the military department of the county party committee to a mere soldier.

The Leftists who were in the higher levels of the leadership of the party bodies in those days did not allow the commanders the right to make a decision on military affairs. They maintained that everything concerning military operations must always be discussed at meetings and decided collectively, on the principle of majority rule. This became an iron rule which no one could ever break in the command and administration structures of the army, binding the commanders hand and foot. This abuse of democracy in military affairs weighed so heavily even on able commanding officers that it produced a state of functional paralysis.

Even at the critical moment when the armed enemy was tightening his encirclement in order to destroy them, they continued their nonsensical argument over whether to stand and fight the enemy or break out of the encirclement. Some sensible men insisted that they should fight, and not continue their empty talk until they were all destroyed, but the ultra democrats declared that no military action should be taken without a decision of the meeting.

This was nothing short of criminal suicide for the besieged guerrillas. While they continued their futile argument, the enemy fell upon them. Only then did the guerrillas stop arguing and begin fighting. The enemy fire mowed down 13 guerrillas. Only a few of them escaped death by a miracle. One of them came to Wangqing at O Pin's request and told me the details of how the 13 men had been killed. Paek Il Phyoung and O Pin were among the dead.

The soldier from Hunchun told me that, as he was elbowing his way through the heap of dead bodies, O Pin, with his intestines tumbling out of a wound in his belly, had said with his last breath: "I have no right to order you, but I am telling you as a party member to report this incident to Comrade Kim Li Sung without fail."

I cursed the advocates of ultra-democracy and the dogmatists who had blindly followed them in battle. Had it not been for the obstacle of this ultra-democracy, the Hunchun company could have broken the siege and averted such tragic losses.

These 13 comrades are still fresh in my memory; they had shared life in the shadow of death with me in the Dongning county town. As we were withdrawing from the town after the battle, they had come over fresh from their blocking mission, shaken my hands, set me on their shoulders, and tossed me in the air, saying that the Wangqing company had fought well. At the memorial service for the fallen comrades they had cried bitterly as they made speeches. I felt my heart choked at the news that these men of such burning passion and love had all been killed in one night.

Of these 13, O Pin was the most unforgettable. He had been introduced to me by Chae Su Hang when we were building revolutionary organizations around the six towns in the northern frontier region of Korea. While Chae was attending the Taesong Middle School in Longjing, O Pin had attended the Tonghung Middle School in the same town. Both schools had produced many figures of social importance and independence fighters. They had participated in the student movement together in Longjing. O Pin, together with Chae Su Hang, had attended the Kongsudok meeting and the winter Mingyuegou meeting which we convened. They had taken an active part in the discussion of the policy on the armed struggle.

It was probably in May 1931, that O Pin and Chae Su Hang guided me to Jongsong, the birthplace of Chae. My first step on Sinhung village after crossing the Tuman River with them on a smuggling boat is still as vivid in my memory as if it happened yesterday. Drinking in with profound emotion the beautiful verdure on the willowy bank and the ancient scene of the old castle site, we talked at length about the future of the motherland.

In the spring of that year, outside the north gate at Sinhung village, I met O Pin's father, O Ui Son, who was the head of the Anti-Imperialist Union in Jongsong. He had been eking out a living by sharecropping in Chatiaogou, Yanji County; when his son became a career revolutionary he had moved to Sinhung village with his family, and his house soon became a secret liaison point linking the AJPGA in the Wangqing area with all the underground revolutionary organizations in Jongsong County in the homeland.

Every time I went to Sinhung village, O Pin's family served me noodles. We spent the Tano festival or the fifth day of the fifth lunar month at this house in 1933. On that occasion O Ui Son went to a market in Phunggye, eight miles away, to buy buckwheat flour, and he made buckwheat noodles for us for lunch, noodles that reminded me of Pyongyang cold noodles.

They were suffering from a shortage of water. I worked with the spade as hard as if I were O Pin, who was then fighting in Hunchun. When I met O Pin at Luozigou before the battle of the Dongning county town, I said that his father in Sinhung village had served us buckwheat noodles for the Tano festival. When he heard this, his pleasure was evident. Even though he had been demoted to a soldier from the post of military department head of Hunchun County, he was not in the least disaffected or dispirited.

As I encouraged him not to lose heart, he said, "I am in high spirits, as you can see. My demotion cannot make me Kim Pin or Park Pin. Nevertheless, I do not feel like working in Hunchun any more. I am thinking of moving to Wangqing after the battle, if my superior permits it. What do you think of the idea?"

I answered, "I will be happy if you come to Wangqing. But remember that there are a lot of Leftists willing to brand people as 'Minsaengdan' members in Wangqing, too." "Is that so?"

"The Leftist wind never dies away in Wangqing."

"But I think I should feel light-hearted beside you. In any case, I shall come to Wangqing, come what may. When I say something I stick to it."

When we attacked the fort in the west of the town, he led the line of advance with a grenade in his hand. He was highly commended for this at the meeting to review the battle. When the units were parting with one another at Luozigou after the meeting he reaffirmed his firm intention. His resolve to come to Wangqing was unshakable. He said his determination had been strengthened when he saw the guerrillas from Wangqing capturing the fort and charging into the town during the battle. Naturally I promised him my full cooperation.

However, the sad news of O Pin's death reached Wangqing before I could keep that promise. Lee Kwang had been murdered in the spring, and Pan, the member of the provincial party committee, had been killed in the summer; today O Pin had gone to the world of no return without realizing his long-cherished desire.

The sad news of the death of 13 warriors including O Pin came as a bolt from the blue. Ever since then I have shuddered at the mention of ultra-democracy in military affairs, and never tolerated the slightest tendency towards it in our ranks.

This tendency was so repugnant to me because it was utterly destructive of revolutionary practice.

We still regard it as an absolute principle that all questions concerning military operations must be discussed by Party organizations and welcome that the creative opinions of the masses must be incorporated into the planning of military operations via the Party organizations. But we do not tolerate the encroachment of this principle of collectivism on the authority of the commanding officers who are in charge of the administration of their units.

In the early days of the war against the Japanese, however, ultra-democracy, on the excuse of collectivism, limited the authority of the commanding officers and paralyzed the command system in the administration of military units and conduct of operations.

In those days, in order to stimulate the creative energy of the party members there were party group meetings, branch meetings and committee meetings at all levels in the guerrilla army when military operations were being planned or during a battle, and there were also unit meetings similar to the general servicemen's meeting nowadays. The principle was to consider every aspect of the situation.

For all this, the Leftists, who regarded ultra-democracy as being as absolute as Napoleon's code of laws, maintained that all military matters, irrespective of their importance and the prevailing circumstances, should be discussed at party bodies of all levels and at unit meetings.

Suppose the revolutionary army was to attack a town. They discussed the plan first at a party group meeting, using a sketch map of the town without its name, deciding whether or not it was necessary to attack it and, if it was necessary, in what way, before a resolution was adopted.

When the need to do battle and the possibility of victory was confirmed at the meeting and a detailed plan of operations was mapped out, the same process was repeated at a branch meeting.

The same procedure was followed at the unit meeting, except that this was also attended by non-party members. They said: "We are going to attack a certain town, the attack will bring us great political and military benefits with no losses or few casualties, the plan of operations is such and such, we will surely emerge victorious if we fight in accordance with this plan."

Then they passed a decision, issued battle orders and attacked the town. Such meetings, which proceeded with agenda improvised as suddenly as a stone thrown into a lake, involved endless arguments, about the pros and cons of every possibility, before conclusions were finally reached. The right to an equal vote required by ultra-democracy resulted in time-consuming uproarious arguments involving everyone.

Operational plans which had gone through different meetings at different levels turned out to be useless as the enemy situation changed in the meantime. And when such an operation was undertaken the changed situation resulted in a heavy toll of the forces of the revolutionary army. The death of the 13 courageous men at Dahuanggou was a glaring example of the influence of ultra-democracy on military affairs.

Another expression of this abuse of democracy was the striving to establish excessive equality and impartiality in the revolutionary army. Such abuses were also witnessed in the units under my command.

One day, with Kim Myong Gyun, head of the military department of the county party committee, I paid a visit to the barracks of the 1st company to learn about its work. I found the company commander sweeping the yard and its political instructor chopping firewood with his men in a corner of the yard. I smiled at the laudable sight of officers working in harmony with their men. For some reason, however, the sight left Kim Myong Gyun cold.

"I'm pleased to see the commanding officers setting an example," I said, but the department head still seemed unimpressed. "Well, what about joining them?" I said, approaching a besom lying in a corner of the yard.

Kim Myong Gyun tugged gently at my sleeve, saying, "Let me show you an amazing sight." He ordered the duty officer to summon the company commander and political instructor immediately.

The officer answered, "Now is the morning cleaning time."

"Bring them here as you are ordered and no more idle talk!" Kim Myong Gyun demanded with no more ado.

The officer's response was not soft, either. "Then the company commander and political instructor will be criticized at the unit meeting"

I casually asked Kim Myong Gyun what the officer's answer meant. He replied, "It means that the company commander and political instructor must do the cleaning, setting aside everything else, when the soldiers are cleaning, for they are equal human beings."

This incident occurred when ultra-democracy was still at its incipient stage. This blind idea of equality was soon put into practice by the guerrilla army, and it paralyzed its command system for some time.

It is needless to say that of course every man, and every soldier, is equal as a human being. But in the revolutionary army - the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army or the Korean People's Army - every soldier is given different assignments in accordance with his duty. One man is designated company commander, another man platoon leader and another squad leader.

The various duties and assignments performed by soldiers place them in the relationship of superiors and subordinates in the revolutionary army, a company commander being superior to his platoon leaders, a platoon leader to his squad leaders and a squad leader to his men. The service regulations of the revolutionary army stipulate that subordinates shall obey the orders of their superiors without reservation. Otherwise it would be impossible to command the army and maintain iron discipline.

The service regulations of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army fully reflected the collective opinions of the soldiers and required the commanding personnel to abide by the regulations willingly.

However, the Left opportunists ignored the relationship between superiors and subordinates stipulated in the service regulations of the AJPGA, and this inflicted serious damage on the living tissue of the AJPGA, whose lifeblood was discipline, order and unity between the officers and men, and it undermined the army's moral basis.

Ultra-democracy in the army was an expression of ultra-egalitarianism. It even produced the unsavory practice of soldiers not respecting the superiors they had elected, speaking impolitely to them or disputing their orders on the excuse of equality.

An army in which subordinates do not salute their superiors, speak to them impolitely, or dispute their orders and instructions, is no longer an army. It is a rabble. Can one ever expect from such a rabble the noble comradeship and unity of ideology and purpose that encourage men to shield their commanders from danger and the latter to protect their men at the risk of their own lives? Can one ever expect from it the steel-like unity that enables them to speak with one voice, walk with the same gait and breathe as one?

Ultra-democracy in military affairs also required that a commander should do exactly what his men did in battle. The proverb, "Horns on the head, rosary beads on a string," states the simple truth that everything has its place. In other words, a commander and his men have different duties to perform in battle. A suckling infant is capable of understanding this.

Ultra-democrats in the army, however, preached that the commanders should fight in the front rank both in attack and defense, unafraid of death. This sermonizing made it impossible for the commanders to perform their duties properly. Commanders who were duty bound to study the combat situation from the best vantage point all the time and command the battle from a broad viewpoint, had to move about in the rank and file. That was why they were unable to control their units in accordance with the situation.

Certainly, a commander sometimes needs to take his place at the head of the attacking men, or to inspect the trenches and encourage the men by going through fire. When his personal example is required to change an adverse situation into a favorable one, he must, of course, stand in the front rank and encourage his men to destroy the enemy. But doing this in every situation is not the correct way to set an example.

When summing the results of battles in those days, commanders who moved in the front rank of the attacking formation, away from their command posts, were always extolled. Men would compete with one another in praising their commanders - one saying that his platoon leader did not fear the hail of bullets as he stood on the hill, commanding the battle, another boasting that his company commander jumped into the enemy's trench several meters ahead of his men, and another bragging that no battalion commander could be braver in fighting the enemy hand to hand than his battalion commander.

In this climate, the adventurism tendency to plunge, single-handed, into the enemy's position became endemic among the platoon leaders, company commanders and battalion commanders of all guerrilla units in east Manchuria, the very commanders who should have maintained the positions defined in the battle regulations, calculated the general development of the battle and determined their forces' future course of action. This tendency led to the deaths of many platoon and company officers, the basic unit commanders of the guerrilla units, in the early days of the war against the Japanese.

A great number of these single-handed heroes were produced in Wangqing - men such as Kim Chol, Kim Song Hyon and Lee Ung Man. Kim Chol and Kim Song Hyon - fell while leading charges in battle, and Lee Ung Man was wounded in the ankle while leading the fighting from the front.

Choe Hyon and Jo To On in Yanji were master-hands at the bayonet charge, famous throughout the whole of east Manchuria. They even carried out reconnaissance missions themselves, instead of sending their men. They were innocent adventurers, as naive in their actions as schoolboys, rather than military commanders.

Jo To On was a famous adventurer produced by the Yanji guerrilla unit. He was so good at whistling that from the early days the people in Yanji called him by the nickname of "Whistling Jo." Wherever he went, his nickname attracted the people's attention.

Even when his hair was gray and he had long given up whistling, he used to be known as "Whistling Jo," an expression of people's affection for this veteran who always braved the hail of bullets at the head of his men during the war against the Japanese. He became so accustomed to the nickname throughout his life he felt uncomfortable when he was called by his real name.

Once a visitor knocked at his door and asked, "Is this the house of Comrade Jo To On?" He answered bluntly, "Not Jo To On, but 'Whistling Jo.'" This reply embarrassed his visitor, but it showed how fond he was of the nickname his comrades-in-arms had given him during the anti-Japanese war.

If he had been alive, I would wish to recollect him by his nickname which was so popular among the masses.

Jo To On did not know how to write even his parents' names; only when he was much older than school age did he learn how to read and write the Korean alphabet, as well as studying the multiplication table and a Children's Reader. As soon as he was able to read and write, he became a member of the

organization and the guerrilla army and then developed further to shoulder the heavy responsibility of a company commander. This company commander would go himself to reconnoiter enemy strongholds within sight, come back to his company, issue orders for a raid, and then dash like hurricane in the vanguard of the attack.

When he had captured several rifles at one time after reconnoitering and raiding positions of the enemy's self-defense corps in broad daylight, the Leftists gave wide publicity to his distinguished deed at various meetings and in the official papers. But this was one-sided propaganda which gave no consideration to the fact that Jo was a commanding officer who should have refrained from such adventures. However, as a result of that propaganda he became famous as a soldier throughout almost the whole of east Manchuria.

He was seriously wounded in the battle of Dadianzi while rushing at an enemy machinegun emplacement at the head of his unit. He was so near the machinegun that a bullet which hit him in the belly emerged diagonally from his back. His life was saved by miracle, but he had to live in hospital for six years because of the wound he received. He was Unable to return to his beloved company.

He was bedridden while the anti-Japanese armed struggle was developing to the level of victorious, large-unit operations over wide areas in south and north Manchuria and the homeland. The Korean People's Revolutionary Army became a legendary army known to the whole world and its just struggle became a beacon of light to the oppressed peoples of the world. This war required efficient commanders and veterans capable of directing new regiments and divisions. If he had not been disabled, Jo To On could have rendered tremendous service when the war against the Japanese was at its triumphant high tide.

The Leftists refused to pay attention to the safety of commanders until the distorted concept of democracy was finally eliminated from the army; it was only some time later that guards were organized in each of the regiments and divisions to protect the commander. The abuse of democracy in the revolutionary army was also expressed in the indiscriminate use of reward and punishment. The anti-Japanese guerrilla army had a system of reward and punishment designed to strengthen its fighting efficiency. We rewarded soldiers who were exemplary in combat, training and everyday life, and punished those who seriously violated the service regulations, applying various standards according to specific merits and demerits.

Ultra-democrats, however, disputed this system by arguing over why one comrade was awarded the first prize, and another the second prize, when they had both performed the same duty in the same squad, over why somebody was only given a reprimand and somebody else was given a warning when they had committed the same mistake; thus they bolstered opinion in support of indiscriminate application of regulations and brought pressure to bear upon us.

This surrealistic attitude undermined the basic aim of a system of reward and punishment. In short, ultra-democracy was a pernicious ideological trend that ran counter to our aspirations and efforts to foster the military, political and moral superiority of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army and advance the anti-Japanese



armed struggle towards ultimate victory. If we had not eradicated this ideological trend in good time, all the commanders of the guerrilla army would sooner or later have been reduced to mere figureheads, and the guerrilla army to a lawless collective in which there was no distinction between the commanders and the rank and file, and ultimately to a rabble disarmed by itself.

Ultra-democracy, no matter what specific forms it took, was an opportunist trend derived from petit bourgeois ideology. It was, in effect, an anarchic tendency which had nothing in common with the revolutionary ideology of the working class.

Anarchism, a reflection of petit bourgeois ideology, derives from an extreme hatred for authority in general and a resistance to the political power of the bourgeoisie in particular. It attempted to introduce anarchic disorder and immoderate conduct into society, extolling ultra-democracy, radical freedom and self-indulgence.

Some radical ideologists, who represented the distress of the petit bourgeoisie, which was economically bankrupt and politically disenfranchised under the pressures of capitalist mass production and the political dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, attempted to lead the masses in opposition to state power in general by alleging that the political power of the capitalist class should be overthrown by violence and anarchism established.

The so-called "theory of anarchism" of such ideologists as the French petit bourgeois, Proudhon, and Bakunin and Kropotkin in Russia, which found expression in an extreme hatred for political power and unreasonable demands for social equality, was a destructive ideological trend which made it impossible to rouse the working masses to the struggle against the repression of the capitalists, to safeguard the gains of the revolution and establish truly popular and democratic systems in those countries which had overthrown the dictatorship of the exploiting class; it was condemned by the impartial judgment of history.

Nevertheless, for some time this ideological trend gave the petit bourgeoisie illusions about ultra-democracy and unrestricted freedom and it spread to some extent to the regions and countries where capitalist industry had not been developed on a large scale and the petit bourgeois and peasant mentality remained dominant. This is the major reason why quite a few people thought that anarchism made certain contributions to the struggle against capitalism.

Some working-class parties enlisted anarchic forces in the struggle to overthrow the reactionary regime of the landlords and bourgeoisie. It is well-known that the Soviet government cooperated with Makhno and his clique, an anarchic collective in the Ukraine, during the Civil War.

In the early days, when ultra-democracy emerged in the guerrilla army, anarchism still existed as a political idea that served a certain social stratum, the petit bourgeoisie in particular, as an expression of their revolutionary character, and it inflicted tangible harm on the revolutionary theory and practice of the working class.

This does not mean, however, that the only form taken by ultra-democracy was anarchism. The activities of the revisionists who emerged in the international working class movement also had elements in common with ultra-democracy. Under the cloak of democracy, they promoted bourgeois liberalism, anarchism, immoderacy and disorder, and they gave rise to social confusion and self-indulgence. In the light of this experience, we cannot but conclude that there is an ideological community between extreme bourgeois democracy and anarchism.

If ultra-democracy finds its way into the military sector, it will eventually produce anarchic confusion. Had it not been eliminated from the guerrilla army before it was too late, ultra-democracy could have irretrievably damaged the process of building up the guerrilla army and its military operations, and could have seriously hampered the overall development of the revolutionary movement.

When we were involved in combating it, with the firm determination of wiping it out, a meeting of commanders and political commissars of the guerrilla units in east Manchuria was convened in Shiliping to review the work done in the year and half since the guerrilla zones had been established and to take measures to defend these zones from the enemy's large-scale "punitive" operations.

I met Kim Il Ryong and Kim Jong Ryong at this meeting. The former was the commander and the latter the political commissar of the Antu guerrilla unit. The meeting was also attended by Lang and Cha Ryong Dok, commander and political commissar of the Helong guerrilla unit, and Lu Jin, Park Tong Gun and Park Kil, general commander, commander and political commissar of the Yanji guerrilla unit. Some comrades also came from the Hunchun guerrilla unit, but I cannot remember who they were.

This meeting also discussed measures for overcoming the ultra-democratic tendency in the command and administration of guerrilla units.

We maintained that the main factor in the command of a guerrilla unit was the authority of its commander and the establishment of rigid discipline and centralization, that the method of administration should give priority to political work. At the meeting I stressed the following points: The distinctions between the superior and the subordinate in a unit should be clear and absolute.

A commander should be steadfast and positive in executing the orders issued by his superior and unswervingly carry out a decision once he had made it. He should always take the initiative in commanding and act with determination, without wavering or hesitating in complicated and difficult circumstances. But this on no account means that he may resort to subjectivism and arbitrariness in commanding. He must know how to draw on the energy and wisdom of the masses in executing the orders of his superiors and in the command of battles. He should not command his unit only by means of orders, but engage the soldiers' conscious enthusiasm by giving priority to political work.

Today's war is not like wars in the days of slave-owning and feudal societies, when one contended for victory on a solitary horse; it is a modern, people's war in which the army and people fight as one. The outcome of a war is decided by the ability to allow fuller scope to the enthusiasm and creativity of the

army and people. This requires that political work should be given definite precedence. Party meetings, unit meetings, explanations and propaganda by agitators are powerful means for political work. Commanders should therefore make effective use of these means.

I criticized the Hunchun guerrilla unit for its mistake in Dahuanggou and warned the representatives from the guerrilla units in all counties of the harmfulness of ultra-democracy in military affairs, showing that it had led to the loss of 13 guerrillas. Our younger generation might not easily understand or believe the episodes I have briefly mentioned here, or the childish nature of the infantile disorder of ultra-democracy as demonstrated in these episodes. But these are the true facts.

The infiltration of this malady into the guerrilla army in the early days of the armed struggle was a trial for those of us who bore the heavy burden of defending the guerrilla bases and creating the allied front while also being responsible for administering the army.

At the meeting we stressed once again that guerrilla units should be commanded and managed in accordance with the principle of individual responsibility on a basis of democracy. After the incident in Dahuanggou two contradictory tendencies appeared in the guerrilla units. One supported the enforcement of one-man management system with a single commander, and the other insisted upon continued adherence to the democratic principle in army administration. These two positions each had merits and demerits.

Rendering the one-man management system absolute might give rise to arbitrariness and subjectivity in the command and administration of the army, while making democracy absolute might deprive the army of promptness and efficiency in its command and management. So I proposed the principle of one-man management system based on democracy for discussion. According to this principle a commander's responsibility to command and administer his unit was based on a decision made by the party organization following collective discussion.

Collective discussion based on democracy would enable complex and difficult military tasks at each period to be carried out satisfactorily by exploiting the masses' collective wisdom, whereas the one-man management system based on the discussion would enhance the commander's sense of responsibility and role in accordance with the military requirements, the prerequisite for which was a high degree of promptness, determination and concerted action.

We also stressed the need to establish iron discipline in the guerrilla army by maintaining a well-regulated system of command within it. A commander's orders are not an expression of individual opinion; they are an expression of the democratic and organizational opinion of the body of a higher level. Military orders possess legal force and a commander is responsible before the law for the orders he has issued. The rank and file should never in the least degree discount or dispute orders; they are duty bound to execute them promptly and without fail, whatever the circumstances. Commanders should command and supervise the carrying out of their orders in an appropriate manner.

We also discussed the tasks of creating a sound ideological atmosphere in the units and of consolidating revolutionary unity between the superiors and subordinates by intensifying the study of communist ideology and the struggle against such petit bourgeois ideologies as the infantile equality and anarchism pursued by ultra-democracy in military affairs. The meeting at Shiliping enlightened the commanders of the guerrilla army. In the subsequent trials of repeated battle ultra-democracy was eliminated from the army once and for all.

I-lad we not completely overcome ultra-democracy in the army in the early days of the anti-Japanese war, we would not have been able to consolidate the invincible ranks of the Korean People's Army in such a short period of time after liberation, nor would we have emerged victorious in the fight against the international allied forces of imperialism headed by us imperialism.

It is now a matter of course that our People's Army contains neither those who insist on unprincipled equality and impartiality nor those who dispute their superiors' orders. The soldiers answer their superiors' orders only by saying, "I understand!" Our People's Army is a collective of loyal soldiers who live in a spirit of unity of superiors and subordinates, unity of army and people, a spirit of constant self-reliance and fortitude from the day they take the oath of the military code of conduct to the moment they are discharged from the service.

If anyone wishes to know our soldiers' attitude towards democracy, he need only understand their militant slogan, "When the Party decides, we do everything!" If he wants to see the genuine features of unity between superiors and subordinates manifested in the deeds of our soldiers, he need only learn of the last moments of Heroes Kim Kwang Chol and Han Yong Chol, who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of many of their comrades-in-arms. Ultra-democracy was liquidated a long time ago, but it must still be guarded against.

We safeguard democracy but oppose ultra-democracy; we maintain equality but we regard ultra-egalitarianism as taboo, because both of these extremes invite revisionism. There are quite a number of people on the Earth who are anxious to see our style of socialism corrupted by the filthy germ of revisionism. Our people and the People's Army therefore never tolerate the infiltration of our ranks by revisionism.

We do not want our Party to be reduced to a club or a market-place by the tendency of ultra-democracy. The suffering inflicted upon us by the evils of ultra democracy in military affairs during the anti-Japanese war and the lessons of Eastern Europe cry out to us that we must not allow this.

## 8.5. Operation Macun

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An epidemic of fever broke out in the guerrilla zone in the autumn of that year. This acute disease, with the symptoms of chill, high fever and rash, swept through the valley of Xiaowangqiflg. I, too, fell ill and was confined to my bed in Shiliping. I learnt later that this illness was an eruptive typhus.

The younger generation nowadays does not know what this disease is like, for they live in a land which has long been free of epidemics.

But when we were waging the armed struggle in the mountains 60 years ago, the people in the guerrilla zone went through untold suffering from epidemics. Since thousands of people lived in the relatively small valley, epidemics of various kinds would break out. The enemy's "punitive" forces would attack frequently, creating havoc as they pursued people from hill to hill, so we could not improve the unsanitary conditions and take appropriate measures to prevent epidemics, even though we wished to. All we could do was to stretch a straw rope across the gate of the house of people who had been affected or paste a warning notice on the wall: "Off limits. An epidemic site."

This was the worst possible trial for us - an epidemic raged at the same time as the enemy hurled thousands of troops against us day in and day out, in a do-or-die attempt to eliminate the guerrilla zone. To make matters worse, I was ill and many of the leadership were pale with worry over the fate of the guerrilla zone.

They sent a platoon leader, Kim ThaeK Gun, together with his wife and about a platoon of soldiers to guard and attend to me. When the other units went out to fight, these guerrillas remained behind to defend Shiliping. Mr. and Mrs. Kim had been living in Yehe in north Manchuria and had moved to Wangqing by way of Muling, determined to participate in the revolutionary struggle in east Manchuria.

In addition, Choe Kum Suk, the Wangqing county party committee member for women's work, stayed in Shiliping, on assignment from the party committee to nurse me. At first I received medical care in the front room of the house of a woman called Chun Ja. Her husband, Kim Kwon Ii, had been the secretary of a district party committee and later worked as the secretary of the county party committee.

Whenever the enemy attacked the guerrilla zone, Kim ThaeK Gun would carry me on his back from valley to valley to seek shelter.

As the enemy's "punitive" operations intensified, they carried me deep into a valley in Shiliping along a water course, and built a hut for my shelter under a huge steep rock, difficult for the enemy to assault. One could only approach it by means of a rope hanging down the rock. Here I recovered completely thanks to the ministrations of the three people tending me.

These unforgettable individuals snatched me from the jaws of death. But for their diligent nursing, I would not have survived in the valley of Shiliping. I was so ill that I lost consciousness several times. I was told later that each time I slipped into a coma, they would shed tears, and cried, "For goodness" sake, pull yourself together. What shall we do if you are so ill?" And when Kim ThaeK Gun was out looking for provisions, Choe Kum Suk would support me as we wandered in search of a shelter. It is no exaggeration to say that I only recovered thanks to her help.

I had received much assistance from Choe since the early days after my arrival at Wangqing. When I had arrived at Macun from the campaign in north and south Manchuria, she was the member of the party committee of district No. 2, Dawangqing, for women's work. At that time Lee Sin Gun had been in charge of the women's association of the county. Whenever Choe came to Lee to discuss their work, I would often see her at Lee Chi Baek's house. They were on intimate terms, as close as sisters.

Lee Sin Gun praised her greatly for having a fast hand at writing, to which I paid no heed at first. I simply wondered how fast she could write. But I was surprised when I saw the minutes of a meeting she had taken. The contents of the speeches delivered at the meeting had been recorded in full. Modern stenographers are said to write fast, but I have not seen one who could compare to her. She could file away all the discussions we had in a single night. We let her record the proceedings of important meetings.

She was as magnanimous as a man and warm-hearted; and at the same time, she was a woman of principle, faithful to the revolution. She would have hauled a boat over a sandy beach if I had asked her to do it. I sent her to the enemy-controlled areas on several occasions on various missions, and she worked efficiently there.

As a woman, she sympathized very much with me for having lost my parents. She took the same loving care of me she would have taken of her own younger brother, and I called her "sister." She would visit me before anybody else whenever I returned from the battlefield, slipping into my hands something she felt I needed. Sometimes she would sew up tears in my clothes and knit wool into underwear for me. If she did not come to Lishugou for a long time, I would go to see her.

We were so much like brother and sister that we would laugh and joke when we met. When she met old people in the village, she would address them in the dialect of Hamgyong Province. The words she used were funny and her intonation was even more interesting. Even when I mimicked the way she spoke and carried the joke too far, she did not get angry, but simply smiled. But broad-minded as she was, she would not accept jokes about her being pretty.

If I said she was a beauty she would explode, saying that I was making fun of her. I enjoyed it when she pounded me on the back with her fists, so I would joke and call her a beauty in spite of her awkward feelings. In fact she had a cherubic face, though she was not a woman of great beauty. But to me, women such as Choe Kum Suk in the guerrilla zone were much nobler and prettier than the girls and ladies in the big towns. I thought no women in the world were more beautiful than those in the guerrilla zone.

Even though they lived year in and year out among powder fumes, without once making up their faces, they did not complain nor became bitter; they simply devoted themselves to the revolution. I thought they were most beautiful. No doubt it was this attitude of mine that led me to call Choe Kum Suk a pretty girl. In those days I would spare nothing to make the women in the guerrilla zone look much more beautiful.

We often found face powder, cream and other cosmetics among the trophies we had captured. At first, when they saw these articles, our guerrillas would throw them into a stream or trample on them, saying that they were things used to make the faces of Japanese jades beautiful. For some time I did not interfere in the way the aromatic, high-quality trophies were disposed of. For I thought they were useless. Our women in the guerrilla zone did not paint their faces in those days. They all shared the view that to smell of face powder or perfume was a sin. Some women made up their faces once in a long while on holidays, but when they came to gatherings, they would take seats in the back corners, feeling sensitive to the others' views.

I regretted this. I thought it painful that they should live a hard life with their faces stained with soot and ashes, Smelling of powder fumes all the year round and not making up their faces even once. So I said to the guerrillas, "None of us must throw away cosmetics from now on. We have women among us, our women in the guerrilla zone. Where on earth are there women more wonderful than our woman guerrillas and women's association members?"

The soldiers replied in one voice, "You are right. There are no women in the world more wonderful than our women in the guerrilla zone. They did not go to the enemy-controlled area, but have shared their lives with the guerrillas for a year and a half, even though they are bereaved of husbands, children and lovers by the 'punitive' atrocities, live on herb roots and tree bark and shiver with cold out in the open in unlined clothes in the dead of winter. We feel ashamed and regret that we Korean men have not made it possible for them to dress in silks and paint their faces with rouge and lipstick so that they could show themselves off to the world. Let us send them all the best things we have captured, even though we don't eat enough and are poorly-clothed. Let us allow them to powder their faces if there are cosmetics."

One day we captured cosmetics from the enemy and took them to Choe Kum Suk to give to the women's association members. She was tremendously excited at the sight of a bundle of cosmetics. From that day the smell of face powder began to hang in the air in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone. When I went to a club to enjoy a performance of the children's art troupe on one holiday, I could smell face powder and cream there.

Only Choc Kum Suk did not make herself up even after several days had passed. I was concerned, and I asked her why she did not. She only smiled instead of answering. There seemed to be some reasons I did not know. So I asked Lee Sin Gun what the reason was, and was told that Choe had given her share of cosmetics to a women's association member in Shiliping.

Later, we attacked the enemy behind his lines and again captured plentiful cosmetics. I gave some of them to Choc Kum Suk, saying that she should not give them to others this time, but make up her own face, for I wished to see her face powdered. She promised me that she would do this in gratitude to me for

capturing the cosmetics at the risk of my life. A few days later on my way to Shiliping to give guidance to the work of Choe Chun Guk's company, I saw Choe Kum Suk, the head of the women's association of Dawangqing, sitting looking very smart at the edge of the River Dawangqing, looking down at the water with her back turned to the road.

I got my orderly, Lee Song Lim, to inquire why she was there. From a distance I saw the orderly approach and salute her. Then, all of a sudden he split his sides with laughter for some reason. Curious, I walked over to them quickly. No sooner did I reach the edge of the stream than Lee stopped laughing and pointed at Choe's face with his finger, "Comrade Commander, look at her face."

I could not help smiling myself. Her clean, good-looking face was spottily painted with rouge and cream. But Choe only looked up at us without understanding what was the matter. "Your face has become a world map, auntie," Lee said.

"Oh, my!" Choe Kum Suk exclaimed, and she plumped down and began to splash water on her face. Clumsy painting is no cause for guilt or shame, but she was totally at a loss, as though she had done something shameful. On a laundry stone close by I saw a puff-box and cream case I had sent to her a few days before.

I realized she had no skill at making-up and was very clumsy at it. But how could I make fun of that? She was making up her face for the first time in her life. Worse still, she had no hand mirror. So she had carefully put rouge and cream on her face as she looked down at her reflection in the water. It was neither surprising nor funny that she painted her face like a map of the world.

As Lee Song Lim approached her to tease her once again, I waved my hand to check him. If he had said a few words more at that time, she would have broken into tears and fled. I am sure that women who make their faces up with high-quality toilet articles in front of full-length mirrors or at dressing-tables with triple mirrors every morning, will sympathize with Choe Kum Suk when they read this part. I have heard that nowadays it is the fashion for girls who get married to take a dressing-table with triple mirrors with them among their personal belongings. This is material proof that our women wish to make their life more abundant and civilized.

But in those days when we had to eat gruel mixed with vegetables and lie out on the frozen earth, fighting desperate battles to defend the guerrilla zone, only a few of the women in Xiaowangqing had hand mirrors, and they could never dream of dressing-tables. So they went to the riverside, as Choe Kum Suk did, if they wanted to make themselves up.

That day I did not reproach Lee Song Lim for ridiculing Choe's make-up skill, but I chided myself for not having paid attention to obtaining mirrors for the women in the guerrilla zone. Our sympathy for them was nothing when compared to the affection they had for us. Our love for the people could in no way surpass the infinite affection with which they had supported us and attended on us.



This was the case with Choe Kum Suk. She nursed me all the time with a warm affection and sincerity worth many times more than the confidence I had placed in her. When my illness took a turn for the better, she ran to Tumen 25 miles away before going anywhere else. Tumen was a trading center for a range of Korean produce. She bought a bundle of Korean pears and apples there and returned to Shiliping.

I was moved to tears to see them. I even suffered from the hallucination that my mother in the world beyond had transformed herself into Choe Kum Suk and was giving me her love. It was indeed a love that only one's own mother or sister could give.

Inhaling deeply the fragrance of the fruits of my motherland which she had put in my hand, I said, full of gratitude, "Sister, how can I repay your kindness?"

"What kindness? If you are so eager to return it, then take me round the sights of Pyongyang after the liberation. I have heard Pyongyang is the most beautiful place in the world." Her reply was half serious and half joking and yet somehow very earnest. "Never mind. I am sure I can make your wish come true. Neither of us must be killed, but fight on in order to set our feet on the soil of Pyongyang when the motherland is liberated, sister."

"I shall not die. But I always feel uneasy for you, for you don't take care of yourself." In order to tempt my appetite she obtained some sesame pounded in a mortar and mixed it into my dishes and gruel. She took pains to serve me with delicious fatty foods, saying that I had fallen seriously ill through lack of nourishment. She made the utmost effort, but everything was scarce or running short at that time.

Kim Thaek Gun caught minnow in a stream and boiled them in soy sauce or broiled them to feed me. He would catch 70 or 80 of minnow a day. He was not only enthusiastic, but very skilful at fishing.

Ashamed of serving only those fish at every meal, Choe went to the village and got noodles. To the guerrillas who inquired after my health, she said, "The Commander must recover as soon as possible, but the trouble is that there is nothing to feed him, it upsets me to prepare his meal everyday from the fish caught by Thaek Gun, but the Commander says he enjoys eating them."

On hearing this, those members of my unit who were master-hands at fishing caught a sackful of fish with dragnet one day and came to visit me. Choe Kum Suk prepared it in various ways and produced a dish for every meal. When I got a little better, she told me I had continually called out the name of a woman she did not know when I had been in a coma and she mimicked it; it was a joke she had invented with Kim Thaek Gun's wife. It was quite absurd, but I was convulsed with laughter for the first time since I had fallen ill. Looking back upon it now, I see it was laughter through tears. I was well aware of that they were playing the fool in order to cheer me up after being bedridden for so long.

Choe Kum Suk's care of me even included telling me a false date to prevent me going back to Macun before I recovered completely. Whenever I came round from a coma, I asked her how long I had been unconscious, and each time she would reduce the real period. For instance, if I had been in a coma for two

days, she said it was two hours and if it had been five days, she would say five hours. After recovering completely, I added up the days from what she had told me and thought that only ten days had passed since I fell ill. I felt quite relieved to hear that.

The lie she had told me was exposed when Choe Chun Guk came to visit me. This honest political instructor could never tell a lie. He told me that I had been bed-bound for a month. She reproved innocent Choe Chun Guk for his tactlessness, but I immediately gathered myself and returned to Macun.

A mountain of information was awaiting me at headquarters. The data illustrated various aspects of the Japanese imperialists' moves to bring Jiandao under their rule. During the month I had been ill, the enemy had completed the preparations for winter "punitive" operations. High-ranking officials dispatched from the Japanese Cabinet had come to Jiandao and reached a final decision on the plan for winter "punitive" operations against the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria, after discussing the matter with the brains of the army, gendarmerie-police and diplomats in the field. The issue had even been discussed at a Cabinet meeting in Tokyo.

At meetings the Japanese imperialists held to discuss the problem of Manchuria, they claimed that "Operations for public peace in Manchuria must begin with Jiandao!" They asserted that the conquest of Jiandao was inseparably linked not only with the great cause of building up the puppet Kingdom of Manchukuo but with the security of the frontier of the Empire of Japan; its conquest was therefore a matter of great urgency for the sake of Manchukuo as well as of Japan herself. They also alleged that this campaign should be blessed for the sake of the future of the great Kingdom of Manchukuo and that the commander of the Kwangtung Army, whose mission it was to invade the Soviet Union, should supervise the police institutions in Manchuria and that its provost marshal, charged with the control of the army, be in the forefront of the conquest of Jiandao.

After rigging up Manchukuo the Japanese imperialists had adopted several important measures to maintain public peace in the area. They committed a division of the Kwangtung Army to "punitive" operations as a replacement for the Jiandao task force, established an armed constabulary in each county, and established a secret service, judiciary police and industrial police; in this way they made the police structure three-dimensional and expanded it on a large scale.

Associations for the maintenance of public peace were organized throughout Manchuria as joint consultative organs of Japan and Manchukuo for the liquidation of insurgents and the pacification of public opinion. Each province and county was a unit, in addition to the center; furthermore, various spy organizations emerged and stretched out their tentacles towards the communist camp. Through the introduction of the collective security system which had existed in China in the old days and which had proved effective for Japan in the maintenance of public order in Taiwan and Kwangtung area, the Japanese and Manchukuo police bound the people hand and foot.

Large-scale colonization by armed Japanese immigrants who were reserve soldiers and the expansion of the self-defense corps forces helped to check the anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese forces which had deep roots in the three provinces of northeast China. The Japanese imperialists empowered local secret-service

policemen engaged in the work with rebels to execute them on the spot.

All of these measures showed what painstaking efforts the Japanese imperialists had exerted to dominate and retain the colony of Manchukuo. A particular headache for them was the armed struggle in the Jiandao area, waged by Korean communists who struck at the face and back of the Empire in the northeastern corner of China, and the full-scale national liberation movement of which this struggle was a mainstay.

It was no exaggeration when a Japanese provost marshal said that the conquest of Jiandao would be 90 per cent achieved if the Korean communists' activities were suppressed. The so-called great Empire of Japan was so afraid of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerilla Army and the guerrilla zones, its strongpoint. The Japanese imperialists therefore made frenzied attempts to eliminate the anti-Japanese guerrilla zones in east Manchuria at any cost.

In the summer of 1933 the military authorities of Japan recalled to Korea part of the Jiandao task force which had suffered heavy casualties from the attacks of the AJPGA and dispatched in its place the Hitomi unit and many other crack troops of the Kwangtung Army to various parts of east Manchuria. The main forces of their occupation army in Korea were concentrated in the northern frontier region of our country, so that they could be promptly committed to "mopping-up" operations in the guerrilla zones. Large armed forces - over ten thousand men in all - encircled the guerrilla zones in Jiandao and began winter "punitive" operations.

Directing his main effort to the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, where the General Staff of the Korean revolution was situated, the enemy hurled against this area forces of 5,000 men from the Kwangtung Army, the puppet Manchukuo army, the police and self-defense corps. The density of the enemy's troop dispositions in this battle has never been surpassed in any war except the wars of pre-modern days in which the belligerent armies contended for victory in square formation, and the battle fought in Lushun (Port Arthur) during the Russo-Japanese War, since the advent of skirmish-line warfare. The enemy even put his air force on alert. Special detective teams supervised by the Jiandao secret service were also dispatched to the areas surrounding the guerrilla zones.

Thus the whole region of east Manchuria became the field of the most fierce and bloody battle between the Japanese imperialists and the Korean communists. It was more a final showdown than a battle for the defense of a few guerrilla zones.

The guerrilla forces in Xiaowangqing were only two companies. Worse still, food reserves were low there. The guerrilla bases in east Manchuria found themselves in a critical situation that threatened their very existence. No one in the guerrilla zone was optimistic enough to believe that the two companies could defeat the powerful enemy armed with guns and aircraft. We were caught between two alternatives - fighting to the last man or abandoning the guerrilla zone and surrendering to the enemy.

We chose to fight to the last. According to the principles of guerrilla tactics, the best thing to do was to avoid a showdown. But if we did not fight, the enemy would swallow up the guerrilla zones on the Tuman

River in a single gulp. If we did not defend these zones the revolutionary masses who had been enjoying genuine equality and freedom under the care of the people's revolutionary government would be frozen, starved and shot to death in the dead of Winter. Furthermore, the people would no longer look up to us.

The autumn scenery of Wangqing was magnificent, but it was about to be ruined by the furious storm of the winter "punitive" operations. All of the guerrilla zones turned to us in tense anticipation. The people's countenances brightened or clouded depending on the soldiers' expressions.

I began to look for some ingenious scheme, but none occurred to my mind. There was no man at my side with whom I could discuss tactical problems. Park Hun, a graduate from the Huangpu Military Academy, was absent; Kim Myong Gyun, xiaogezi (little man?Tr.), who had served in the Soviet army for some years, and Lee Ung Gol, a graduate from a military academy of the Independence Army, had disappeared after being accused of being members of the "Minsaengdan."

Yang Song Ryong, too, had fallen a prey to the "Minsaengdan" nonsense.

I even thought how happy I would be if such a famous general as Hong Bom Do was with us. Hong was a Righteous Volunteers' Army general who had won a brilliant repute on the soil of Wangqing. The brilliant victories the Independence Army had won at Qingshanli and Fengwugou could be said to be the brainchild of Hong Bom Do. Some people belittled him by saying that he was a general who fought with an intuitive knack, without any strategy, but that was nonsense. What they had described as a knack was in the final analysis the product of strategic genius.

When he was alive, my father often said that Hong Bom Do was a man of remarkable resources. Had he not been a resourceful man, he would not have dealt such a telling blow to the Japanese army on the Gaoli Pass by employing skilful ambushes so cleverly and prudently. Those who could not discern the intelligence concealed beneath his woodcutter's appearance, should not have claimed that they knew him. Many years had passed since this commander-in-chief of the Korean Independence Army, who once had had the area around Haerbaling under his thumb, concealed his whereabouts. His image seemed to be fading from the people's memory with the passage of time. My distressed mind was tormented by a yearning for help from my forerunners.

As I was struggling day in and day out with the problem of strategy in the log-cabin of the headquarters, the old man Lee Chi Baek called on me with a pot of honey one midnight. Holding out the pot to me, he said, "I am sorry that I did not give you anything when you were suffering from fever. Please take this honey to help you recover.

"Wild honey is worth its weight in gold. You did wonders to obtain it."

"Old man Ma who lives at the entrance of Hwanggarigol got it. A few days ago he boasted that he had collected some wild honey, so I went to see him. He gave me the whole pot, saying he would sell even his house to obtain anything that was helpful to your health. I am on my way back from his house now."

I felt my heart overflow with gratitude for their consideration.

"Thank you very much, but I am young. You should take this honey."

"Please do not decline the kindness of old man. I have suffered constant regret for not nursing you. You look haggard beyond description, Commander."

He pulled at my sleeve, suggesting that we take pot luck at his house. I followed him without objecting. A meal with him was welcome, but I was more interested in spending a night in the house still scented by the presence of Pan. Even though I had moved my lodging, I left a large share of my affection with the generous, kind-hearted family who had taken care of me as warmly as if I was their own son.

We ate corn gruel mixed with kidney beans and pumpkin as a mid-night snack. The food tasted sweet, perhaps because I had just recovered from my febrile disease. The hostess, Mrs. So Song Nyo, was well aware of my likes and dislikes in food. The most notable food she used to treat me to was potato and maize roast. The potatoes in the Jiandao area were large and the year-old ones contained a lot of sugar. Such roasted potatoes with turnip pickle soup tasted wonderful on a day when it was snowing heavily.

After the snack I lay beside the old man in the room where Pan had stayed.

The old man could not sleep for some reason; he kept sighing continually. I thought he was yearning for his son who had passed away a few months before. His son, Lee Min Gwon, had been severely wounded in an attempt to disarm Guan's unit when it was about to surrender to the enemy in the spring of 1933; he had died while undergoing treatment in a hospital in Qiuyuegou. I myself participated in the ceremony held in the memory of Lee Min Gwon. In September 1932, a memorial service for the guerrilla, Choe Yun Sik, was held in this house. "Why do you keep sighing all night long, father?" I asked him, pushing aside the quilt and turning round on the bed to face him.

"I cannot go to sleep. How can I sleep in peace when I have heard that thousands of the enemies are encamped at the entrance to the guerrilla zone? They say that the guerrilla army will be crushed in this 'mopping up' operation. What do you think, Commander?"

"It is a false rumor spread by the reactionaries. But if we don't make full preparations, the guerrilla zone will collapse in two or three days. Frankly speaking, the destiny of the guerrilla zone is hanging in the balance. So I cannot sleep, either."

"It makes no sense for the guerrilla zone to be destroyed. How can we live without this zone? We would rather kiss the dust or give up the ghost."

"You are quite right. If we are to die, then we must fall in this guerrilla zone. But what should we do? The enemy numbers thousands, and our army defending Xiaowangqing is no more than one hundredth of the size of the enemy."

The old man puffed nervously at a cigarette and spoke in a serious tone of voice, pushing his pillow in front of my face, "If you are short of soldiers, I will become one for you. There are quite a few old men like me in Xiaowangqing who know how to fire a rifle. They will be able to fight much better than the Kanghwajin guard corps if each of them is given a rifle. I think there are rifles and ammunition that the Independence Army soldiers buried somewhere near Zhongqingli where we lived before.

If you can find them, you can surely arm the hunters and the old men who were Independence Army soldiers in the old days as well as the young people like my son-in-law, Jung Gwon, who is busy with some kind of youth work. Everyone should become a fighter and fight to the death fight. If we have no rifles, we must defend the guerrilla zone by clutching the enemy's throat and giving him a belly throw."

At the time when I was in despair over the disparity between our forces and the enemy's, his remark suggested to me that the only way out of the impending difficulties was an all-people resistance. I felt confident that we could seize the initiative in the fight if we fought a death-defying struggle in every quarter, by enlisting not only such paramilitary organizations as the self-defense corps and the Children's Vanguard, which I had intended to use to man the front line with the guerrilla army, but also the unarmed people.

The defensive battle at Xiaowangqing would have to be a battle between the enemy's army and every soldier and civilian in the guerrilla zone, rather than a battle between the enemy's army and the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. We could also count on the support of the people from the semi-guerrilla zone.

This talk with Lee Chi Baek encouraged me. I thought, "He is right. When the people say they will fight and they can win, they mean what they say. Victory in war depends on the will of the people and on how efficiently one enlists them."

Thus I received my first inspiration while listening to the calm voice of an old man who represented the opinion of thousands of people in the Wangqing guerrilla zone. The plan of operations we were mapping out had without fail to contain the people's will as expressed by the old man Lee.

I resolved that the defensive battle we were going to wage at Xiaowangqing should be made an all-out fight fought by all the people, young and old, men and women, in the guerrilla zone. This definition of all-out resistance was an expression of our supreme confidence in the people in the guerrilla zone, who had been sharing life and death, weal and woe, with the army for the past two years. The significant period for which fighting itself had been our routine in the guerrilla zone allowed me to feel such confidence.

The guerrilla zones could not have remained strong for two years after their establishment through the efforts of the army alone. One factor was the efforts of the people, who had played a considerable part in building up the army and defending the guerrilla zones. When we fought a hard battle with the enemy, who was ten or a hundred times stronger than us, we felt strong when we had the people in our rear. When we sensed their breath as they ran along the trenches, bringing hot water and rice balls, our combat

efficiency increased a thousand times.

This faith in the people's strength underlay my decision to fight an all-out battle and my plan of battle. This determination conformed to the people's will to become an integral whole with the army under all circumstances and their determination to live in the guerrilla base, if they were to live, and die there if they were to die. An all-out effort by the people, when enlisted, would be a formidable force.

This was the reserve force of the guerrilla army suggested by the old man, Lee Chi Baek. But in fact the people of the guerrilla base were not a mere reserve force; they were a most reliable component of the main force.

We reaffirmed the tactical principles of attacking and destroying dispersed enemy forces by concentrated initiatives and of dispersing and harassing the enemy behind his lines when he came under attack from concentrated forces. We then called on all the people in Xiaowangqing to offer all-out resistance.

In response to the appeal, all the organizations and social strata turned out as one for the preparations for the decisive battle. The self-defense corps and young volunteers' corps advanced to the defensive position together with the guerrilla army and the young and middle-aged men without weapons piled up rock barricades on the steep heights along the line of defense.

The famous hunters Jang, Choe, Lee and others from Wangqing came to Macun, formed a hunters' corps with the veterans of the Independence Army, and then took the field. The women's stretcher teams and cooking units also went on the alert. Children set spiked wooden planks in the roads along which the enemy's convoy was expected. The infirm and small children were evacuated to safe places.

We made full preparations for the fight in the determination not to follow in the footsteps of the Independence Army under the northern political and military administration, which had fled, deserting Wangqing. We would rather fall in battle.

Wangqing had witnessed not only the victory at Fengwugou but also the bitter grief of the ignominious defeat suffered by the Independence Army under the northern political and military administration which retreated, leaving its compatriots to suffer unspeakable "punitive" atrocities.

In south Manchuria there had been an Independence Army organization called the western political and military administration; there had also been the northern political and military administration in the area around Xidapo, Wangqing County, in east Manchuria, which was expanding the area under its military influence with So Il as its president and Kim Jwa Jin as its commander-in-chief. It was said that the patriotic fighters affiliated with the administration numbered 500, and the organization had had one million rounds of ammunition as well as funds amounting to 100,000 yuan.

The cadet-training school (military academy) run by the organization in Shiliping had been a considerable size; it could accept more than 400 cadets. The processions of animal-drawn convoys carrying supplies of

straw sandals and provisions contributed by the peasants in Wangqing and its vicinity to the political-military administration used to stretch back as far as Xidapo. This army, in cooperation with the Korean Independence Army of Hong Bom Do, had once annihilated a large force of the Japanese aggressors' army at Qingshanli.

When Kim Jwa Jin, in grey serge uniform, with a sword at his side, passed by on his white horse with bluish mane, the people in Wangqing, men and women, young and old, used to bow deeply, as if they were greeting the cortege of the Prime Minister or the King of feudal Korea. They did this to express their gratitude to the Independence Army for the victory at Qingshanli. But at the news of the imminent massive "punitive" attack on Jiandao by the Japanese army, the renowned General Kim Jwa Jin and his men had vanished, without offering the slightest resistance. Unaware of this, the Wangqing people had gone out on the road to have a look at the commander-in-chief, Kim Jwa Jin.

Only one company remained. For some reason this company had attended the graduation ceremony at the Tongil School just prior to the "clean-up" of Jiandao. In accordance with custom the school had prepared a sumptuous feast for the grand graduation ceremony. As soon as the ceremony was over, the soldiers had given three hasty cheers for independence, sat at the table and wolfed down unrefined liquor, rice cakes, cold noodles and other food. When the "punitive" forces arrived, they all fled. The pupils and their parents, too, had scattered in all directions. The scene was said to have been like a disturbed anthill.

The "punitive" forces had shot, bayoneted, and slashed with swords the defenseless people who were running helter-skelter for their lives. The Independence Army under the northern political and military administration had been routed. The people in Wangqing lamented over the sudden ruin of the army which had seemed so impressive. If such a tragic event were to recur in the land of Wangqing, where power was in the hands of the people, we would not have the face to claim that we were the sons and daughters of Korea.

We decided to strike at the enemy by employing elusive tactics - ambush, allurement, surprise attack and night storming - as guerrilla warfare required. We had evolved these guerrilla tactics ourselves in the course of defending the guerrilla zone from the enemy's repeated "punitive" offensives.

In the early days, when the Korean communists defined guerrilla warfare as the basic form of armed struggle and began to put it into effect, we had known practically nothing about tactics. We could have referred to the experiences of others and their manuals if they had been available, but we could not find them. So we sent a man to the Soviet Union to obtain some reference materials on war, including the combat experience of the Civil War; they had been of some help to us in understanding the concept of guerrilla struggle and the method of organizing ambushes and surprise attacks, but they had not been suitable for our actual situation.

As a first step to writing a manual of guerrilla warfare in our own style, I finished writing a pamphlet after the battle at Jiapigou at the end of March 1933. The pamphlet was titled Guerrilla Actions, and it brought together the initial military experience we had gained in our armed activities in the space of more than one year.



The pamphlet dealt with fundamental matters, ranging from the guerrillas' spiritual and moral qualities to the general principles of guerrilla warfare. It also codified all of the principles and methods, ranging from the organization of guerrilla combat actions such as raid, ambush, defensive battle, march and bivouac, to guerrilla skills such as firing, handling weapons and discipline. Needless to say, this was not a great book of military science such as Sun-tzu's Art of War or Clausewitz's On War.

But in the situation at that time, when we had neither renowned military theoreticians nor veterans of armed struggle, the pamphlet was a valuable handbook, representing the simple theory of our own style of guerrilla warfare. The officers and men of the guerrilla army studied it until it became dog-eared from being carried in their rucksacks, and they tried their best to apply the regulations specified in it to their military practice.

Guerrilla Actions, together with the Guerrilla Manual which was published later, provided prototypes for the establishment and development of our revolutionary armed forces and Juche-based tactics.

On November 17, 1933, the enemy attacked the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone from three directions in combined operations of infantry, artillery and air force. The descendants of the Samurai fell upon the guerrilla zone like angry wolves, growling and threatening to bite at everything, even at the trees standing there. These wild invaders seemed intent on swallowing up the land of Wangqing at a single gulp.

The hordes of "punitive" troops crawled in waves over the frozen ground, their aircraft continually bombing Macun and Lishugou where the military and political headquarters were located. The enemy's tactics had become more brutal. Previously, when frustrated in his attack he used to retreat to his camp and then resume his onslaught. But now he did not retreat even when his advance was checked, but stayed at the point he had reached, consolidating the line he had established before advancing again, step by step. Employing this murderous tactic, he destroyed every life and burnt down everything he came across.

However, our army and people heroically defended the guerrilla base in unbreakable unity. The fiercest of the battles was fought on Mt. Ppyojok and the outpost in the Ssukpatgol on Mt. Mopan, the gateway to the guerrilla zone. The 3rd company and the Anti-Japanese Self-Defense Corps manning these mountains mowed down the attackers with a surprise barrage of gunfire, grenades and rocks when the enemy had advanced to within 20 meters. The enemy attacked tenaciously in waves, but failed to penetrate the line of the outpost. The defenders on Mt. Mopan destroyed the enemy's highly mobile cavalry that was outflanking the defense at a bend of the River Dawangqing.

As the enemy committed large forces in the successive waves of attacks on Mts. Ppyojok and Mopan, we switched from an all-out defensive to a war of attrition, employing flexible maneuvers mainly designed as enticements and feints, in combination with positive defensive actions. This was a uniquely flexible tactic for destroying the enemy forces continuously by employing a variety of combat actions, and not allowing the enemy a moment's breathing space by constantly drawing him into engagement on our own initiative. Had we clung to a stereotyped defense, and not employed mobile tactics in good time, the guerrilla army would have been routed by the enemy's tenacious attacks based on numerical and technical superiority.

In line with our new tactics, the guerrillas, along with the members of the paramilitary organizations, withdrew from the outposts; they lured the enemy deep into the defensive zone and crushed him with constant ly-switching tactics-ambush, sharp-shooting, raiding the enemy's campsites and burying bombs in the bonfire.

Bombs could be buried in bonfires even by small boys, and the effectiveness of the measure was assured. Whenever we moved from one position to another we made sure that bombs were buried in the bonfires. As soon as the enemy soldiers reached the deserted position, they would gather around the campfires to warm themselves. Then the bombs would explode, blowing up the enemy. O Ryong Sok, the fourth younger brother of O Paek Ryong, working with the women of the self-defense corps, killed the enemy by this method at the central sentry post on Mt. Ppyojok.

We also organized frequent night raids on the enemy's camps. Raiding parties of two to five guerrillas would infiltrate the enemy's position, scatter leaflets to disillusion the enemy forces and fire a few shots before returning. Three or four shots fired at the enemy's tents or his campfires would transform his entire camp into bedlam. Such raiding parties were sent three, four, and even five times a night.

The enemy soldiers were unable to sleep all night; they trembled in fear and shot at random among themselves. The enemy was so scared by our constant raids that war lunatics began to appear among his ranks. Some enemy soldiers surrendered to us after reading such leaflets as "Appeal to the Japanese Soldiers!" and "Appeal to the Puppet Manchukuo Army Soldiers!" scattered by the guerrillas.

Hunters armed with matchlock rifles, also fought. Though they were old, their marksmanship was marvelous. Their admirable skill in shooting only enemy officers could be compared to that of modern snipers. The members of the women's association rushed to and from the trenches with rice balls and hot water on their heads. Children until 10 years of age came to the battlefields and beat drums and blew trumpets to boost the men's morale.

A conspicuous feature of Operation Macun was the showers of rock blocks from outpost positions, like those on Mt. Ppyojok. These piles of rock would roar down upon the attacking "punitive" forces, killing and wounding them en masse. The thunder of a rock-slide down on the steep slope and the clouds of dust like gun smoke struck terror into the aggressors' hearts. This method also proved very effective in halting the advance of the enemy's cavalry, vehicles and artillery.

One of the heroes shown up by these battles was a guerrilla with a nickname of "13 bullets." He had been known in the Wangqing area as an adventurous young man since the time when he had captured rifles from a tax office on the Tuman River on assignment from the YCL organization. When he arrived at the office he had said, "How are you, panjandrums? I am a Korean young man, a member of the Young Communist League." He introduced himself, then took out a revolver and took down three rifles hanging on the wall without any great hurry.

Then he rang up the police station and shouted, "What are you doing over there? There's a communist here. Come over here quickly, all of you." The police station had hastily dispatched mounted policemen to the site of the incident. He had returned, only narrowly escaping being killed. He had repeated similar adventures afterwards. I do not need to describe here the kind of criticism he received from the YCL organization.

This young man performed a great feat at the post in the valley of Ssukpatgol, a feat worthy of being recorded in the annals of the anti-Japanese revolution. A ten-man blocking party had been stationed at the post at all times. The head of that party was none other than this young man, "13 bullets." He was the platoon leader and was also in charge of the YCL group in that party. A large "punitive" force consisting of Japanese and puppet Manchukuo soldiers and self-defense corps men, surrounded the valley under cover of darkness one night and started attacking the post. The blocking party was involved in heavy fighting from dawn. They repelled the enemy's charge seven times until one corner of the log-cabin that was serving as a post had been burned down.

Calling a YCL group meeting in the thick of the battle, the young man said, "Comrades, behind us is the guerrilla base and our beloved brothers and sisters. If we fall back a single step from here, we will have no right to live in this world as young Koreans. Let us hold out to the last, even though it costs our lives, even though our bodies are torn to pieces!"

The blocking party members, ablaze with hatred, fixed bayonets to their rifles in order to fight hand to hand with the enemy. "13 bullets" was keen to fight in that way as well. But he calmed himself, in order to carry out his assignment. This brave fighter, who had been criticized for his self-opinionated attitude and adventurism, had grown into a seasoned commanding officer who could control and regulate himself in bloody battles.

When we reached the valley with reinforcements, he was lying at the post with 13 shots in his body. Hence his nickname?" 13 bullets." Members of the blocking party had been wounded in seven, three and two places. They were given the nicknames of "seven bullets," "three bullets" and "two bullets."

The people in Wangqing called him "13 bullets" instead of his real name. I also called him by his nickname. Eventually his real name faded from the people's memory. It is annoying that I cannot remember his real name. But I draw comfort from the fact that the nickname he earned in the anti-Japanese war will have a more lingering effect on the minds of the readers than that his real name would have.

The battle became heavier as the days went by. People were evacuated from Xiaowangqing which had been reduced to ashes by the gunfire of the Japanese army to Shiliping. The enemy killed everybody who came into their sight - soldiers and civilians, young and old, men and women. Hundreds of people were killed in Xiaowangqing during the winter "punitive" operations.

When we were fighting in front of a lumber camp at Wucidao in Shiliping, a Japanese army unit, which had passed a sentry post disguised as refugees, fired a machinegun at the backs of people who were

moving from Macun to Dawangqing. This raid alone cost us scores of casualties. The enemy surrounded the village of Duchuanping in one night and killed all the sleeping people with volleys of machinegun fire. The family of Paek Il Ryong, a secretary of a district committee of the youth association who was a skilled playwright, were all killed. A great number of children in Xiaowangqing were killed during the "punitive" operations of that year.

When the situation in the guerrilla zone was at its worst, the refugees in the valley of Lishugou numbered more than 1,500. The guerrillas went to indescribable lengths to evacuate them to Dawangqing. Sometimes the procession of refugees moving to Dawangqing would be cut to pieces by a surprise attack from the enemy; then, they would wander about the woods the whole day trying to find one another. At that time I covered the evacuation of the revolutionary masses all day long, carrying babies in my arms. Other guerrillas, too, helped the old and the sick, while carrying on fighting. This heartbreaking picture was the initial point of unity between our army and people of today. It was a picture painted in blood and tears.

When I look back upon the scene of that day as we took the refugees from Lishugou to Shiliping, I feel a lump rise in my throat.

Many of the refugees had not eaten cereals for 20 days because of the enemy's "punitive" operation; they ate bean pods and dried turnip leaves for their meals. In Shiliping for lack of cereals they boiled cowhides and ate them.

If we show our younger generation the "foodstuffs" the people in the guerrilla zone ate during those years when they were too hungry to lift up their heads to see the sun in the sky, they will not be able to hold back their tears at the subhuman starvation their forerunners suffered.

Kim Myong Suk (from Yanji) lost her two children and she herself came within an ace of death, for she had not yet recovered from the period of spring food shortage before the barley harvest. As she had not eaten anything for a whole week, she could not think of burying her children outside, even though she saw them starve to death with her own eyes; she lay in the hut without moving, for she had no energy to sit up. Her neighbors came and managed to pull the bodies of her dead children away from the hut and bury them in fallen leaves; they, too, had eaten nothing for a whole week and were too weak to dig graves. When she ate boiled rice for the first time after her return to her liberated motherland, Kim Myong Suk wept, recollecting the spring famine in the guerrilla zone which deprived her of her two children.

In the Chechangzi guerrilla base there was a man who, in the battle at Yulangcun, had been wounded by eight machinegun bullets, his skull being split open to reveal his brain, but had miraculously survived. His tenacious grasp on life earned him the nickname of "eight bullets." Later he, too, died of starvation while working in the government office at Dongnancha. On his deathbed, he said, "If I had died when I was wounded eight times, I could have been remembered as a hero. How lamentable it is to die here of hunger!" The enemy besieged the guerrilla zones and starved the people to death or drove them out to freeze to death.

The Korean people endured unbearable trials in those years. The sacrifices imposed upon them still rankle as unhealed wounds in the heart of our nation.

The rulers of Japan are under a moral obligation to reflect upon the crimes they have committed in Korea and Manchuria. Repentance implies neither shame nor humiliation. It is a process of self-reform by means of reason in the effort to approach perfection. They may close their eyes, but time will never erase the facts of history. Japan must remember that her high rate of growth, the economic bed of roses in which she glorifies, is stained with the blood of the Korean nation. Japan, also, has experienced a national disaster in lives which were lost under foreign fire, and her beloved daughters were raped by occupation troops, hasn't she?

In spite of the heavy losses he suffered having invaded the guerrilla zone, the enemy tenaciously attempted to prolong the battle in order to make us die of cold and hunger, by denying us reinforcements and fresh supplies of weapons and provisions.

Effecting a decisive turn in the tide of battle was the only way we could save the army and the people in the guerrilla zone. Striking the enemy hard and harassing him behind his lines, together with continued efforts to destroy him within the defensive area was the only way we could save them.

Ever since my arrival in Wangqing, I had been opposed to the tendency that had restricted us to the defence of the guerrilla zone. In other words, my idea was to raid and destroy the enemy by concentrating efforts when the enemy's forces were dispersed, and at the same time to disperse ourselves and harass the enemy in many places behind his lines when he was already under concentrated attack. This was called the tactic of avoiding the enemy where he was strong and attacking him where he was weak. Only then could we defend the guerrilla zone and preserve our forces.

Most of the party cadres in the county and east Manchuria, however, insisted that we should concentrate our efforts in defense when the enemy was attacking us by massing his forces against the guerrilla zone, to save the guerrilla zone and the people.

These differences in opinions regarding a tactical issue resulted in a serious argument as to which of the opinions was in accordance with Marxist principles. They contended that my opinion was not an expression of Marxism but of escapism and capitulationism, while I asserted the correctness of the tactic of harassing the enemy behind his own lines.

I said that our forces, no matter how concentrated, would never be equal to the enemy's forces, so we should evacuate the population, and leave only a part of the guerrilla force to shoot at chosen points, while the rest of us should disperse and harass the enemy from behind; for instance, ten guerrillas equipped with rifles could take 30 or 40 unarmed young men with them to strike at the enemy from behind at his weak points, then they would be able to capture weapons and provisions.

Many comrades judged the situation correctly and supported me.

But some bigots would not listen to me. Boasting of seniority based on so-called activity, they said, "Young men should listen to experienced people. How is it conceivable for the army to leave the guerrilla zone when the enemy is falling upon us? This idea means deserting the people in order to save the army."

When the guerrilla zone had been reduced to ashes and many people had been killed in a short space of time, I met Tong Chang-rong, Lee Sang Muk, Song Il and other cadres of the ad hoc committee and county party committee, and insisted on conducting harassing operations behind the enemy lines.

"Things have reached a dead end. If we go on in this way, not only we, but also the people, will all be killed. Where can we retreat? If we retreat deeper into the mountains as we are doing now, there will be no houses and no food in the forest. Retreat will get us nowhere. You seem to think that you and the guerrillas can directly repulse the enemy, but that is hopeless. We should divide the guerrilla army into three or four groups and send them into the enemy-controlled area tonight. If we hit a few of the enemy's bases from behind, the 'punitive' forces will surely retreat from Xiaowangqing."

Hard battles were also being fought in other guerrilla zones in east Manchuria. The people in Hunchun were driven towards Jinchang and Huoshaopu, the people in Wangougou were driven towards Dahuangwai and Sandaowan, and the people in Helong towards Chechangzi. Even when things had come to this pass, some of the leadership hesitated to make a decision.

So I asserted once again the idea of harassing the enemy from behind and declared that I would fight according to my own decision because the army was under my command. Then I assembled the guerrillas and said, "We must not only hold on, but strike the enemy from behind. Who will go to fight behind the enemy lines? Any of you who will follow me, come along! I don't need many, only half of you, and the rest must stay here to protect the people. Those who want to go with me, must break the siege tonight. If we break through, we'll survive. If we attack the enemy bases and strongpoint one after another, the people will spread the news. Then the 'punitive' forces which are attacking this valley will fall back, afraid of being destroyed from behind."

The guerrilla army was thus divided into two groups - one, under the command of Choe Chun Guk, defended Shiliping, and the other, under my command, went to the enemy-controlled area. The YCL members evacuated 1,500 people from the guerrilla zone to Luozigou. We gave Choe Kum Suk the assignment of taking Tong Changrong, who was confined to his bed, towards Miaogou and nursing him there, and put all our food reserve in her knapsack. That was the last time I saw her.

That evening, in command of a detachment, I crawled through the line of siege and penetrated deep into the enemy-held area. As we had expected, the area behind the enemy lines was almost deserted. When we entered a village near a certain town, the villagers were preparing their feast for New Year's Day. They said they thought everyone in the guerrilla zone had been killed by the Japanese imperialist "punitive" forces, and they were happy to see us; they treated us to rich festive food like dumplings and millet cakes. That night Kim Saeng Gil, a guerrilla of O Paek Ryong's platoon, nearly died from a belly-ache after eating 140 dumplings.

My men felt so tired the next morning that I posted a sentry and let them sleep all day long. As they caught up on their sleep after shivering in cold without proper food or rest for months, their faces were radiant.

We began striking at the enemy the very next day. Our tactic was to attack primarily the small bases of the "punitive" forces and combine to attack considerably large bases. We struck at the enemy first in Liangshuiquanzi, destroying a puppet Manchukuo army unit and the self-defense corps, and then fell upon the barracks of the Japanese consulate police. And then, after a feinting maneuver far away from Liangshuiquanzi, we again raided an enemy convoy of trucks at Xinnangou, capturing a great amount of wheat flour and munitions. From there we slipped away to the mountainous area of Beifengwudong and made preparations for a new battle. On the night of February 16, 1934, we eliminated most of the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers, policemen and self-defense corps members in Beifengwudong, and captured some of them.

After winning a victory there, we crossed the Beigaoli Pass and advanced to Sidong; then we attacked the forest ranger base in Tonggol, killing and capturing all the enemy at their barracks.

The final battle which made a decisive contribution to frustrating the enemy's winter "punitive" operations was fought at Daduchuan, a site of strategic importance on the Tumen-Mudanjiang railway. Disguised as a "punitive" force, we raced over 25 miles of steep mountain pass by means of forced march, divided our force into three groups. stormed the police station and the quarters of the self-defense corps and set fire to the munitions depot.

After this battle the enemy began to lift the siege of the guerrilla zones and retreated to the position from which he had started 90 days before. He could not eliminate the "scourge." The "punitive" operations, which had threatened the very existence of the guerrilla zones for three months, had failed.

The battle in defense of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, which for convenience' sake was called Operation Macun, ended in victory for us. This was a miraculous event which passed almost unnoticed on the outskirts of a world preoccupied with the assumption of office by Adolf Hitler, the trials at Leipzig and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. I greatly regret not being able to describe in vivid detail all the heroic efforts made by the defenders of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone in the face of dire hardships.

We paid dearly for the victory. Hundreds of people lost their lives under the gunfire of the enemy. The loss of Choe Kum Suk and Tong Chang-rong caused me bitter pain. Among all the people in the guerrilla zone who came running to greet us with tears on their faces as we returned in triumph from behind the enemy lines, I could not see Choc Kum Suk, who cared for me as lovingly as if I were her own younger brother. The knapsack my orderly carried for me contained a hand mirror I had obtained as a present for her. There were also several sacks of trophies for the members of the women's association.

What harsh trials the members of the association had endured, shedding bitter tears as they defended the

guerrilla zone that winter! How many meals they had cooked and how much root of grass they had gathered! Two women, Hye Suk and Yong Suk, lured the enemy who forced them to act as their guides to a place where there were no guerrillas, and caused him many problems before being killed. By shouting out that the enemy was coming, Choe Chang Bom's aunt lured towards her enemy troops who were crawling up the cliff on which the guerrilla command post was located. These were patriotic woman martyrs in the modern war against the Japanese, just as Kye Wol Hyang<sup>6</sup> and Ron Kae had been in the war against the Japanese invaders in the Middle Ages.

My gift to beloved Choe Kum Suk had come too late. The enemy had deprived of me the only woman I ever called "sister" and felt so attached to in my whole life, the woman who used to say she would not die and was more concerned for my safety than her own when I said that both of us must fight on and live to see the liberation of the motherland.

The death of Tong Chang-rong was also a heartbreaking loss to me. He was one of the most unforgettable of the Chinese comrades-in-arms who had taken loving care of me and respected my ideas. We had frequently argued about important matters concerning political lines. As he was somewhat obstinate, we had now and then failed to reach an agreement, but such differences had not affected our friendship. He had always respected me, saying that I was the only man in whom he could place his trust among the Koreans.

After the battle at Daduchuan we withdrew in the direction of Yaoyinggou, and then returned to Macun, where we reviewed the defence of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone. The people who had returned from evacuation were building their houses on the ashes. An old man told me he was building his house for the 70th time since he came to the guerrilla zone - such was the vital energy of the people in Jiandao who had decided to live in the guerrilla zone no matter where, and die there should they have to die.

But for the assistance and support of such people, our guerrilla army would not have succeeded in defeating the enemy's large-scale "punitive" operations. The victory of Operation Macun was the result of unity between the army and people and of resistance supported by all the people. The fighting spirit with which we attacked the enemy in spite of all our disadvantages, as well as the protean tactics which, supported by that spirit, we ourselves evolved were the decisive factors in the victory of Operation Macun.

Throughout the whole of Operation Macun the spirit of the guerrilla zone was displayed, a spirit that had thrived and soared aloft like giant trees on the soil of revolutionary power, on the basis of the unbreakable will and mettle of our nation. This spirit enabled us to defend every inch of Xiaowangqing with our blood, with a strength which guns and planes were unable to conquer.

Operation Macun proved to be a brilliant military, political and moral victory for our revolutionary army, enhancing its military authority. In this battle we created a variety of new tactics, which served as the backbone of future guerrilla tactics, and we laid the organizational and tactical foundations for the switch to large-force actions in the subsequent years. The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army acquired rich experience which enabled us to repulse an enemy attack from any quarter.



Operation Macun ensured the successful defense of Xiaowangqing, helped towards resolving the critical situation in the guerrilla zones in the neighboring counties, and made a great contribution to promoting the overall Korean revolution centered on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The spirit of the heroic soldiers who held out against the American invaders on Height 12118 in the war in the 1950s was derived from the spirit of the guerrilla zones in the 1930s. We still maintain this spirit as we advance along the straight road of our own style of socialism within imperialist encirclement.

No force in the world can ever break the spirit which was born and tried in the flames of the anti-Japanese war. As long as they possess this spirit, our army and our people will continue to advance along the road of constant victory in the future.

## 8.6. Arsenals in the Thick Forests

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When I was in Macun I often visited an arsenal which manufactured arms and munitions. At that time we simply called the arsenal an ironworks. There was an ironworks of this kind in every county in Jiandao.

In the early days one or two people sent by the organization made small weapons such as swords and spears, heating with bellows the charcoal-fired furnace in the ironworks which was sometimes called Macun Arsenal or Xiaowangqing Arsenal.

Just before Operation Macun I visited the ironworks and found no fewer than seven or eight people working there. At that time Kim Sang Uk was managing the ironworks in place of Park Tu Gyong, who had been transferred to the post of head of the food department of the district government. Those I still remember among the people working there are O Hak Bong, Choe Sang Mun, Yang To Gil, Kang Hae San, Park Yong Bok and Lee Ung Man. Of these, Kang Hae San was the only man who had joined the ironworks already possessing the technical skill of a blacksmith.

The others had almost no experience of handling iron; they were rank beginners who had never repaired weapons before. But some time later these novices were manufacturing bombs, pistols, rifles and ammunition which we had thought could be made only in a modern munitions factory, and furthermore they made the gunpowder needed for them in a rural smithy which had no lathe, drilling machine, shaper or milling machine. This was a miracle achieved only in the war against the Japanese, a miracle worked by the unshakable will and the revolutionary self-reliant spirit of the Korean communists, who believed that victory in this war depended upon the independent efforts of our own nation.

The naive people of Jiandao once planned to build a hand-grenade factory in the guerrilla zone with the help of the Soviet Union. This was the time when communists all over the world looked to the Soviet Union in humble reverence as a beacon of hope for the emancipation of humanity. The thought of getting assistance from the country which had carried out a revolution before any other gave rise among the people to a spirit of dependence on others.

While the idea of depending on others and the aspiration to make a revolution with the support of others engendered the idea of adulation of capitalist powers among the nationalists, it was also the root cause within the communist mentality of reliance on the Soviet Union. At that time we considered it a natural internationalist duty for the communists of the Soviet Union, the first country to have succeeded in a revolution, to support the communists of the less developed countries.

But the Soviet Union sent no reply to our request, neither a promise to comply with it, nor notification that she could not do it or was not in a position to assist us. It was at this time that we resolved firmly to rely only on ourselves. The silence from the Soviet Union confirmed us in our belief that self-reliance

was the only way to live, that the decisive factor in promoting the revolution was to enlist our own forces to the maximum and assistance from others was an auxiliary factor.

We therefore paid special attention to the work of the arsenal and concentrated our efforts on it. When Park Tu Gyong was the manager of the arsenal, we had made sure that the arsenal was equipped with such tools as anvils, hammers, pliers, sledges, bellows, files and a boring machine. With these tools the workers in the arsenal repaired damaged weapons or made new weapons for the guerrilla army and the paramilitary organizations.

The most noteworthy of the weapons manufactured in the arsenal was a single-loaded pistol made by cutting down the barrels of shotguns and Model 38 rifles that had been damaged. These pistols were not supplied to the army, but to the members of the self-defence corps or the Children's Vanguard. Single-loaders made by the Yulangcun guerrilla unit were supplied mainly to the political workers, and they enjoyed a great popularity among their users. Cartridges were also renovated by removing the detonation caps from the empty cartridges used by Model 38 rifles, putting new caps in their places and charging them with powder.

Gunpowder was the most urgently required of all the materials necessary for the manufacture of munitions, and it was difficult to keep up with demand. At first the arsenals in the guerrilla zones made bombs and renovated bullets with powder sent by miners and underground workers. But this route of acquisition was always dangerous and exposed the revolutionary organizations we had formed with much effort in the mines to considerable risk. Many people lost their lives in their attempt to obtain this gunpowder. A typical example is the incident which had occurred at a pond near Longshuiping, a village close to a mine in Badaogou. Kim Chol Ho, Choe Hyon's wife and comrade-in-arms, had developed into a revolutionary in this village, in front of which there was a deep pond with thick reeds.

The people living in Longshuiping cultivated rice by using the water from this pond, but this pond, the lifeline of the peasants in the area, was turned into a sea of blood in a single day. When the fiendish Japanese military police discovered 20 miners from the Badaogou Mine who had sent gunpowder to the guerrilla zone, they killed them mercilessly at the pond.

This incident forced the leaders of the guerrilla bases and the workers in the munitions sector to reconsider the conventional method of acquiring powder solely through organizations in mines and to seek out a new way. Each gram of powder with which the arsenals in the guerrilla zones charged the bombs and cartridges was the crystallized flesh and blood of the fighters.

We decided to produce our own powder. Some people said this was like building a castle on sand, but I thought that if a man was determined enough he could do anything, and we could surely succeed, just as our ancestors had succeeded before us. With this thought I began studying in earnest the history of gunpowder manufacture and everything relating to it. In the course of this study, I came to the conclusion that nitro, the basic raw material of gunpowder, could be made manually.

Nitro could be made in any place inhabited by people, and we could see it every day. One sunny day I took the workers of the arsenal to the yard of Lee Chi Baek's house, where ashes and compost were piled up. I pointed to a substance like white salt which had formed on the pile of compost, and told them that it was nitre. When they heard this, they burst into laughter, saying that they had been like an old man looking for the pipe he was holding in his hand. We could obtain nitre from the sites of old toilets and from the earth at the bottom of cowshed and stable manure piles.

It is well-known that in the Koryo period Choe Mu Son invented gunpowder and thereby made a great contribution to the defense of the nation. The firearms he manufactured were installed on warships. The naval forces of Koryo inflicted wholesale slaughter on marauding Japanese when they used these firearms in the sea-battle off Jinpho. It is said that he refined ashes and dust he gathered around his house to obtain nitre for making gunpowder. Some people have claimed that the gunpowder of the Koryo period was not the invention of Choe Mu Son, but a product he made by applying a method learned from a foreigner. They alleged that our country offered no theoretical or technical foundations on the basis of which he could have invented gunpowder. I did not regard it as a fair assessment. Historical records show that, at the time of the Three Kingdoms, Silla already used firearms.

Our self-respect has been injured by the flunkeyistic and nihilistic attitude of those who, on hearing of an invention of another country, would praise the exceptional brain-power of the people of that country, but shrug their shoulders in doubt when they heard that a Korean had invented something.

The workers in the arsenals obtained nitro by a simple method. They used earthenware, tin and ceramic containers with perforated bottoms. They filled these containers with dirt collected from the floors of stables and toilets and from underneath manure piles, and then poured water into them. They caught the water dripping out through the holes at the bottom, and then boiled it down in a cauldron. The white crystal remaining was pure nitro. The upper layer of crystals obtained in this way was called the horizontal formation, and the lower layer, the vertical formation. The vertical formation of crystals, which was deemed to have the characteristic of exploding in one direction, was used for the cartridges of rifles and pistols, while the horizontal formation, which was thought to explode in all directions, was used mostly for bombs.

The raw materials needed for making gunpowder were obtained through the efforts of the masses. Sulfur, an essential material, was obtained from the insulators on the enemy's telephone poles. Gunpowder must contain an inflammable substance like alcohol; Chinese white spirit was substituted for pure alcohol.

Our first experiments were not successful, but we were not dispirited by failure; we repeated the experiments and at last discovered the ideal proportions for compounding the powder.

I cannot forget the people who had participated in the manufacture of gunpowder at that time. One of them was Son Won Gum. I was not acquainted with him, nor had I met him before. And yet I knew his per friend.

Park Yong Sun was the first man to acquaint me with Son's accomplishments. When he came to Macun to give a short course on bomb-making techniques, he and I spent a few days together, talking about the events taking place around us everyday. Every now and then he would mention the name of Son Won Gum with warm affection and respect. I began to listen with curiosity whenever Son became the subject of our conversation. Park was his comrade-in-arms and had supplied a reference for his admission to the party.

A man can achieve sudden fame for his exploits, his talent or for an incident in which he is involved. In 1932 Son Won Gum was well known among the revolutionaries of the Jiandao area for his escape from a police station. He was arrested by the police while acting as a messenger traveling from village to village carrying a fiddle and disguised as a drug peddler. He escaped from the station through a manhole of a sewer waist-deep in effluent, painfully dragging a body injured all over by torture, and then spent a full day in a river. It was amazing that he managed to escape safely through the strict enemy cordon; even more admirable was his endurance in supporting his bleeding body in the water for an entire day.

He later joined the guerrilla army and the Communist Party, and his sincere efforts made him a conspicuous figure. A rise in the Suribawigol valley of Xinchengde hill in Jingucun was the site of the Helong Arsenal, managed by Park Yong Sun. The workers of this arsenal were the first to produce a bomb known as the noise bomb. The noise bomb was later developed into a chilli bomb and then into a powerful bomb called the Yongil bomb. The production of Yongil bombs required a lot of materials, and the workers of the arsenal had to go to considerable extremes to obtain these materials. Son Won Gum always led his company in their efforts to find solutions to this knotty problem.

"We once encountered great difficulty in making the noise bombs, because we were running short of the paper and cloth to make the powder holders. Everyone racked their brains to find a solution. Then Son hurried to the village before anyone knew what he was doing, and returned with the paper he had torn away from the doors of his house and cloth from his only quilt. I felt rather ashamed, when I saw him returning, panting, to the arsenal at midnight." Park Yong Sun told me this in Macun.

"If this is true, then he is a true revolutionary with wonderful qualities," I said, frankly expressing what I felt about him.

Park went on to say, "Son always led the others in doing everything. Once the manufacture of bombs was interrupted for lack of wire, so he traveled many miles to Nanyangping and brought back 300 meters of telephone line he had cut there. He also obtained sulfur, scraps of iron and tin plates."

One snow-stormy night Son came to the arsenal carrying a heavy load of tin plate and iron pieces, followed by a strange old woman who was carrying an iron cauldron on her head. The old woman's unexpected appearance startled the workers.

As he helped the old woman set down the cauldron, Park Yong Sun asked him, "What's all this, Won Gum? Why on earth did you bring this grandmother all the way here when the Siberian wind is cutting

our flesh to pieces?"

Setting down the load from his back, Son shook his head and said meaningfully, "I did not bring her, she followed me on her own accord."

Park Yong Sun asked the old woman, "How come you followed him, grandmother?"

"He's an old acquaintance of mine. We got to know each other when I was living in Neifengdong. When we could not afford to buy any medicine for my daughter-in-law who was seriously ill, this young man, who was selling medicine and advertising it by playing a fiddle, gave us some medicine and rice for nothing. So my daughter-in-law was saved. I was sorry that I could not repay him for his kindness. Then, as luck would have it, he came to our village today and asked every household for scrap iron. So we thought this was our chance to repay his kindness. This is the largest cauldron we have. I hope it will be of some help."

She looked down dubiously at the cauldron she had set beside the furnace.

Feeling embarrassed, Park Yong Sun told her, "Thanks for your offer, grandmother, but we don't take new cauldrons; we only accept the damaged ones. Please take this back." This made the grandmother angry. She said, "Don't say that. The Japanese swines burnt my two sons to death. I won't regret giving up this piece of iron."

The workers of the arsenal made no more attempts to persuade her.

On hearing Park's story I felt the urge to go to Helong there and then and see Son Won Gum. The essential element of his image which so captivated me was his iron-willed spirit of self-reliance.

I said excitedly to Park Yong Sun, "You should have brought him here now. His experience is a good lesson. How happy everyone would have been to hear about his experience! You should tell them about it for him."

After the short course in Macun, Son Won Gum became known throughout east Manchuria. When Park Yong Sun was leaving Macun after the short course I said to him, "When you're back in Helong, tell Comrade Son Won Gum that his experience had a very good influence on the participants in the short Course. And tell him that one day we will meet and talk about our feelings."

But I never did meet him. In fact, he lost the sight of both eyes in an explosion in the course of his work.

Manufacturing gunpowder was always dangerous. One could even lose one's life. The most dangerous work was charging the bombs and cartridges. Park Tu Gyong, Park Yong Sun and Kang Wi Ryong all suffered serious wounds while making gunpowder. And yet, in spite of this, they did not leave their workplace.

Though deprived of his eyesight, Son Won Gum neither lost heart nor became pessimistic. Instead, he inspired his comrades, by saying, "Don't feel sad, comrades. I've lost my sight, but I still have my heart, two arms and two legs." As he cut wire and assembled bombs by touch, he sang the *Internationale*. He had buried his father, elder brother and sister in the wilderness and now he himself was blinded - a young man who had not yet lived half his lifetime. When the guerrilla zones were evacuated, he left his unit lest he should be a burden to his comrades-in arms, and went to Jingucun.

Everyday he heard the enemy propaganda slandering the guerrilla army and the Communist Party, claiming that "The guerrilla army has been annihilated in the mountains," "The people in the guerrilla bases have all been starved to death," "Go to Chechangzi, and you will find nothing but skulls there," and "The Communist Party's politics is destructive. You'll get nothing from that party."

Son's blood boiled in fury. He went from house to house, telling people, "It is not true. The guerrilla army is still alive. It has advanced over a wider area. It is eliminating the enemy in various parts of north and south Manchuria. The guerrilla army, which at first had only a few dozen soldiers, has now grown to a force of hundreds and thousands of men armed with heavy guns and machineguns. Compatriots and brothers, do not be deceived by the enemy's propaganda. Let us give stronger support to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The war against the Japanese will surely end in victory for us."

His journeying carried him as far as Yanji and Longjing, hundreds of miles away beyond the boundary of Jingucun. The Japanese army and police did not pay any attention to this "blind beggar" who felt his way with a cane as he walked and carried a fiddle on his back?as he had done before. When he heard the news of the battle at Pochonbo on the road, he went around the streets and alleys in Yanji, shouting excitedly; "Korean compatriots, General Kim Il Sung and his army raided Pochonbo on the fourth of June.

The Korean People's Revolutionary Army crossed the Yalu River and advanced to the homeland which we long for waking and sleeping. The enemy, scared out of his wits at the revolutionary army's strength, is now screaming in distress and terror. Japanese imperialism is doomed." His fiery speech set the whole town of Yanji afire. But he was arrested by the Japanese police and burned alive.

"Listen, everybody! I have no eyes, but I can see the bright, liberated motherland. I beg you, stay firm until the day of victory. Long live the Korean revolution!"

These were his words before he was executed. This pioneer of the spirit of self-reliance ended his days at the age of 25. Whenever he recalled Son Won Gum, Park Yong Sun used to say, "Won Gum died, without even knowing what it means to be married."

If he was still alive he would have many good things to say about the spirit of self-reliance to the younger generation. His career itself would become a living textbook of self-reliance.

The development of gunpowder production brought about a great change in the production of munitions.

As powder became available, the production of bombs increased quickly. A bomb consisted of a fuse and a tin. Tins were sent by the underground organizations in the enemy-controlled areas and semi-guerrilla zones, and into them was inserted something like an oil bottle charged with powder, the gap between the tin and oil vessel being filled with broken pieces of damaged ploughs and other steel splinters for shrapnel, and then the fuse was connected. This made a simple bomb.

Since it was produced manually, the bomb was neither convenient nor attractive to the eye. Clumsy handling could easily cause an accident - one guerrilla army soldier lost an arm through igniting the fuse too slowly during an assault on the enemy in Liangshuiquanzi. But this bomb was much more effective than a hand grenade. The Japanese were terrified of our guerrilla army's bombs.

Once gunpowder became available, we were able to make wooden guns. Wu Yi-cheng's unit fought using guns similar to the anti-tank guns nowadays which we could not afford. We made wooden guns instead. Shortly after the battle of the Dongning county town the people in Wangqing made the first such wooden gun from an ash tree. We tested the gun during the assault on Daduchuan, and its blast produced thunderous results. It would be only natural to doubt the effectiveness of a handmade wooden gun. But after our first shot from this gun, the enemy fled in horror. The people in Helong also made wooden guns at the arsenal in Moguyuanzi, Yulangcun.

When they fired one of these guns on Qianli Hill the Japanese soldiers and policemen in Erdaogou, eight miles from the hill, would create a hubbub - they were frightened out of their senses! When the revolutionary army fired its wooden guns the enemy was stupefied, for it was beyond the limits of their common sense and imagination to believe that we could make guns in the guerrilla bases, which had no technical equipment.

The revolutionary zeal, indefatigable spirit and creative initiative displayed by the workers of the arsenals in making and repairing weapons should indeed inspire admiration in the people's hearts. At that time the arsenals of the guerrilla army had hardly any modern machines or tools. The people in Wangqing had only one boring machine, and the workers of the Helong Arsenal managed by Park Yong Sun had one hand-operated drilling machine they had obtained through a man in Dalazi who worked as a steel forger. My memory is unclear as to whether the Toudaogou and Nengzhiying Arsenals in Yanji County had any such machines or not.

Apart from the boring machine and hand-operated drilling machine, files were the best tools they had. The workers of the arsenals used their files to repair everything. They repaired the cartridge extractor and firing pin of a rifle by filing, grinding, hammering and tempering them in fire, water and clay. Soon they were even able to repair machineguns without any difficulty. There were numerous talented people among the workers in the munitions sector, such as Park Yong Sun, Son Won Gum, Kang Wi Ryong, Park Tu Gyong, Song Sung Phil and Kang Hae San. They were skilled enough to set the eye in a needle.

The secret of all these miracles was quite simply the spirit of self-reliance. If the Korean communists, from the early days, had not thought solely of relying on themselves, but remained captive to an illusion of help from communists in other countries, and if they had not cherished the unshakable belief that



relying on themselves was the only way to survive and to revive Korea, the arsenals would never have sprung into being in the guerrilla zones, and such powerful weapons as wooden guns and Yongil bombs would never have been produced.

We could have appealed to the people for war funds as the Independence Army did, or gone to other countries begging and entreating for help. Once you begin to beg, you begin to fawn on others, sinking to the despicable depths of licking the soles of the others' feet or plucking the mucus from their eyes if they tell you to.

The slogan of self-reliance that we raised in the early days of the anti-Japanese war, and the strenuous efforts we had made to implement it ever since were also in accord with the prevailing revolutionary situation. The Japanese imperialists' invasion of Manchuria had aggravated the contradictions between Korea and Japan and between China and Japan, and these contradictions inevitably presented the Korean communists with a task of high level combat - an armed struggle.

If we had clung to mendicant diplomacy, begging other countries to help us, instead of relying on ourselves, we would not have started the war against Japan immediately after Japan's invasion of Manchuria, nor would we have developed our guerrilla army into a powerful force within a few short years.

Self-reliance was the slogan which most correctly reflected the people's aspiration and the demand to liberate the country by enlisting the nation's own independent efforts and its own strength. It was no accident that people quickly accepted this slogan, transforming smithies into arsenals and building new weapons-repair works in all sorts of places.

Self-reliance and fortitude was the basic spirit underlying not only munitions manufacture and repair but every aspect of the anti-Japanese revolution; it was the criterion by which to measure one's loyalty to the revolution. We did not regard any man who was not self-reliant and did not strive hard as a true revolutionary, no matter how ardent his patriotism, or how committed he might be to communist ideology, because self-reliance was the key to success in the revolution. The leaders of the nationalist movement in the past had been attached to dependence on external forces; they accepted the illusion of Wilson's theory of national self-determination because they were devoid of the spirit of self-reliance.

In Yilangou, Yanji County, there is a village called Nanyangcun. After the harvest and spring struggle the Japanese army and police descended on this village, mercilessly slaughtered the innocent people and young men, and burnt down their houses. The political workers dispatched to the village gathered the young people and stirred their spirits by saying, "We conduct a non-violent political struggle, but the enemy resorts to arms.

We cannot defeat the enemy with bare hands. The time has now come to take up the life-or-death armed struggle against Japanese imperialism. What do you think we should do, comrades?"

One young man, shaking his fist, said, "Let us make spears out of scrap iron. If each of us had a spear, we could stab the enemy and capture his weapons, couldn't we?" The young man had an old father, Lee Thae Sun, who had been a blacksmith. He went on to say that the tools his father had used were still kept in his shed, and that they could surely be used to make swords and spears.

The young people immediately agreed, saying, "That's right. First let's make swords and spears, and then capture rifles with them."

Using the hammers and pliers with which the old man, Lee Thae Sun, had forged farm implements, they began to forge spears out of the metal hoops of cart-wheels over charcoal made from the roots of birch trees, in a valley beyond the common people's reach. They put an edge on the forged spears by whetting them on a stone.

The unaccustomed sound of hammering ringing out beyond the village attracted the curiosity of the old smith, and he came to the valley. The young people hid the spears they were making in the grass and pretended to be making steel for tinderboxes.

The old man cast a dubious glance over the young people and asked, "What are you making?" "Steel for tinderboxes, sir," they answered in one voice.

"You don't seem to know what you're doing. Give that hammer to me."

In an instant the old man made steel for ten tinderboxes, and then returned home with the tools.

Next day the young people took the tools again when the old man was away in the field, and began forging spears. He appeared unannounced at the young men's open-air smithy as he had the previous day. He asked them sternly, "What have you done with the steel I made for you yesterday, you children, and why are you making new steel?"

His son replied on behalf of his friends, "Other people have taken them."

This scene was repeated several times. The old man soon realized that the young men were not making steel for tinderboxes. Why would they take up smithying in the busy farming season just to make steel? One hot summer day the old man approached them unnoticed along the furrows of the maize field and found them forging spears, learning the skill from his son.

"I was wondering just what you were doing all the spring and summer, and you were making preparations to get killed, you stupid."

As he fussed and objected collecting the tools together, the embarrassed young people grabbed him by his clothes, saying, "Why should we sit with folded arms when the enemy is killing young people like flies?"

Dumbfounded, the old man nodded his head and thought for a while before saying with dignity, "You hammer and I will hold the pliers. And keep a strict watch."

That day he made spears for more than ten young people. But then the young men in the neighboring village came with scrap iron and damaged cart-wheel hoops and exchanged them for all the spears, saying that they should show kindness to people who had no blacksmith. The old man said that spears could not be made of carbonic steel and ordered them to dump the pieces in the furrows of the field. Instead, he forged scores of daggers and spears from the high-intensity steel of scores of octagonal chisels which he had been concealing.

Armed with the daggers and spears the old man had forged, 20 young men of Nanyangcun raided a small unit of the puppet Manchukuo army moving from Yanji to Jiulongping, capturing lots of weapons and ammunition. The old man praised their victory delightedly. Under his management the secret smithy in Nanyangcun went on to produce many swords and spears. Eventually, even bombs were produced in the smithy. The old man devoted his life to producing and repairing munitions until he was captured and killed by the enemy.

This is only a single instance demonstrating the vital force of self-reliance. In this fashion, self-reliance opened a new era in the history of the national liberation struggle in our country, the era in which everything was created from nothing. These vital phases may be regarded as living proof of the correctness and power of the communist method of solving all problems by allowing full scope to the people's strength and wisdom.

Self-reliance was the most important method by which the Korean communists established the principle of Juche in their struggle, and they could neither think of nor speak about Juche apart from self-reliance, nor could they imagine the development of the Korean revolution without this quality.

Only self-reliance was capable of eradicating once and for all the worship of great powers which was still a great fetter on the spiritual life of our people in modern times and allowing us to pave a new way to victorious national resurrection by following the ideal of independence, self-development and self-sufficiency. Self-reliance was the touchstone with which to distinguish a man equipped with the spirit of Juche from a man who was not.

We therefore consistently inculcated the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance in the masses from the very first day of the war against Japan. The idea that, while help from others would be welcome, we must and could liberate the country through our own efforts even without others' help; the idea that, while help from higher echelons in solving our problems would be welcome, we must find the solutions to all our problems through our own efforts and wisdom, even without such help - this idea easily won the sympathy of the masses. But quite a few people still retained remnants of the outworn ideas, and either did not believe in their strength or underestimated it.

Some of those who had welcomed our appeal to carry through the revolution by placing our faith and

reliance in the strength of our people became dubious and perplexed in the face of a minor problem such as arming ourselves.

One day, when we were absorbed in the military training in Antu which was part of the preparations for the founding of the guerrilla army, Lee Yong Bae and Pang In Hyon broke a rifle's firing pin while cleaning it. In view of the conditions at the time, when each rifle had to be captured at the cost of blood, this was a serious case which could not be allowed to pass with impunity.

After examining the broken pin carefully, I said to them, "I will give you one day; repair it by this time tomorrow!"

They both stared at me wide-eyed. They clearly had not expected me to make such a preposterous demand.

"How can we repair a rifle manufactured in a modern munitions factory? We can fight a battle or risk our lives, but this is something we cannot even imagine doing with our poor skills, isn't it?"

"How can we call our undertaking by the sacred name of revolution if it is something that can be achieved simply by picking out the easy jobs to do? I think that the true meaning of revolution and the pride of a revolutionary lie in doing those things nobody dares to do." "But the broken pin is made of steel. Can it be repaired with theory alone?"

Pang In Hyon looked gloomily at the bolt with pin in his hand. Until that moment he regarded my demand to repair it as absurd and unreasonable. What would be the consequences of a commander revoking his orders at such a moment? Though I knew my orders were unusual, I told them again coldly, "If you cannot repair it, you are not entitled to be guerrillas. How can you carry through the complicated enterprise of social transformation when you cannot repair a little pin? If you do not intend to repair it, you may not participate in drill from tomorrow."

When I threatened them in this way, they were all startled; they promised me to repair it and asked me to teach them the method.

"I don't know the method, either. You must discover it yourselves."

They left the training ground with the bolt with the broken pin, their faces stained with tears.

Next day they appeared at the training ground, their faces beaming, for they had repaired the pin. It was not repaired perfectly, but it worked as it was meant to. The other comrades were all surprised. Even I, who had given the orders, could not believe my eyes. How could they, who had said they could not even imagine repairing it because they had no skill, repair it with so little difficulty?

Pang In Hyon hastily explained the repair process:

"At first we thought of making a new pin with wire, but we could not get proper steel wire. So then we heated the broken pin and extended it by beating it out. We whetted it on a stone and managed to shape it, but the problem was to make it hard again. We went to Xiaxiaoshahe to see an experienced smith who lives there. He told us to temper it in oil. We did as we were told and this steel is the result."

Their experience greatly excited the others. Everyone greeted with excitement the lesson that any one could work wonders if he had faith in his strength and made effective use of it.

I still remember the bright smiles covering the faces of Lee Yong Bae and Pang In Hyon as they ran to the training ground with the repaired pin in the hand. The smiles were doubtless an expression of immeasurable pride in their own strength. What ecstasy on earth can be more powerful than the pleasure and joy a man feels when he finds a strength he thought he did not possess?

A rifle's firing pin is not such a big thing. One could easily capture 10 rifles in the time it takes to repair it. But the lesson learned from repairing it generates a power greater than that of a hydrogen bomb.

Marx and Engels defined the history of the development of mankind as the history of class struggle and, needless to say, this is a correct proposition. The history of mankind can also be said to be the history of man discovering, creating and perfecting himself. In other words, it is the history of the creation of the human being who continuously discovers and develops in himself the powers and skills peculiar to himself and, at the same time, the history of the struggle to defend the independence of the popular masses.

It can also be called the history of innovation by a human being who has steadily refined himself in the political and ideological, cultural and moral, scientific and technological dimensions. Through the effort of creation and innovation, mankind has ushered in the age of the rocket, computers, genetic engineering and the green revolution.

From this point of view we can say that self-reliance is a powerful force which has driven the development of history. If people had lived simply believing in the grace of God, the "Lord of Creation," without developing their own strength, they would still be lost in the Paleolithic Age.

When we were operating the arsenals at full pressure in various parts of east Manchuria, Shi Zhong-heng hinted to me that there was a munitions works which had once been managed by Wang De-lin's national salvation army in the Dongning county town. This information increased my interest in the town. According to Shi Zhong-heng, the works was organized in the spring of 1932 as an ordnance repair shop equipped with a few lathes, casting facilities and sewing machines.

From the latter half of 1932 this shop developed into a comprehensive munitions factory with more than 200 persons involved in manufacturing hand grenades, mortar shells, 25-cartridge automatic rifles, and the guns known as hog-guns. Since that time the factory had been equipped with new machine-tools and

other means of production.

The weapons manufactured in this factory had been supplied mainly to the NSA units in Dadianzi, Wangqing County, and the Ningan region. Following the Japanese occupation the factory was dissolved, but its equipment and machines were left intact. If we had succeeded in taking the town completely into our control in the autumn of 1933, the factory would inevitably have become ours and we could have armed ourselves more adequately with up-to-date light and heavy weapons.

The experience gained in the munitions industry in the guerrilla bases in the first half of the 1930s was applied and developed in the arsenals built in the bases on Mt. Paektu during the latter half of the 1930s.

We organized a sewing unit in each of the guerrilla bases and thus solved the problem of military uniform by our own efforts. The cloth was obtained, dyed and sewn by ourselves. We boiled down the bark of oak, black walnut and Amur cork trees in a large cauldron and soaked the cloth in the water to dye it khaki. Sometimes the colour of the cloth varied a little with the proportion of the barks from various species of trees.

The first members of the Wangqing sewing unit were Kim Ryon Hwa and Jon Mun Jin, who had once been a nurse at a hospital in the village of six households. There was also a male designer, but I cannot remember his name. The unit was later reinforced with Lee Ii Pha, Kim Myong Suk and Kim Sun Hui. It also employed temporary workers when it was short of hands. Jon Mun Jin made my uniform in the days in Xiaowangqing. When I went from Antu to Wangqing, the women in the unit said they would make a fine uniform for the young general and they sewed a full uniform set, including an overcoat, for me. The material was ordinary cotton cloth dyed by hand, but each stitch eloquently declared warm and delicate care of the makers' hands.

The Xiaowangqing sewing unit, with only two or three sewing machines, made all the uniforms needed for a battalion or a regiment and even full-dress uniforms to the order of battalion or regimental headquarters for the officers and men of the Chinese nationalist units. A full-dress uniform included coat, trousers, cap, puttees and cartridge belts. The amount of work assigned to the unit by far exceeded its capacity. When they were overburdened with work, the diligent and faithful sewing-unit operatives would press on with their work without sleeping at night. When they were sleepy, they dipped their faces in water and sang to keep awake. They sang so much that they all learned scores of revolutionary songs by heart.

The first leader of the Xiaowangqing sewing unit was Kim Ryon Hwa. The people in Wangqing called her a hoyden. Some even called her a tomboy, since she occasionally smoked a cigarette. But this frivolous woman was very skilful at knitting and sewing. She began to learn sewing after she got married. Her husband was a misfortunate one-legged man. The first most significant means for earning a livelihood she had found in her hopeless struggle with poverty was doing needlework for others. Her skill in sewing had developed since then. She not only made smart uniforms, but also fine Chinese clothes. Those who had accused her of being a tomboy would now bow their heads in the direction of the valley where the sewing unit was situated, saying, "Please accept my humble greeting, sister," when once they

had tried the clothes she made for them.

Many of the members of the sewing unit were forerunners of the culture of self-reliance with no less enthusiasm than the arsenal workers. Kim Myong Suk, Jon Mun Jin, Han Song Hui, An Sun Hwa, Choe Hul Suk, Kim Yong Gum, Kim Su Bok, Choe In Suk, Park long Suk, Jo Yong Suk, Park Su Hwan, Ma In Ok and Kim Son were all master-hands who accompanied us and worked hard to produce tens of thousands of uniforms. I cannot find the words to describe adequately the well-known last moment of An Sun Hwa, and the heroic death of six members of the sewing unit at the secret camp in Ganbahezi.

We built hospitals in each of the guerrilla zones to treat the wounded and ill. All the medical appliances used in the treatment, such as scalpels and tweezers, were made by the technicians in the arsenals and most of the herb medicines were obtained and produced by the medical workers, with the help of the masses. There were only a few modern medicines.

There was nowhere we could turn for doctors and nurses, so we had to train them for ourselves. A few pioneers who had been doctors of Koryo medicine trained a great number of assistants. Lim Chun Chu and Lee Pong Su were not only famous doctors with distinguished records but also qualified teachers who rendered meritorious services in the training of our medical reserves. How many people's lives were saved by their treatment, so that they could return with joy to their units!

We also solved the problem of food grains by relying on our own resources. It was not in our style to solve this problem by setting the people an amount of food to be delivered and then collecting it from them. We proposed the aim of attaining self-sufficiency in food for the army and the paramilitary organizations such as the Red Guards, Anti-Japanese Self-defense Corps, Children's Vanguard and the young volunteers' corps, and issued a strong demand to them to cultivate crops & wugh their own efforts on the arable land in the guerrilla zones. In the latter half of the 1930s, when the Korean People's Revolutionary Army expanded over a wide area and was conducting large-scale guerrilla warfare we sent troops to the rear to farm at the foot of Mt. Paektu, away from the battle fronts.

Self-reliance was thus essential to the survival of the revolutionary army in the long-drawn-out war against the Japanese. The realization that one could survive only by relying on oneself became a part of the thinking of all the guerrillas; self-reliance became their motto. Those who made this motto their very lifeblood upheld their honor even on an isolated island, and those who did not surrendered to the enemy or left their ranks, abandoning their principles halfway.

The seed of self-reliance nurtured by the anti-Japanese forerunners in the snowstorms of Paektu was implanted in the minds of the people of the whole country after liberation, serving as the motive power that kindled the flames of the effort to build a new Korea and gave birth in this eastern corner of the world to the legendary Chollima. When we began a project to manufacture an electric locomotive at a small factory which had been a repair shop, a foreign ambassador to our country said that he would pass through the eye of a needle if the Koreans made electric locomotives by themselves. The pleasant whistle of the electric locomotive Pulguni-1, which our workers and technicians made by relying on their own ability, shattered the ambassador's complacent prediction.

The spirit of self-reliance that rang out in the hammering of the arsenals in the guerrilla zones drove the pulse of the era of the Workers' Party and provided the powerful force that propelled this era forward.

The spirit of self-reliance, born of the tempest of the war against the Japanese, still pulses in the slogans, "Let us live our own way!" "Let us meet the requirements of Juche in ideology, technology and culture!" - slogans devised by the Secretary for Organizational Affairs, Kim Jong Il - and in the slogan, "When the Party decides, we do everything!" In the final decade of the turbulent 20th century our people are advancing towards new heights singing the March of Self-reliance, as they go.



## 8.7. An Immortal Flower

In the year 1933, the revolutionary organization in Wangougou sent Kim Kum Sun (Kim Kum Nyo ) and Kim Ok Sun, pupils of the Beidong Children's Corps school, to Xiaowangqing, according to the decision of higher echelon.



*Photo: Kim Kum Sun - a young girl revolutionary.*

These two girls were talented members of an art troupe who were held in special affection by the people of the Yanji area. They came to Macun on an assignment from the revolutionary organization to spread songs and dances in the Wangqing guerrilla base, where there were many revolutionary people. In those days the revolutionary organizations in east Manchuria used to send many talented people to Xiaowangqing, the strategic center of the Korean revolution. The people in east Manchuria rendered every assistance to Xiaowangqing, just as our people nowadays spare nothing to support Pyongyang.

On their arrival at Macun the two girls, guided by the caretaker of the Beidong Children's Corps school who had accompanied them, came directly to the army headquarters to see me. I found them very young, not much over 10. At first I guessed they were sisters. But they were not only their names were similar.

The caretaker of the Beidong Children's Corps school introduced the girls to me in turn, explaining with humor the children's records and their family backgrounds. That story was very impressive. While the caretaker was telling me about her, Kim Ok Sun wept. I, too, was close to tears, for the 13 years of her life were full of tragic events.

When she was nine years old, she was engaged to a landlord's son who was more than 20 years old. The engagement was arranged by fraudulent means without her knowledge or her parents'. In those days a young man over 20 was regarded as an old bachelor, and his parents were anxiously searching for a good match through the offices of go-betweens. The young man was apparently a dim-wit or cripple, with no hopes of getting married by fair and just means.

In fact, his parents, unable to find a mate for their son who was now on the wrong side of 20, had hastily forged the engagement by treating the girl's father to a heavy drinking bout and forcing the drunken man to sealing the agreement with his thumb. According to the contract Kim Ok Sun was obliged by law to marry the bachelor when she was 15 years old. Her father remained unconscious of the outlandish contract for two days. When he came to himself back at home he cried bitterly in discovering in his pocket a document promising his daughter in marriage, sealed with his fingerprint, and 80 yuan of money

of doubtful origin.

The money was a present from the family of the would-be bridegroom in return for the agreement. When she learned of this, Kim Ok Sun's life had been filled with tears. But her father, Kim Jae Man, who had sealed his daughter's future by means of this piece of paper, soon bought a straw-thatched house, a kitchen garden, an ox and a pig, and lived in quiet prosperity. He seemed to think there was no use crying over spilt milk, no use protesting against the power of the rich, and that the best thing to do was to turn the money to good account, to turn the misfortune into a blessing. Whenever his daughter wept over her future, he would soothe her, saying:

"Don't cry, my dear. That 80 yuan has breathed life into our ruined family. Anyway, this is better than dying of hunger. You will feel easier if you think that your engagement has saved your family from destruction.

The ignorant and simple man did not understand the revolution. He was so naive that he thought he could free himself from poverty, and even become a millionaire, if only he worked his fingers to the bone. This led him to harbor illusions about the landlord who was exploiting him. Now and then the landlord brought something to eat to the house, so Kim Jae Man thought there was no kinder landlord in this world than his. His daughter once went to the yard of her school to listen to a speech by an underground operative. When he learned about this, he beat her cruelly, for he was afraid that his daughter might become involved in the revolution.

Only when his village had been reduced to ashes for the fifth time by the enemy's "punitive" invasion was his class consciousness aroused. His family lost their house and draught animal at the hands of the invaders. Some of his neighbors were killed in fire. On the night when he sent his daughter to the Wangougou guerrilla zone, he said, "We must stake our lives now on a life-and-death struggle with the enemy, my dear. I was too ignorant of the ways of the world. Now you must join in the revolution and do away with those devils."

Later Kim Ok Sun made her home at Kim Kum Sun's house in Songlindong; together with Kum Sun, she attended the Children's Corps school in Beidong and as a member of the district, and then of the county art troupe, she participated in the work of enlightening the masses. Korean children like Kim Ok Sun at the tender age when they should have been complaining of their lot to indulgent parents, had to launch headfirst into the struggle with poverty, tugged to and fro by the tough waves of a world which made no allowances for them.

Our children rose in resistance against this cruel world, which was equally oppressive to young and old. The Korean children in Jiandao formed revolutionary organizations such as the Children's Corps, the Children's Vanguard and the Children's Expeditionary Corps in various areas, and participated in the struggle as an organized force. All our boys and girls, educated and trained in the revolutionary organizations, played their parts as more than mere small cogs in the wheel of the revolution against the Japanese.

Kim Ok Sun was one of these children, and so was Kim Kum Sun. When I heard her story I could not but feel pity for Kim Ok Sun. The misfortune of this little girl was the epitome of the misfortune suffered by millions of Korean children.

How laudable and honorable their determination and mettle were, when they left their dear homes at such a tender age and came to the guerrilla base to work for the revolution! They had walked hundreds of miles from Wangougou to Macun by way of Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou in order to support Xiaowangqing and how thankful we were! How admirable and praiseworthy for these two girls to have come all the way to Xiaowangqing, making their way along the thorny path with the help of their canes, carrying heavy knapsacks on their backs and wearing work shoes made for adults!

Thinking that I should exchange those work shoes for canvass or rubber shoes, I asked them, "Who sent you to Xiaowangqing?"

"Mr. Yun Pyong Do did," the girls answered cheerfully, standing to attention, their hands on the sides of their skirts. Not only were their eyes as bright as stars, but their voices rang with refreshing vitality.

I was very glad. Being with children was one of the great pleasures of my life. Their laughter relieved me my sense of hardships and mental torment. Mix with children, share their feelings, and you will feel a strong urge to live, and you will understand that they bring beauty and variety to people's lives. You will also feel inspired with a sense of the noble duty of bringing them to full bloom and safeguarding the ideals glowing in their eyes.

Feeling pity for Kum Sun, with her calves and face covered in scratches, I asked her: "It must have cost you a great deal of trouble to come all this way. Didn't you find it hard to cross so many high passes?"

"We had a hard time of it with the blisters on our soles. But we did not give any sign that we felt tired, in case the man who was bringing us might send us back to Wangougou." "Wouldn't it have been nice to stay at home with your parents?"

"Yes, it would, but when will we become grown-ups like that? Our instructor in the Children's Corps said we had to experience hardships to become grown-ups. I want to grow up as soon as possible, through many hardships."

"Why do you wish to grow up quickly?"

"We will liberate Korea. Please don't send us back home, for mercy's sake, Commander Kim." I was surprised at her manly way of thinking. Young as she was, she was unusually advanced in her determination to devote her life to the liberation of Korea.

"Don't worry about that. You two girls are among the few talented children in Jiandao - why should I send you back? Stay with us in Wangqing from now on. Taking part in the Children's Corps life here will

not be too bad at all."

Kum Sun did not hide her joy; she clapped her hands.

I asked the leaders of the YCL in the county and district to admit them to the Children's Corps school in Macun, so that they could continue their organizational life in the corps, and requested they be provided with lodgings in kind-hearted households, so that they would feel at home in this strange place so far away from their parents.

That year the guerrillas and the people of Wangqing held a grand May Day celebration in the playground of the Children's Corps school in Macun. The celebration was attended by all the soldiers in the Wangqing area. The two girls from Wangougou won first place in the running and high jump respectively that day, receiving warm applause from the people of Wangqing. Kum Sun was small in build for her age. When she walked, with a knapsack on her back, moving her legs quickly in her light gait at the head of the art troupe, everybody smiled at her pure cute image.

I, too, derived much strength from this image. By nature, I preferred optimists. In the days when we were fighting arduous battle in the mountains and surviving on grass root, one optimist gave more strength than dozens of guns. Kum Sun was an outstanding fighter and optimist, representing the youngest generation of the alliance of the three organizations - the Communist Party, YCL and Children's Corps.

Some days after I met Kum Sun, I called the pupils of the school to the headquarters to learn how they were getting along.

From the outset the Children's Corps members were always supposed to carry a week's emergency rations with them in knapsacks. But many of the children I examined had eaten the parched-rice flour supplied by the school. Only Kum Sun had kept her rations quite untouched. After examining their knapsacks I praised her by giving the thumbs up sign, saying, "The other children have eaten theirs all, but Kum Sun, the youngest, has resisted temptation splendidly. She is the best!"

She only smiled, looking shy, and then said, "I, too, have taken out the powder pouch several times. I was scarcely able to suppress the temptation to eat it." "But how did you do it?"

"While the others were eating the flour, I kept my eyes shut. If I still felt like eating, I went outside. And when I could not bear it any more outside, I went to the well and drank a dipperful of water. Then I felt as full as if I had eaten the flour."

I was moved to admiration by her fluent answer. This child's sorrowful mind mirrored the destitution of the people in the guerrilla zone, and the noble aspiration of these young indomitable eagles to develop the revolution staunchly in spite of crushing poverty. That day we gave each of the children ten cups of parched-rice flour and some corncakes, and put matchboxes in their knapsacks. A few days later we sent their school two cartloads of supplies, including new padded clothes and quilts, shoes, notebooks and

pencils. We fought frequent battles, and had kept some of the captured goods in reserve. Food and clothes were scarce, but we sent a large share of the reserves to the Children's Corps school.

"All the best things for the children!" - this has become an immutable principle of our life nowadays; even in those difficult days when we were fighting in a foreign land we would give the children everything we could, according to this principle. In order to obtain food, clothes and other things we needed for them, we would not hesitate to take the army into battle.

We promoted the slogan, "Let us always be ready for the independence of Korea and the liberation of the world's proletariat!" among the Children's Corps and educated them in the spirit of patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

They performed truly great exploits, no less significant than those performed by the adults, enlightening the masses, giving artistic performances, standing guard duty, delivering messages, reconnoitering enemy movements, capturing weapons from the enemy, and defending the guerrilla zone. When we were rebuilding the log-cabins burned down during the enemy's "punitive" atrocities we could always see them at work, these young eagles, running with rice balls along the trenches where revolutionary soldiers were embattled, singing revolutionary songs amid the flames of the battle fought to defend the guerrilla base. In the farming season they weeded and harvested in the fields.

Sometimes they would pick wild fruits and send them to the guerrilla barracks. One day I saw the pupils of the Children's Corps school standing sentry at the central sentry-post on Mt. Poyojok. With a heavy grenade on each of their waists, they stood on guard, each holding a 1.5-metre pole tipped with an iron spearhead. They said they were relieved every hour. They changed the guards when half of a joss stick the length of two matchsticks was burned away. They told me the stick burned for two hours, and I thought this method of measuring time quite ingenious.

These children once came to see me with a suit of clothes consisting of lined Korean jacket and trousers, trouser-leg ties, grey silk waistcoat, riding breeches, leather shoes, boots and black rubber shoes. It was a token of their thanks to me for sending trophies to their school on many occasions. In those days we sent the Children's Corps members all the Korean apples we captured from the Japanese convoys. Many of the children were born in this foreign country and had never been to Korea or seen a Korean apple. Kim Ok Sun, who witnessed the event, often recalls with warm affection the tears full of earnest gratitude, which the children shed when they received the crates of apples.

Park Kil Song, the head of the children's department, visited their school one day and told them, "Boys and girls, Commander Kim takes loving care of us just as a father cares for his own children. We are the beneficiaries of his love, unable to repay his kindness. We have to show our thanks to him. What do you think we should do?"

As soon as Park finished speaking, Kum Sun stood up and said, "Let us have some fine clothes made for him. They say he wears unlined clothes even in the winter cold."

Park Kil Song smiled at her words.

"Kum Sun has suggested making some fine clothes for him. What do you think of the idea?" The children answered in chorus, "It's a good idea."

"Alright, then. I, too, had thought of making warm clothes for him as Kum Sun has suggested. Let us obtain some cloth and have some good clothes tailored by the women's association members or by the sewing-unit members. But you must remember that cloth does not simply fall from the sky."

Kum Sun stood up again and spoke freely:

"Let us pick mushrooms, dry them and sell them. They say mushrooms are expensive. Once we have money, we can buy cloth."

The other children echoed her words enthusiastically, "That's it, that's it. Let us pick mushrooms and sell them to landlords."

Starting the next day they went to the mountains with Park Kil Song, carrying baskets. I saw them several times marching in line past the valley in Lishugou, singing as they carried the picked mushrooms, but I did not know the secret contained in those baskets. I only thought they were going to all this trouble to gather tasty food for the wounded in the hospital. Those mushrooms had now been transformed into money and then into the clothes which appeared before me.

After making the Children's Corps salute Kum Sun said, "We had a suit of clothes made for you, since you wear unlined clothes even in the winter cold. Please accept it."

It was true that I used to wear unlined clothes in winter. Taking the clothes I felt like weeping, without knowing why. I said to them, "Though I wear unlined clothes, I am in the prime of my life. I will not forget your kindness all my life long. I am going to give these clothes to a grandfather who is the oldest person in Xiaowangqing; please don't feel disappointed."

They looked at me regretfully, tears on their unhappy faces. They were very sorry that I had not accepted the clothes for myself. I had to speak to them two or three more times before they would smile.

After the mass meeting was over, Kum Sun came to me and whispered, as she felt the sleeves of my uniform, "The cloth is so thin that the wind will blow right through it to the bone." Even now, when the winter cold arrives, those words spoken by Kum Sun in Xiaowangqing ring in my ears.

At first the Wangqing people used to call her "black eye." They gave her that nickname because her eyes were black. Some time later she was given another nickname - "Macun hawfinch." The women from the Kilju and Myongchon areas gave her this nickname because she was small and yet lovable like a

hawfinch. When people called her "Black eye!" she simply answered "Yes!" and the same when they called her "Macun hawfinch!" She was not offended even if they used her nicknames dozens of times a day.

It was a red-letter day for the Wangqing people when Kum Sun gave a performance of tap-dancing. She always danced with Ok Sun and this dance received the greatest applause of all the items in the performance program of the art troupe of the Children's Corps. When she repeated the turn in which she wove a kerchief between her legs while beating out a quick rhythm on the stage with her feet, the audience would cheer and stamp.

During my days in Wangqing in the mornings I used to ride up and down the valley of Macun on my white horse to learn about the situation in the guerrilla zone, and think up new plans. The morning ride was an essential part of my daily routine. The bugler of the guerrilla army, Song Kap Ryong, and my orderly, Jo Wal Nam, accompanied me on these rides. I always came across a singing squad of Children's Corps members on the road, and their song delighted and refreshed my mind.

How can I adequately describe the feeling of satisfaction I felt as I sat there on horseback and looked at those healthy, vivacious faces with pink cheeks! I did not skip my ride even on snowy or rainy days for I wanted to see them. I thought how they would miss me if they did not see me on the road, when they had come out in spite of the rain and snow. Their feelings were the same as mine, they took their stroll in all weathers. Kum Sun always led the chorus. In that unharmonious ringing chorus made up of scores of voices we could easily single out Kum Sun's peculiar chirping voice. And when I heard that voice I felt a sense of security, and a rather superstitious belief that everything would go smoothly in the guerrilla zone, although I could not say why.

But one day I did not hear her voice among the chorus of the pupils of the Children's Corps school shaking the valley in Lishugou. Feeling that I was listening to a strange song sung by children from some other region, I went out into the yard of the headquarters. The singing squad was just passing a small lane near the headquarters. Kum Sun was standing at the head of the squad as always. She was plodding along without singing, with her head lowered for some reason. Lee Mm Hak, the head of the Children's Corps, was leading the chorus that morning in her place. The singing squad without Kum Sun's leadership was just like a chorus troupe deprived of its leading singer.

That day I could not settle down to work. I went to the school shortly before sunset to see her, and there I heard the sad news that her family in Wangougou had all been killed by the enemy. I realized why she had marched with the singing squad with her mouth closed and why Lee Mm Hak had to lead the chorus in her place. That day she rested her head on my lap and cried so bitterly that she nearly fainted. Trembling like a Sparrow soaked in water, she said, "What can I do? What is the point of living when my father, mother and younger brother have all been killed?"

It was difficult to console her. I stayed at the school until it became dark, trying to calm her down.

"Steady yourself, Kum Sun. If you waver, and give in to grief, the enemy will try to kill you as well. The Japanese swine are trying to wipe out the Koreans in Jiandao. But we cannot let them take our lives so easily. In spite of everything, you must grow up to be a fine revolutionary and take revenge on the enemy."

Only then did she stop crying and look up at me, wiping away the tears.

"I will have my revenge on the enemy, as you have said."

After this she became a girl of few words, and she did not laugh easily. Indeed, she seldom laughed aloud or raised her voice to chatter as before. When leading the chorus she no longer chirped like a sparrow as she had done in earlier days. Her lovable nickname, "Macun hawfinch," disappeared from use in Xiaowangqing. The young girl's thoughts of vengeance were expressed in her redoubled devotion to the life of the Children's Corps and the activities of the art troupe.

The art troupe of the Children's Corps, with Kum Sun as its main pillar, conducted brisk activities in such enemy-controlled areas as Shixian and Fluimudong in Tumen. The fame of the Wangqing children's art troupe extended as far as north Manchuria and beyond the boundaries of east Manchuria.

In those days the communists in east and north Manchuria maintained close contact with each other across the Laoyeling Mountains. The natural barriers of the mountain terrain could not prevent the communists in the two regions from constantly visiting each other, and assisting each other.

The guerrilla bases which had transformed Jiandao into a stronghold of the struggle against Japan had become a model of the ideal land for which all the people yearned and the new society and order established in these bases aroused the neighboring people's admiration and envy, they dreamed of a similar life. In particular, the battle of the Dongning county town was a turning-point in raising the prestige of the communists among the people and armed units in Manchuria.

After this battle, the NSA soldiers began to call me "Commander Kim," and in general it was from that time that people began to call me "General Kim" and "Commander Kim." All the policies and democratic measures we put into practice in the guerrilla zones were addressed to the primary concerns of the times, and enjoyed the blessings of all the people.

On several occasions the party organizations and military departments in north Manchuria sent visitors' groups to the guerrilla zones in Wangqing and its vicinity in order to learn about the experience of the people in east Manchuria in building guerrilla zones.

The center of Wangqing in those days was not Xiaowangqing; it was Yaoyinggou. Kum Sun and the other members of the children's art troupe left Macun when, after the enemy's large-scale "punitive" invasion, all the structures of the guerrilla zone moved simultaneously to Yaoyinggou. I also moved there with some army units in the spring of 1934.



In the summer of the same year a visitors' group from Ningan County, consisting of underground organization members and guerrillas, and led by Im Yong Ju, a woman secretary of the YCL, came to Duitoulazi from Badaohezi via Sheaxiandong. The local people and guerrillas in Yaoyinggou gave the visitors a warm welcome. The Children's Corps members shouted, "A warm welcome to the visitors' group from north Manchuria!" and waved triangular red flags.

In the evening a bonfire was lit in the yard of the guerrilla quarters and a performance was staged for the group. The children's art troupe staged a varied program for the guests, for they had many Children's Corps members with exceptional artistic skills. Lee Mm Hak was good at dancing and playing the harmonica. When he played a humorous part in a drama the audience split their sides laughing. Kim Jae Bom was also a talented dancer. He was especially skilled at imitating the gait of a duck or a rabbit while he was dancing. These children staged their performances and disseminated songs, roving through every revolutionary organizational district in Wangqing County.

We made dancing-dresses for the art troupe from the best silk cloth among the trophies we had captured, and also solved the problem of providing other stage costumes for them. While staying in Yaoyinggou for some days, a small unit of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, sent by Zhou Bao-zhong, learned of the experience gained by the Wangqing guerrilla unit. This was not a simple tourist trip, more like training which combined drill and practice. Throughout the days of their stay they followed the daily schedule we had defined, and engaged in military drill, political study and cultural activities, just as the Wangqing unit did.

We gave the YCL and Children's Corps organizations assignments to pay visits to their quarters regularly. When, after much practice, the children's art troupe managed to teach the soldiers revolutionary songs in Chinese, the soldiers in turn taught the children some interesting Chinese songs. On some days the children would visit them, having prepared a drama in the Chinese language.

The guests from north Manchuria were impressed by the activities of the children's art troupe, and would invite the children to their quarters whenever they cooked delicious food.

On returning to north Manchuria, they publicized the children's art troupe very widely. In the summer of 1934, Zhou Bao-zhong invited the children's art troupe of Wangqing to north Manchuria. We readily complied with his request. I told Park Kil Song that he should make good preparations for the tour in order to delight the soldiers and people of north Manchuria. Then I framed a detailed itinerary for the art troupe's activities in north Manchuria.

We sent the art troupe to north Manchuria in order to bring the Chinese people some happiness and further consolidate our solidarity with them.

Zhou Bao-zhong's invitation to the children's art troupe was aimed at educating the men and officers of the Chinese nationalist army units which were then under the influence of the communists. Zhou Baozhong, who was working as the chief administrative officer of the Suming Anti-Japanese Allied

Army, which was organized in the area around Ningan, was making tireless efforts to rally the anti-Japanese forces that had dropped out of Wang De-lin's national salvation army.

After sending the art troupe to north Manchuria I felt ill at ease for some days. My mind was never free of the worry that the young ones might not reach their destination in safety, though they were well used to battles, hunger and all sorts of hardships. It would be difficult for all of the children, but how could the young ones like Kum Sun negotiate the steep Laoyeling Mountains? However, I need not have worried. All the members of the art troupe were young eagles trained in the maelstrom, indomitable fighters who had many times braved the threat of death.

They easily crossed the mountains which I had considered an impassable barrier, and passed safely through the area infested by bandits. When it was raining, they marched on, wearing pine twigs or the birch-bark on their heads instead of umbrellas. At night they would cook rice for themselves in canteens, took a light meal and then slept in the open air by the campfire, with guards posted. Some children suffered serious stomach troubles deep in the mountains.

Worse still, their route of march was not the highroad between Wangqing and Laoyeling, along which ox-carts and sleighs had passed, but a steep short cut used only by the guerrilla army messengers. And yet not a single straggler appeared among them on the hundred-mile-long journey. I was told that even Kum Sun, the youngest in the troupe, climbed over the mountains by herself, singing as she went and rejecting the other children's offer to take her knapsack.

In later years Kim Ok Sun, who went to north Manchuria with her, used to amuse me with tales about their activities among the NSA units, whenever she had an opportunity. The curtain rose on the children's art troupe's premiere at Chai Shirong's unit, stationed in Machang. Chai was the man most under the influence of the communists among the leaders of the Chinese national salvation army units. If we educated him in a somewhat more efficient way, we could easily make an ally of him, and there was even a chance of making him into a communist.

The premiere in Machang began with a speech by Kum Sun. As many as 150 officers and men enjoyed the performance together with Chai Shi-rong and they were most impressed. As Kum Sun finished her speech, they could not conceal their excitement, and said, "How well that little girl speaks! We must fight against Japan all the more bravely for the sake of that girl."

Commander Chai was so moved that he took her to his room, set her on his lap and put earrings and bracelets on her ears and wrists. He even provided two coaches for the art troupe so that they could travel to their performances.

The tour of performances, which had been scheduled to last for one week, was prolonged several times at the request of the Chinese nationalist soldiers. The art troupe also staged a performance at Zhou Baozhong's unit.

Chai Shi-rong presented them with two cartloads of gifts, including padded coats, dabushanzi, scarves, pork, chicken, dried starch noodles and wheat flour. He also gave each of the children a satchel and presented them with some rifles.

When the art troupe returned to Yaoyinggou from the tour, I was in another region with my unit. As soon as I returned to the guerrilla zone, the children came and stood around me in a circle and boasted of the gifts they had received in north Manchuria.

"These were all given to us by a man called Commander Chai. He had a beard like Lenin, and he was very kind-hearted. I went to his room and had some trotters. Mr. Zhou Bao-zhong also gave us many gifts."

This was how Kum Sun praised Commander Chai and Zhou Baozhong; she set a 7-shooter at my side, saying, "You should keep this revolver, General. We've decided."

She emphasized the word "decided," but as soon as she had finished she laughed at herself for some reason I did not understand. I carried the revolver for a few days in case the children should feel disappointed; then I quietly gave it to the leader of the young volunteers' corps.

I also ensured that all the other arms were handed over to the young volunteers' corps, and the other gifts dealt with as the children's art troupe wished. That autumn a miraculous rumor that Kum Sun's mother was still alive spread throughout the Yaoyinggou guerrilla zone. When she heard the rumor Kum Sun romped about the valley in Yaoyinggou with scores of daisies in her hair; the people in the guerrilla base who knew her family's story were delighted to see this.

The Children's Corps organization decided to help her to realize her wish to see her mother. At first Kum Sun who knew only too well what her duty was and had a high sense of collective responsibility, was not willing to accept the assistance of the organization, saying that she alone could not enjoy such special favor, when many other children also wanted to see their parents.

I saw her for the last time in the autumn of 1934 when our unit was taking preparations for the north Manchuria expedition in Zhuanjiaolou. The children's art troupe came to that region and staged an art performance. I think it was a special performance bidding farewell to the expeditionary force. After the performance we caught a roe deer and made dumplings to treat the art troupe members.

As I was going outside after looking around the house in which they were taking their meal, Kum Sun pushed aside the dishes she had been eating, hurried over to me and whispered in my ear as if telling me a great secret, "I have heard that my mother is alive, General." "It's true. All the guerrillas are delighted at the news. I am very happy, too." "I was so happy that I sang a solo three times today. And I wanted to sing still more. "Then sing as much as you can."

I picked a fine-toothed bamboo comb and a coarse comb from among the trophies I had brought with me

to give the children in Zhuanjiaolou and put them in her hand.

"Thank you, General."

She clung to my sleeve as if she were my little child. It was heartening to observe jubilation in the behavior and speech of this lovable young girl who had never played on other people's affection in spite of her young age.

"Well, you must go to see your mother soon. I am afraid I cannot see you off, for I have to go to north Manchuria."

That was the last conversation I had with Kum Sun.

When she returned to her school after the art performance in Zhuanjiaolou, the revolutionary organization in Yaoyinggou was looking for a suitable person to transmit a classified document to an enemy-held area. The organization was discussing seriously on the problem of who would be safest and most appropriate as a messenger. Eventually, Kum Sun was selected.

When the organization entrusted her, and nobody else, with this important task, the young girl readily accepted it as an expression of the greatest trust.

On the day she was to leave on the mission, Han Song Hui took the girl to the waterside and washed her face, combed her hair, fastened her shoes, and smoothed down her skirt as she would have done for a bride. She pierced three acorns with a pin and set them in her hair instead of a ribbon. That day the Children's Corps members accompanied her to the edge of the village to see her off.

*Where are you going to?  
I am going to Yanji.  
Which hill are you crossing?  
I am crossing Jiqing Pass.  
Why are you going there?  
I am going on a mission.  
Whom are you going with?  
I am going alone.*

She walked with short steps through the forest, humming a song. She made up the words as she walked along. The others laughed, clapping their hands, to hear the song, and echoed her words in a chorus which reverberated across the valley of Yaoyinggou.

After delivering the message she was arrested, together with several adults, by Japanese gendarmes while on her way to see her mother. They were surely delighted to learn that she was from the guerrilla zone, and thought that the "kid communist" would let out important information. Apparently they discovered

that she had come from Yaoyinggou, and thought they might be able to drag confidential information out of her, since the leadership structures of east Manchuria were situated in Yaoyinggou.

It was in fact true that she knew secrets about many aspects of the guerrilla zone. She knew a great deal about the movements of the revolutionary army, the activities of the leadership, the secret routes connecting the guerrilla zone to the semi-guerrilla zones, the living conditions and attitudes of the people in the base, and so forth. Since, as a member of the art troupe, she had performed on many occasions in enemy-held areas, they might be able to squeeze information out of her about the underground organizations if they could break her. Aware of their opportunity, they did their best to extract valuable information from her. At first they treated her to delicious foods and cajoled her with sweet words. Then they intimidated her and tortured her.

I once read a foreign story about a boy living in a village on an island who was executed by his father because he was tempted by a silver watch and revealed the whereabouts of a man who had been hiding in a haystack. As the story suggests, it is easy to persuade a child. Children can be tempted by things or give in to threats or torture.

But children who have been trained politically through the organizational life do not disgrace their honor. Not a single member of the Children's Corps ever abandoned his or her political creed for a penny. So Kang Ryom, Lee Hon Su and Lim Hyong Sam, who grew up under the care of our Party after liberation, were all young boys of 13-15 years, but they did not reveal the secrets of their organizations even when threatened by the enemy's bayonets during the Fatherland Liberation War.

Kum Sun was an indomitable young fighter tempered like steel in the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution. This young daughter of Korea refused to speak even under cruel torture. She only opened her mouth to condemn and curse the hangmen.

The provost officer who was interrogating her said, "We will kill you if you don't say anything."

"How nasty you are! I will not speak with bandits," Kum Sun answered.

The merciless hangmen decided to kill young Kum Sun for the sole reason that she would not confess the secrets of the revolutionary army. All the people, who saw the young girl from the guerrilla zone, covered in blood and gore, dragged to the place of execution, gritted their teeth in indignation. That field in Baicaogou became a sea of tears. But Kum Sun shouted to these mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters who felt such sympathy and pity for her, "Why are you crying, dear fathers and mothers? Don't cry. The revolutionary army soldiers will surely wipe out the enemy. You must fight staunchly until the day when the motherland is liberated!"

Her fiery speech summed up the nine years of her life. The execution site rang to her sharp cry, "Down with the Japanese imperialists! Long live the Korean revolution!"

After hearing that she had been killed, I did not visit the Children's Corps school for some time. I somehow felt afraid of going to the school. It was too sad and depressing to think of the Children's Corps school and children's art troupe without Kum Sun. The enemy had deprived me of the butterfly spirit of the art troupe and the skylark voice of the guerrilla zone, who had been loved so well by the Wangqing people.

Who would now sing as sweetly as Kum Sun and who would dance as briskly, lightly and gracefully as she for the people in the guerrilla zone as they fought bloody battles and combated grave difficulties? Who would enchant the officers and men of the Chinese national salvation army with fluent Chinese songs, as Kum Sun had done, and who would cast me such a lively, bright and lovable smile as she did when I Went for my morning ride?

The sad news of the death of Kum Sun perturbed the revolutionary masses in the Wangqing area. A solemn ceremony in her memory was held in Yaoyinggou. Enraged young men and women from all the counties of east Manchuria joined the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in swearing to take revenge upon the enemy.

A magazine connected with the Communist International and Chinese and Japanese publications vied in reporting the achievements of this young heroine unprecedented in the history of the liberation struggle of the oppressed nations in the world. Her heroic life was retold under the title of Short Biography of a Young Girl Martyr. The skylark of the guerrilla zone, Kum Sun, who had tirelessly crossed many torrents and mountains on her tiny feet, thus shook the world at the age of nine.

In the modern history of our country there is a famous patriotic girl martyr, called Ryu Kwan Sun. The mention of her name recalls the March First Movement of the year 1919. The girl was a scholar at the Rihwa School in Seoul, but she went back to her native district in Chonan, South Chungchong Province, when the school was forced to close in the wake of the March First Movement; there she organized a demonstration for independence and led it from the front before being arrested by the Japanese gendarmes.

The court sentenced her to a heavy penalty of 7 years' imprisonment. In view of the fact that the terms of servitude given to 33 people who had initiated the movement were 3 years at the maximum and 1 year at the minimum, and the fact that some of them had been found not guilty, we can see how seriously the Japanese judiciary regarded the 16-year-old girl's case of felony. Even the peasants in remote areas were aghast, saying that seven years was the longest term of penal servitude in the history of the March First Movement. When she had died in the Sodaemun prison, our nation dubbed her the "Joan of Arc of Korea" and she is still remembered with warm affection.

No such a title has yet been conferred on Kum Sun. For there are no girl heroines of her age and no other girls who have performed exploits comparable to hers. That our nation has a girl heroine such as Kum Sun in addition to Ryu Kwan Sun, the heroine of the March First Movement, is our nation's distinctive source of pride and glory. A novel and film depicting Kum Sun have been produced recently, but this is

not enough to preserve all her exploits for posterity. It would not be too much to erect a gold or bronze monument to young heroes or heroines such as Kum Sun.

Kum Sun died at the age of nine, but she is immortal. Though her life was short as a flash of lightning, she had reached the acme of mental development and set a perfect example of an honorable life. While there are many people in the world who have lived for a hundred years and left nothing worth mentioning to their nations, at the age of nine she performed an undying exploit that will be enshrined in the hearts of coming generations.

It can be regarded as a meritorious deed of the Korean communists to have raised this young heroine of world renown. In the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution we communists trained many children into young heroes and heroines, including Kim Kum Sun, Jon Ki Ok, Mok Un Sik, Kang Ryong Nam, Park Myong Suk, Park Ho Chol, Ho Jong Suk, Lee Kwang Chun, Kim Tuk Bong and others. They were all young martyrs thrown up during the tempest of the anti-Japanese revolution.

"Don't kill me by shooting, but with bayonets, and send the bullets to the guerrilla army." This was what Jon Ki Ok, a member of the Children's Corps in Munchun, who was arrested by the enemy while transmitting a message, said to the puppet Manchukuo policemen in the last moment of his life at the execution site. Even the firing squad was moved by his noble revolutionary spirit in placing the guerrilla army and victory in the anti-Japanese war above his own life and health even amid the dreadful tension and fear of death just prior to execution.

This brilliant feat by the mere boy, Mok Un Sik, is worth broadcasting to the whole world. On his way from Yongchangdong to Pinggang, carrying a secret message in his straw sandal, he was interrogated by the enemy at a guard post on the Jiqing Pass. The guards who were desperately searching his body for secrets suddenly tried to pull the straw sandal off his left foot. At this he pushed aside the self-defense corps man who was interrogating him and rushed straight into the post, where he thrust his right leg into the oven - the message was in the straw sandal on his right foot.

The enemy, realizing the reason for his action, beat him to a pulp in the attempt to draw him away from the oven. But despite the enemy's kicks and blows, he kept a firm grasp of the oven and did not take his foot out of fire. His straw sandal, his foot and his trouser leg were all burned. The enemy took him to a hospital and gave him an injection to bring him round, for he had lost consciousness. Their attempts to extract secrets from him were truly unrelenting. But Mok Un Sik breathed his last without revealing the secret he kept in his mind.

All the members of the Children's Corps and the Children's Vanguard who assisted in the anti-Japanese armed struggle were heroes and heroines, representing the youngest element of the first generation of our revolution.

Our revolution still regards the Children's Union, along with the League of Socialist Working Youth, as a dependable reserve for the Workers' Party. This is why we build our palaces for children with all the

precious things in the country and spare nothing for the education of the younger generation. I still tell the officials today to take loving care of the younger generation, and emphasize time and again that the children are the kings of our country. A revolution which does not love and care for the children has no future. It is foolish to expect that such a revolution will attain its glorious ideal.

Today an epidemic of hedonism is cutting a wide swath across the rest of the globe. The extreme egoism of caring only for oneself and not thinking about the younger generation has encroached very far upon the minds of many people. Some of them do not have children, alleging that they are a nuisance, and others give up the thought of marrying. Needless to say, it is a matter of personal choice whether one gets married or has children. But what pleasure is there in living without the younger generation?

The revisionists, who are addicted to extreme egoism and hedonism, are not taking care of the younger generation; they are disarming them spiritually and exposing them to all sorts of social evils. If the teenagers wail and lament at the chaos of reality, and bear a grudge against their parents, people in power and the world in general, then the revolution of that country has no future or its prospects are at best gloomy.

But when the officials spare no time, money, passion or effort for the sake of the future generation, our revolution will produce more children like Kim Kum Sun, Jon Ki Ok and Mok Un Sik.

As the family of a famous revolutionary, Kum Sun's family suffered terrible ordeals in the maelstrom of the anti-Japanese war. Her father, who was the head of the underground revolutionary organization in Wangougou, was falsely accused of being a member of the "Minsaengdan" and was killed. Her mother died a heroic death in the battlefield, fighting with a rifle in her hands to defend the guerrilla base. When her father was alive I gave him many difficult secret assignments. He was a man of strong will who carried through the tasks he had been entrusted with to the end. Five members of her family, including herself, were killed. How very similar their fate is to that of Ryu Kwan Sun's family!

This cruel and merciless destiny, however, did leave an heir to the lifeblood of this laudable family. The girl's two-year-old younger brother, whom her mother had left in the care of villagers before she went to her death in the battlefield, miraculously survived. It was Kim Jong Il, Secretary for Organizational Affairs, who identified Kim Kum Sun's younger brother and reported it to me. At that time her brother, Kim Yang Nam, was working as a music compiler at the documentary film studio after graduating from the university of music and dance. He had read in some publication that his father was executed on a charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan," and this knowledge had distressed him. He had been afraid that his father's dishonorable death might cause a public scandal.

I assured him that his father had been a faithful revolutionary, not a member of the "Minsaengdan."

From then, he worked as an official of the Party Central Committee, giving guidance in the field of art and literature and energetically assisting Secretary Kim Jong Il in his work. Like his sister, he was endowed with musical talent and intense ardor. The cowboy of yesterday, who plaintively lamented the



surging sorrow of a mined people on a grass harp, devoted his heart and soul to creating operas from the original revolutionary musical art.

Kim Yang Nam was one of the people who rendered distinguished service in the creation of the Mansudae Art Troupe and its development into one of the world's first troupes under the personal guidance of Secretary Kim Jong Il. In February 1971, the Mansudae Art Troupe gave a historic first performance in the Western Hemisphere, in Cuba, thousands of miles away from our motherland. At that time, Kim Yang Nam was guiding the troupe as deputy head for political affairs.

Secretary Kim Jong Il always felt pity for Kim Yang Nam's sad past: as the only heir to Kim Kum Sun's family, who had been nourished on other women's milk and spent his childhood and boyhood as other's servant. Kim Jong Il took particularly loving care of him, as though he were his own flesh and blood. When he contracted a fatal disease, Kim Jong Il organized an efficient medical team to provide him with

intensive medical treatment round the clock; he also transmitted his diagnosis to our embassies in foreign countries in order to obtain adequate supplies of expensive medicines, and sent special airplanes to countries which were said to have a developed pharmaceutical industry.

Kim Yang Nam underwent operations 10 times and this intensive care lengthened the span of his lifetime by almost two years.

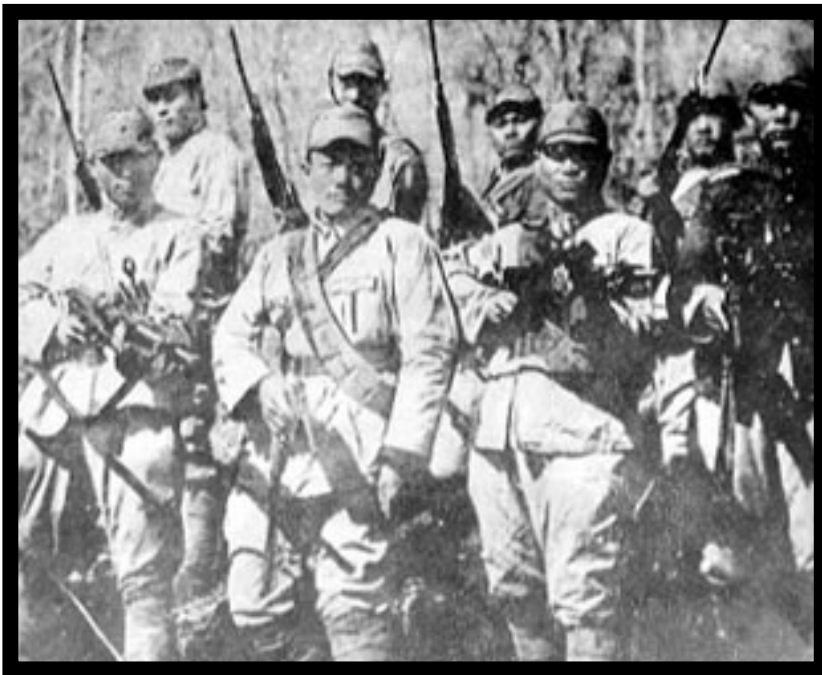
Kim Yang Nam died at the age of 40, which means he lived more than four times as long as his sister. But measured with the standard of our times, when there are so many people who live to a great age, his lifetime was short and he died too early. The ancient philosophy which says that "The good die young" must be regarded as out of keeping with the principles of life for the sake of many Kim Kum Suns and Kim Yang Nams who are still living in this world. Kim Yang Nam's second son recently graduated from the faculty of composition of the Pyongyang University of Music and Dance, which his father attended, and began creating musical pieces for the Mansudae Art Troupe. He is now singing the same revolutionary songs his grandfather, grandmother, aunt and father used to sing.

In this way our revolution, pioneered in blood by the forerunners, is inherited and wonderfully improved through the generations. Though Kum Sun is dead, her mettle and soul are still alive pulsating in the minds of the younger generation powerfully as they did in the days of her innocent childhood when she was romping about the valleys in Macun and Yaoyinggou.

## 9.1. The Korean People's Revolutionary Army

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It is elementary political knowledge that where there are people, there is a state and where there is a state, there is an armed force. Except for a few such special countries as Monaco, nearly all countries, large and small, have their own national armed forces for self-defense. The reason why many small and weak nations surrendered their sovereignty under the threat of a few volleys of gunfire from the colonialists and were obliged to become their slaves for hundreds of years was that they had had no armed forces or very weak ones.



*Photo: Korean People's Revolutionary Army soldiers.*

The armed force of Lee dynasty, too, was annihilated, it was incapable of defending the country. This armed force, which had been so heinous in the suppression of rebels, reviled the foreign aggressors for some time, but did not fire a single gun before yielding. The ruin of our country can be ascribed to this inefficient armed force as well as to the corrupt government.

In order to win back the sovereignty of the country, the patriots of Korea organized the Independence Army. It is inevitable that the nation which has been deprived of its

sovereignty will organize its armed force for its restoration. The nationalists organized the Independence Army and conducted armed resistance for many years, and the Korean communists organized the guerrilla army and dealt a heavy blow at the Japanese imperialist aggressors. Our small secret armed force, which started the long march of the anti-Japanese struggle, had now developed into an army with a regimental force in each county in Jiandao.

After repulsing the enemy's winter "punitive" operations, we realized very keenly the need to reorganize the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army into a people's revolutionary army and we discussed this matter seriously with the commanding officers of the guerrilla units in other regions. In the light of the prevailing situation merging the guerrilla regiments in the different counties into a single command was a pressing need, and the natural course of development of the AJPGA itself. Reorganizing the AJPGA into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was a revolutionary measure which would improve its combat efficiency and counter the large-scale offensive of the Japanese imperialists more effectively by providing a unified command for the enlarged guerrilla forces.

At the meeting at Mingyuegou the need for a large revolutionary force became the subject of our discussion. When discussing the future of the AJPGA there, we agreed that at the initial stage we should organize guerrilla battalions, develop their quantity and quality for some time, and then in due course reorganize them into a larger revolutionary force. Of course this matter was not a major item on the agenda at that meeting. However, the delegates had heated discussions about the future of the revolutionary armed force both within and outside the meeting. The most ardent proponents of the idea of large revolutionary forces were O Pin and Park Hun.

It is a common practice in colonies or semi-colonial countries for the armed forces of resistance to be organized on a small scale initially, expanded with gradual stealth and, when conditions are ripe, unified into a command. At the initial stage, when it returned from exile in Mexico, Fidel Castro's unit had 82 soldiers, of whom only 12 men survived. These people, equipped with seven rifles, went into the Sierra Maestra Mountains, developed their strength by expanding their ranks, and then attacked Havana, toppling the pro-US dictatorial regime of Batista as swiftly as lightning.

In the latter half of 1933, the merger of the guerrilla forces in Jiandao into a unified command became a major topic of discussion as a result of the lessons of Operation Macun for repulsing the enemy's winter "punitive" operations and the heroic battle fought in defense of tens of thousands of square miles of territory.

At the meeting to review operations, it was not the commanders of the 2nd company and 3rd company, who had fought with us throughout the 90-day defense of Xiaowangqing, but company commander Han Hung Gwon, who had been far away from the zone of operations, who spoke fervently about the need for cooperation between various companies and the merger of units. Han Hung Gwon said that the mission of his company in Operation Macun had been to contain a possible enemy advance to east Manchuria across the Laoyeling, but his company had not fought a single battle with the enemy, rendering no assistance to the main force in fighting. In other words, he implied that his company had not been able to attack the enemy from behind as it should during the enemy's "punitive" attack on the guerrilla zones. I thought a lot as I listened to his speech. His speech was self-critical, but he was not to blame in any way. He was an efficient commander who had carried out his mission in a responsible way.

Why did he criticize himself as being a commander lacking in dedication, revolutionary principle and insight? In short, what was he attempting to emphasize during the review? While he accused himself of shortsightedness, I, as his superior, drew a serious lesson from Operation Macun. The lesson was that, in order to organize harmonious cooperation between companies in accordance with the ever-changing combat situation, we needed an adequate command and staff structure and this required a unified system of command. His opinion was, after all, that 'people's guerrilla forces against the Japanese should be merged into one well-regulated command system.

Throughout the fight to frustrate the enemy's attack the guerrilla forces, operating separately in many places, fought separately, without any cooperation with their neighbors or any assistance from them.

In Helong County, for instance, the enemy was said to have launched his "clean-up" of the guerrilla base in Yulangcun in early November 1933. His first attempt had been checked for some time by a fierce counterattack and his second "punitive" operation had lasted only for three days, from the end of November. That was all the fighting they had there. As the time of action shows, the enemy's "punitive" operations in Yulangcun had started about 15 days earlier than his attack on Xiaowangqing. If at this time the guerrillas in other counties, who had not been engaged, had attacked the enemy's rear on the principle of mutual assistance, it would have been much easier for the guerrillas in Yulangcun to repel the enemy.

The circumstances in Yanji and Hunchun Counties were much the same.

What did this mean? It showed, though belatedly, that since the guerrilla zones were subject to enemy attack at different periods, all the guerrilla forces could have made their struggle easier by coordinating their actions through efficient cooperation, if only they had had a unified command and staff system for the guerrilla units in all guerrilla zones and counties.

However, in the circumstances of that time, when the guerrilla units were directed within the framework of each county and each district, such voluntary, active cooperation was impossible. The command system of the guerrilla army at the time of the enemy's winter "punitive" operations was therefore limited in its response to the demands of the situation. Until that time the guerrilla units were under the command of the military departments of the party committees at various levels. Since the battles in the early days of the guerrilla movement, when only one or two companies existed in each county, were fought on a small scale, this system of commanding the army on a district and county basis was not so bad.

However, as the ranks of the guerrilla army expanded and the enemy's "punitive" forces multiplied from hundreds to tens of thousands, it became impossible to choose to fight only small-scale battles. A battle is not always fought by the choice of one of the belligerent forces. When the enemy provoked us to battle by continuously reinforcing his forces, we could not but fight against him.

While the enemy was attacking us in large numbers by mobilizing this or that division, this or that brigade and this or that regiment from several directions, we were scattered in this valley or that one and we fought, without either combining our forces or helping our neighbors; should we be obliged to continue to fight in this way in the future, too? When attacking a large city or a town, we concentrated our forces by selecting men from each county; why should we fight defensive battles with a county or guerrilla zone as our unit of force? This was the idea that obsessed me before and after Operation Macun.

In a nutshell, the guerrilla movement required a new form of armed force corresponding to the content and scope of the movement. It was necessary for us to take radical measures to bring the armed units dispersed in the counties and districts under a single system. The quickest way of meeting this requirement was to merge the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces into a large revolutionary army.

A letter from the commander of the 4th company in Yaoyinggou also - seemed to suggest this. Circumstances prevented the commander from attending the summing-up meeting of Operation Macun,

so he reviewed the work of his company in a letter and sent it to Macun. O Jin U the company commander's orderly, brought that letter to us. During the review of Operation Macun I gave deep thought to the matter of merging the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces. I discussed it with Ju Jin, Yang Song Ryong and others on several occasions.

Once I went to Yang Song Ryong's house and played the guitar there. I did not do it because I was merry or free from anxiety. Frankly speaking, I felt gloomy at that time. Though Operation Macun had ended in victory for us, the guerrilla zone was suffering heartbreaking anguish. Many people who had shared their life and fate with us had been killed. It was not easy to rebuild houses on the ruins and make a new life.

When I visited Yang Song Ryong to discuss military matters, he greeted me with a gloomy face. The battalion commander of yesterday was still furious with anger for he had been detained on a false charge of being a member of the "Minsaengdan." Thanks to our guarantee, he had not been given a prison term, but he had also not been reinstated in his former position. He was operating between Xiaowangqing and Luozigou to obtain food grain; after being bereaved of his wife and mother by the enemy's "mopping-up" operation, he had become a man of few words.

When I brought up the matter of organizing a large-scale revolutionary army, he immediately lit up and expressed exceptional enthusiasm. He said, "I think the point in question is just how to merge the units."

He said nothing about whether he agreed or disagreed with me, but he expressed his approval by bringing up the possible means and forms of merger for discussion. What worried him most was whether some people of a chauvinistic mentality, who were crazy about the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, would accept the idea.

It was no wonder that he should feel uneasy about it. This was the painful position the Korean communists found themselves in, and the special circumstances required that the difficulties be smoothed over prudently.

In those days "international lines," formulated on the basis of their own principles and according to their own yardsticks for assessing all the problems of the communist movement and the national liberation struggle, were imposed upon us as authoritative, while national traditions and aspirations were sharply attacked as a nationalist tendency, in the name of so-called class interest and international solidarity. In this situation, it was not easy for the Korean communists who were building up their revolution in a foreign country to put into practice a plan for establishing their own independent armed force.

Ju Jin also approved of the idea of merging and reorganizing the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces into a large revolutionary army. As soon as I broached this matter, Ju Jin, who was open-hearted and generous, gesticulated forcefully and said that we should merge our units and fight big battles. I was very much pleased by his words about "big battles." It was very pleasant to hear such words from Ju Jin, a gallant man whom the Korean people in Jiandao loved and valued as one of their own. He went on to say that when the Koreans organized an independent revolutionary army by merging their armed units, they

would be accused "extending the revolution to Korea," but they should push ahead with this work as quickly as possible without paying any heed to such accusations.

Tong Chang-rong also supported our plan. He said: The AJPGA Organized in east Manchuria is an armed force formed on the initiative of the Korean communists and Koreans form the overwhelming majority of its ranks; though it was organized on the territory of China, it should ultimately develop into a Korean revolutionary armed force for carrying out the Korean revolution.

Tong Chang-rong's evaluation was very fair and progressive at a time when the very mention of the Korean revolution was stigmatized as EMlOnalism.

As he rightly pointed out, the Korean communists, such as Lee Hong Gwang and Lee Tong Gwang in south Manchuria and Ho Hyong Sik, Kim Chaek, Lee Hak Man and Choi Yong Kun in north Manchuria, to say nothing of those in east Manchuria, had played the roles of pioneers, advocates and leaders in the building up of armed force in the region of Manchuria, just as they had taken the lead in building up the party organizations there. And the overwhelming majority of the commanding officers and men of the armed force were Korean communists.

Tong Chang-rong advised me that, when forming an army, we should employ appropriate forms and means so as to support and supplement each other and consolidate our cooperation with the Chinese communists and that, by doing this, we would bring benefits both to Korea and China.

Pan, the inspector from the Comintern, gave full support to our idea, saying that it was a correct policy in keeping with the line of the Coin-intern.

Everyone capable of logical reasoning, from Yang Song Ryong, who led the Wangqing battalion with me, to Ju Jin, who later became the commander of the 1st Independent Division of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, Tong Chang-rong, from the east Manchuria ad hoc committee, and Pan, inspector of the Comintern, reached a full consensus on the policy of merging and reorganizing the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces into a large revolutionary army. And we were in general of the same opinion concerning the name and nature of the armed force which would be reorganized.

In March 1934, we formally proposed the policy of reorganizing the AJPGA into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, in full accord with our objectives and the character of the political force which would struggle for them.

The names used by the AJPGA in some areas of east Manchuria in its early days - the Worker-Peasant Guerrilla Army - had placed extreme emphasis of its class character, and it did not conform with the character of our revolution, the primary task of which we had defined as national liberation and independence before social emancipation, nor did it conform with the character of the revolution in northeastern China directed by the Chinese communists.

As a preparation for reorganizing the anti-Japanese guerrilla forces into the people's revolutionary army, the Korean communists in east Manchuria, shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese communists, developed the guerrilla battalions in each county into regiments. In this way, all the guerrilla forces in Jiandao were regrouped into five regiments. In every regiment we set up a political department, whose mission it was to give party guidance to the army, a staff in charge of operations, reconnaissance and communications, and a supply department dealing with clothing, food and medicines.

The Wangqing regiment was the first to be reorganized and this was followed by others in east Manchuria. That was the first stage of reorganization. The objective we set at the second stage was to form divisions.

During the days of Operation Macun we had felt very keenly the need to form divisions. Offering resistance to a large armed force of 5,000 men with only two companies was a feat unprecedented in the history of war. As we broke through the difficulties created in the guerrilla Zone by harassing the enemy with a small unit behind his lines, I used to think how happy we would be if we had forces on the divisional level, if not on the corps level, and how high our spirits would be if we conducted activities with large units and fired thousands of guns as one force!

Since regiments had already been organized in each county and their ranks were expanding quickly, the next thing to do was to form divisions without delay. That was the most important task of the moment.

Our objective was to organize first two divisions and one independent regiment under the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and then build on this success more divisions in the future. With this objective in mind, we organized a division out of the regiments in Yanji and Helong, and another division made up mainly of regiments in Hunchun and Wangqing.

In the course of this reorganization, the party committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was established as a new party guidance body. The party committee was entrusted with the onerous task of giving guidance to local party organizations as well as those in the army, because the local party organizations could not protect or maintain themselves if they were not supported by force of arms. In earlier times local party organizations had guided the party organizations in the army.

The work of reorganizing the AJPGA into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was carried out in a very short space of time from March to May 1934.

When they heard about this, the people in the guerrilla zones vied with each other in helping the army and prepared grand celebrations in every zone. The women in Wangqing made congratulatory banners and sent them to us; the YCL organization there staged a congratulatory performance by the children's art troupe and organized an athletic meet. In Sandaowan guerrilla zone in Yanji, a mass meeting and a demonstration attended by more than 1,000 people were held and delegates from the enemy-controlled areas participated in those events. The people were even further convinced of the bright future of national liberation by the formation of the KPRA, and they firmly resolved to rise up as one body with the army in

the anti-Japanese revolutionary war.

The reorganization of the AJPGA into the KPRA opened up a broad highway towards the development of large-force operations in a wider area. Had we not reorganized the AJPGA into the KPRA, or had we not created in good time the large units of regiments and divisions, we could not have lit the torch in Pochonbo, which illuminated the darkness of the motherland, nor won victory after victory in the battles fought in Fusong, Jiansanfeng, Hongtoushan, Limingshui, Taehongdan, Hongqihe and in other places in the homeland and in Manchuria, when we annihilated the enemy's crack troops. Nor could we have smashed the notorious siege imposed by the enemy upon the guerrilla zones after his "punitive" operations.

Through this reorganization we clearly demonstrated at home and abroad the will of the Korean nation to liberate their motherland by an armed resistance, no matter what the cost. If circumstances required, the KPRA operated in the name of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army. We were of the opinion that the word "northeast" did not suggest the name of a country, but, to all intents and purposes, was suggestive of a region. That the KPRA operated in the name of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army, not in the name of the Manchurian People's Revolutionary Army or the Chinese People's Revolutionary Army, was also compatible with the objectives of the Chinese comrades who were struggling against both Manchukuo and Japan. After all, the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army performed its mission as the KPRA and, at the same time, as a revolutionary armed force rendering support to the anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese cause of the Chinese communists.

The KPRA developed into the most powerful armed force in Jiandao, the eastern frontier region of Manchuria, and the region of the Korean peninsula centering on Mt. Paektu.

The principled stand and prudent political magnanimity the Korean communists had shown in the course of reorganizing the AJPGA into the KPRA contributed greatly in subsequent years to the development of the joint anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples, and particularly to the development of the armed struggle against the Japanese in northeast China. If we had insisted on an inflexible form and name corresponding only to the Korean revolution, in disregard of the prevailing subjective and objective situation of that time, the Korean communists would not have launched the anti-Japanese armed struggle in such an effective way, with the extensive support of the Chinese people.

When in later years we organized the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army, we called it by this name when operating in the northeastern region of China as its character required and changed its name to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in conformity with the specific situation when operating in areas inhabited mostly by Koreans or in the homeland, so that we lived and fought under the care and protection of the Korean and Chinese peoples everywhere we went.

Even from today's perspective, we consider it a matter of honor and pride that we placed greater emphasis on the essential content of the movement than on any of its formal aspects. Thanks to this principled view and magnanimous stance, we were always able to hold fast to the national character and independence of our struggle, while fulfilling our duty as internationalists and, for this reason, we enjoyed the respect and



support of the Chinese comrades and the Communist International.

Publications of those days called the people's revolutionary army organized in Jiandao the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, not as the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army. The Dongfang Zazhi (Oriental Magazine?Tr.) published by the Shangwu (Commercial) Publishing House in Shanghai in 1935 wrote, in connection with the guerrilla struggle in northeastern China, that there was a 3,000-strong Korean People's Revolutionary Army in Jiandao, and this was faithfully reprinted in the Lives of the Anti-Japanese Martyrs in Northeast China, published by the National Salvation Publishing House in Paris, France.

It is therefore no wonder that the KPRA was called the 2nd Army Corps after the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army was formed in the later years. The KPRA was, by its nature, an international body of the anti-Japanese allied front of the Korean and Chinese peoples, and the Koreans in the 2nd Army Corps supported the liberation struggle of the Chinese nation under the banner of internationalism, while carrying out their own task of struggling for the independence of Korea.

It was the Japanese imperialist forces of aggression which most feared the formation of the KPRA and its victories in battles in Jiandao, and clamored most loudly about the danger its existence would cause. In most cases they called our anti-Japanese armed force in east and south Manchuria "Kim Il Sung's army" instead of using its official name.

After the AJPGA had been reorganized into the KPRA, the Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army in Jiandao, led by Kong Xian-yong, Chai Shi-rong, Shi Zhong-heng, Li San-xia and others, was united with the KPRA, which was renamed the 2nd Army Corps, in order to achieve success in the anti-Japanese joint struggle; this new formation was also called the "Northeast Korean-Chinese People's Revolutionary Army."

In the course of these events, a solid alliance of the anti-Japanese armed forces of Koreans and Chinese was virtually realized in east Manchuria in the first half of the 1930s.

In one of his articles, Zhou Bao-zhong wrote, "The 2nd Army Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army was, at the same time, the 'Korean People's Revolutionary Army.... In the course of the anti-Japanese guerrilla war the Chinese and Korean peoples maintained ties sealed with blood for the sake of their common cause.'" Thus he recognized the entity of the KPRA and extolled the alliance of Korean and Chinese armed forces against the Japanese that existed in the course of the historical common struggle.

In this sense the Japanese called the guerrilla army organized in Manchuria, and in Jiandao in particular, the "pure Korean partisans."

According to the data uncovered by one of our comrades, V Rappoport, a famous expert on Chinese and Korean affairs in the Soviet Union, contributed an article under the title of "The Partisan Movement in the Northern Area of Korea" to the Soviet international political magazine The Pacific in 1937, in which he

stated: "The partisan army in Korea has mostly been merged into a unified command, has its own center and calls itself the people's revolutionary army.... The expansion of the existing relationship and contact between the Korean and Manchurian partisan armies is setting the Japanese militarists atremble with great unease and, for this reason, Japan is paying serious attention to the border area of Korea."

The reorganization of the AJPGA into the KPRA did not mean a mere change of name or a technical restructuring. It meant a new stage of army-building, of improving the command system of the guerrilla army and strengthening its ranks both in quantity and quality by following up on its successes and drawing on its experiences after reviewing the path of militant advance traversed by the AJPGA. After reorganizing the AJPGA into the KPRA, we launched unceasing military actions to frustrate the enemy's siege.

The headquarters of the Kwangtung Army and the military authorities in Tokyo, who had suffered defeat in the winter "punitive" operations which they had flaunted as the final "mopping-up," made a great fuss over determining the cause of their failure and deciding who would be answerable for it; then in the spring of 1934, they re-examined their previous scorched-earth tactics and proposed a plan which they called a siege, an even more notorious, new plan for "clean-up." It was an atrocious operation intended to wipe out the guerrilla zones for good by combining military siege and attack, political suppression and economic blockade. We regarded this new invention of the Japanese as a replica of the blockade policy Chiang Kaisek had pursued when attacking the Soviet zones in China.

While Chiang Kaisek's blockade policy had been aimed at denying the communist army clothing and food "by producing a subhuman world filled with political terror and economic crisis," the Japanese siege was aimed at killing all the people and soldiers in the guerrilla zones by shooting and burning and imposing on them death from hunger and cold. To this end, they tried to separate the army and people by building concentration villages and to detect and eliminate all the forces of resistance through the introduction of such medieval collective security systems as the ten-household joint responsibility system and the five-household joint surveillance system.

The blockade policy and siege were similar to each other in their tactical aspects. Chiang Kaisek's tactics were to refrain from hasty pursuit or from deep penetration after encircling the enemy but to occupy a position and consolidate it slowly, studying the means of holding it, then proceed to an attack of another position. The tactics of "step-by-step occupation" invented by the Japanese can be compared with Chiang's tactics.

Commenting on this, our comrades said, "How wretched the Japanese are! They have to learn from Chiang Kaisek." This comment was more than just a joke. In his preparations for the siege from the spring of 1934, the enemy moved a greater number of crack troops of the Kwangtung Army and his occupation army in Korea to the areas around the guerrilla bases and reinforced them with puppet Manchukuo army troops.

To cope with a threatening situation in which the enemy was deploying his forces for the purpose of siege, we ensured that the KPRA forces forestalled his attempt by assaulting his military and political

Strongholds one after another from behind in large-scale operations, while fighting in defense of the guerrilla zones and, at the same time, Expanding the guerrilla zones to more favorable areas. This enabled us to manage the difficult situation on the basis of our initiative, consolidate the victories won at the cost of our blood, and maintain the people's high revolutionary spirit.

The KPRA launched a spring offensive. We raided the areas in Wangqing where the enemy forces were concentrated and the constructing sites of the concentration villages at Xiaobaicaogou, Daduchuan, Shitouhezi and Zhuanjiaolou. Our comrades in Hunchun, Yanji and Helong also attacked the construction sites of the concentration villages, smashing the enemy's attempt to establish a siege in its very first stage.

In order to consolidate the success achieved by the spring offensive and, maintaining the initiative, turn the enemy's attempted siege into a fiasco, we immediately launched a summer offensive. The main purpose of this effort was to expand the guerrilla zones to the northwestern area of Antu County and northeastern area of Wangqing County. Defending a few fixed guerrilla zones while the enemy surrounded us would mean falling into the trap laid by the enemy and assisting his efforts.

The task of expanding the guerrilla zone to the northwestern area of Antu County was entrusted to the 1st Division and the Independent Regiment of the KPRA and the task of expanding it to the northeastern area of Wangqing County to the 2nd Division of the KPRA. While the area of guerrilla activity which connected Dadianzi and Fuerhe was the lifeline of Antu County, the area including Luozigou, Laomuzhuhe, Taipinggou and Sandaohezi was the lifeline of Hunchun and Wangqing Counties. Being adjacent to the Mudanling and Laoyeling Mountains, these areas were considered ideal for guerrilla activities, and had been developed by veteran soldiers such as Hong Bom Do, Choe Myong Rok, Lee Tong Hui and Hwang Pyong Gil since the days of the Independence Army movement.

We made a plan under which Ju Jin, commander of the 1st Division, and Yun Chang Bom, commander of the Independent Regiment, were to attack the Dadianzi-Fuerhe area first, so as to draw the enemy's attention, and then we were to advance in the direction of Luozigou. While the attention of the Japanese Kwangtung Army was focused on the area around Dadianzi, Antu County, as we had planned it should be, a part of the 4th and 5th Regiments of the 2nd Division of the KPRA and the Chinese nationalist army units advanced to Luozigou and occupied Sandaohezi and Sidahezi. In Sandaohezi a joint meeting of the KPRA soldiers and 1,500 officers and men of the Chinese units was held. The meeting was in the spirit of an ideological campaign for victory in the battle at Luozigou. Participating in the battle from the side of the Chinese nationalists were units led by Kong Xian-yong, Shi Zhong-heng, Chai Shi-rong and Li San-xia.

Luozigou was a strategic area for the enemy, for it connected Baicaogou in Wangqing County and the Dongning county town. Hundreds of puppet Manchukuo army soldiers led by Wen Chang-ren, a battalion commander, were stationed there. It had originally been a moderate-sized town of about 500 households, but it had rapidly developed into a military stronghold of the enemy after the September 18 incident, and had become an important base for the Jiandao task force since the spring of 1932. When the task force was withdrawn, the Japanese imperialists shipped a heavily reinforced battalion for use in their siege operation.

Occupying the Luozigou area by means of a preemptive attack was the fundamental link in the overall chain of our efforts to create the conditions for lifting a corner of the siege and expanding new guerrilla zones. At the house of old man Lee Thae Gyong in Sandaohezi we held a meeting with the leaders of the Chinese units to discuss the plan of operations.

Lee Thae Gyong was a man of high patriotic spirit who had served in both the Righteous Volunteers' Army and the Independence Army. Working with Choe Ja Ik, he had once been a general affairs director of the northern political and military administration. It was said that So Il had nominated him, a simple rank-and-file soldier, as director, because he had been charmed by Lee Thae Gyong's exceptional marksmanship and calligraphy. When So Il had preached the Taejong faith, worshipping Tan gun, the old man had become a faithful follower of the faith; when Kim Iwa Jin had insisted on the struggle against communism, the old man had supported him and received a revolver from him as a reward for his support. When Kim Jwa Jin had evacuated his forces to north Manchuria just before the large-scale Japanese "clean-up" in Jiandao, Lee Thae Gyong had followed his seniors as far as Mishan. But after Kim disappeared into the deep forest in Daomugou, Yanji County, he had come to Sidaohezi with his colleagues, buried his weapon, and taken up farming.

The impression of the old man that I can still recall is from when I unfolded a sketch map of the streets of Luozigou to explain the operational plan to the leaders of the Chinese units, and he put a stone on a corner of the map, the corner by the window of his house, lest the map should flap in the wind. The family of Lee called it a blessed stone. It was a peculiar stone, shaped as smooth as an egg. The old man said that when he was a director of the administration in Shiliping a friend of his had given that stone to him before he died, left a will saying he would be blessed if he kept it for a long time.

That stone is now kept in the Korean Revolution Museum. Before he died, the old man handed the stone over to his son to keep as a family treasure, saying that General Kim Il Sung had put it on his operational map and touched it and that he should keep it well. When a group of visitors to the old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle went to the northeastern region of China in 1959, his son handed the stone over to them. Though he said he disliked communism, the old man spared nothing to help us.

I met this old man for the first time in the summer of 1933 through the introduction of Choe Jong Hwa, the head of the Anti-Japanese Association in Luozigou. I had gone to Sandaohezi on horseback and was conducting political work among the people there. At that time I had organized an Anti-Japanese Association in Sandaohezi and accepted the old man, who was the elder of the village, as a member of the association. After joining the association he had educated the villagers well and all the villagers had done what he, the elder and the most influential man in the village, had told them to do.

It was more easy to transform a village on revolutionary lines if at least one or two members of the Righteous Volunteers' Army or the independence Army were living there. For the most part, former soldiers of the Independence Army who, like Lee Thae Gyong, had given up the tight halfway and buried their weapons, retained their patriotism. When they, the hardcore elements, went around one household after another, calling on people to help the revolutionary army soldiers who were suffering in the

mountains, everybody responded positively. When the people were asked what they should do when the soldiers came to their village, they replied, "We should cook rice cakes," or "We should kill a calf." Some of the former Independence Army soldiers had betrayed their cause, but such people were few.

The vast majority of them led an honest life to their last moment. For this reason, I was careful not to neglect work with the influential veterans of the Independence Army wherever I went. Before anybody else I visited such Independence Army veterans as O Thae Hui in Shixian, Choe Ja Ik in Xidapo, Lee Chi Baek in macun, Kim Tong Sun in Dongricun and Lee Thae Gyong in Sandaohezi, greeting them and lying down, heads on wooden pillows, beside them to talk over current affairs.

After liberation some people gave the cold shoulder to the veterans of the Independence Army, alleging that their ideology was different from ours. In those days people with ideologies other than communism were rejected out of hand. At times, narrow-minded people in the area of personnel administration would give them a wide berth, and such rash responses acted like a wet blanket on the united front policy we had consistently adhered to. Whenever I encountered such people, I would say to them, "It is wicked to ostracize the Independence Army veterans on the grounds that they have different ideology. It is their limitation, but not grounds for guilt, that the soldiers of that army did not become communists. Are you trying to make communists of Chun Hyang and the young nobleman Ri9?

Even if we are in power, we communists must not fail to appreciate our patriotic seniors. The trend of thought differs from age to age; then why do you ostracize them, guard against them and avoid them? Are they guilty for fighting for Korea's independence at the risk of their lives when others were living with their families in warm houses, eating hot rice? I think that the veterans of the Righteous Volunteers' Army and the Independence Army who fought under arms are more laudable patriots than those who had led a comfortable life in their own houses while earning their own bread. You should realize that you will be forsaken by the people if you ostracize the Independence Army veterans.

On the basis of this view, we enrolled the sons and daughters of the martyrs of the Independence Army in the school for bereaved families of revolutionaries which was built at Mangyongdae. We appointed veterans of the Independence Army who actively supported our line of building a new Korea to official posts according to their abilities. Mr. Kang Un Gon, the first Chairman of the Central Committee of the Peasants Union of North Korea, and Mr. Lee Yong, the Minister of City Management of the first Cabinet of the DPRK, were veterans of the Independence Army.

While we were preparing for the battle after the meeting, our recon naissance party informed headquarters that the enemy had rushed out of the walled town in order to forestall our attack. We lured the enemy out to a point favorable to us and then destroyed his main force, and by pursuing the fleeing enemy we launched our attack on the walled town. Our combined forces had to fight a hard battle in the pouring rain.

The greatest obstacle in the battle at Luozigou was a fort on a west bill just as in the battle in the Dongning county town. The battle went on for three days because of the enemy's desperate resistance from the fort. As we were holding a meeting at the headquarters of the Chinese units on the third day, a

mortar shell from the fort caused wounds, some of them serious, to some of the commanders of the Chinese units, including Zhou Bao-zhong. Zhou was participating in the battle as the chief of staff of Kong Xian-yong's unit. Dispirited by the wounds suffered by their commanders, some of the Chinese units began taking to flight in a disorderly manner, running directly away from Luozigou.

If this retreat were not checked, the battle would end in failure. The capture of the fort on the hill would be decisive to the outcome of the battle. Not only mortars but several heavy and light machineguns were mounted on the fort. Shots from this fort fatally wounded the company commander, Han Hung Gwon, in the abdomen, so that his intestines came gushing out, and JO Wal Nam was also put out of action. Han's wound was so appalling that he himself requested us to shoot him.

To the KPRA soldiers who were pinned down so that they could not approach the fort but only grind their teeth in vexation, I shouted, "Comrades, we must seize the fort at any cost. Let us fight for the revolution to the last drop of our blood!"

Then, mowing the enemy down with Mauser fire, I charged forward. The rain of machinegun bullets from the fort grazed my ears. A bullet pierced through my cap. But I dashed forward without pause for health. The men sprang to their feet and followed me. The fort which was boasted to be impregnable fell into our hands in 30 minutes and a red flag was hoisted on top of it.

The soldiers of the Chinese units who saw that flag turned round and launched an all-out charge in high spirits. The self-sacrificing spirit of the Chinese communists, including Zhou Bao-zhong, was highly influential in arousing them from apathy and frustration to charge. Though wounded heavily, Zhou blocked the soldiers' flight with open arms and shouted at them to look at the red flag flying on the fort on the west hill. The soldiers who saw him stopped their retreat and assaulted the enemy position, raising a loud battle cry.

The battle ended in victory for us.

Wen, the battalion commander of the puppet Manchukuo army, and the Japanese instructor, who were defending Luozigou, said in the last despairing message they sent to the commander of the Kwangtung Army that they had been surrounded and under attack by 2,000 troops of the combined forces of Kim Il Sung's army and other units for six days and five nights and that they were on the brink of being annihilated. They wailed, "Our ammunition has run out and our fate will be decided in a moment. But we are proud of having done our best for the sake of Japan and the building of Manchukuo. Mr. Commander, please understand this and forgive us."

Our victory at Luozigou and Dadianzi was the greatest of all the victories the KPRA won in the early days of the anti-Japanese war. The KPRA's attack on Luozigou dealt a heavy blow at the enemy in his attempt to besiege us and struck mortal terror into his heart. After this battle the enemy's large and small "punitive" forces deployed in the vicinity of the guerrilla bases were paralyzed with fear.

Indeed, the battle at Luozigou reduced the enemy's power in the northeastern region of the Wangqing guerrilla zone, creating a situation favorable for expanding the guerrilla zones and making a great contribution to the further consolidation of the allied front with the Chinese nationalist armed forces. After the battle we continued brisk political and military activities to thwart the enemy's attempts at siege. When the guerrilla zones were evacuated many of the revolutionary people in east Manchuria were able to settle down in the areas around Antu and Luozigou because we had turned this region into an invisible revolutionary base through intense military and political activities from the early days.

The KPRA sacrificed much blood during the summer offensive in 1934. The victory in the battle at Dadianzi was stained with the blood of Cha Ryong Dok, a popular commander of working class origin, who was one of the organizers of the Helong guerrilla unit and the political commissar of a regiment. He was the first political commissar to fall in action after the formation of the KPRA.

## 9.2. The Haves and the Have-nots

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The guerrilla base was my home and secure nest, but I did not always stay there. An army which is cooped up behind a fence will invite tactical self-destruction. Consuming the people's provisions and gadding about the Xiaowangqing valley went against the grain. We were also disgusted by the doings of the Leftists and chauvinists who destroyed innocent people on their own side by labeling them as "Minsaengdan."

I used to go to fight behind the enemy lines in command of my unit whenever the situation permitted me to do so. After the semi-guerrilla zones were set up, I did this more frequently.

The people liked us to do this because they knew well that our actions behind the enemy lines would bring them rice and clothing. However the enemy might slander communism, the people did not believe him if we once stayed with them overnight. The personalities of the communists, expressed in their morality and manners had a stronger effect on the people than the enemy's propaganda.

Men who had had interesting experiences in the enemy-held area vied with one another to accompany me.

I used to take the 5th company with me. Taking too many men could mean problems with food and attract too much attention to our activity, so I kept my company between 50 and 60 men. When more men were needed, I used to call on the 1st company. As I frequently operated behind the enemy lines, Choe Chun Guk, who was in command of the 2nd company, and Jang Ryong San who was in command of the 3rd company, earned the burden of defending Wangqing. The 4th company defended Yaoyinggou.

The 5th company was the crack unit in Wangqing. If they were ordered to march with an interval of three steps between men, they did so; when ordered to suppress the sound of their breathing, they did so. We used to hit a moderate target and then withdraw five or a dozen miles like lightning, avoiding major commitment.

Our harassing operations behind the enemy lines prevented the enemy from committing all his forces to the attack on the guerrilla base.

Some officials in charge of Party propaganda work after liberation gave no publicity to the experience of the Korean communists in fighting behind the enemy lines during the war against the Japanese. Instead, they propagandized only the traditions and experience of a foreign country. The flunkys fever spread by these people developed to such an extreme that immediately after liberation our people were not even aware that there had been a heavy battle fought for the defense of Xiaowangqing during the anti-Japanese war, though they knew all about the battle of Stalingrad and tank battle at Kursk. At one time the Hero Lee Su Bok was called the "Korean Matrosov."



At the time of the Fatherland Liberation War our people believed that Matrosov of the Soviet Union was the first hero in the world ever to block an enemy pillbox with his own body. They were totally ignorant of the fact that Kim Jin, one of the anti-Japanese martyrs of their own country, had done this much earlier than Matrosov.

If we had educated people in our revolutionary traditions immediately after liberation, many of them would not have been killed during the temporary wartime retreat. They could have formed small units of five to six people or 15 to 20 people, each carrying an axe and one or two mal (a mal approximates to two pecks) of rice, and moving from mountain to mountain, firing several shots now and then and posting up leaflets; in this way they could have endured one month or two in mountains. But such education was not given in advance, so during the war we incurred losses that could have been avoided.

Most of my activity behind the enemy lines was conducted in the rural villages in the area on the Tuman River. In one year I traveled by rail in the area along the Tuman River and I could recognize the mountains and ravines across the river, which looked exactly the same as in the old days.

As the saying has it, the darkest place is under the candlestick - it was a good choice to operate under the very nose of the enemy. Our unit advanced to a mountain at the back of Tumen. We all operated in plain clothes there. We posted a sentry on the top of each of three hills, and carried on our operation without haste, reading and sleeping in the forest. The enemy had no idea there was a guerrilla unit operating under his very nose. In the summers of 1933 and 1934 we operated around Tumen and Liangshuiquanzi on the Tuman River.

While I was conducting mass political activities in the vicinity of Liangshuiquanzi following my return to Wangqing after the negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng, I had sent some of my men to the Tumen area and I myself had talked to the local inhabitants with a view to finding a suitable place for my headquarters. In general, they recommended three places, Mt. Songdong, Beigaoliling, and Caomaodingzi, as ideal; in fact, these places provided safety for the headquarters but were unsuitable for the purposes of our activity.

Something attracted me to the mountain at the back of Tumen. As I travelled to and from Onsong, I had thought it resembled Moran Hill in Pyongyang. I examined the place on the map and found it ideal for our purposes.

It had several ravines and dense forests, which made it an ideal place to spend the summer in improvised grass-thatched huts. Our organizations had been active in many places around this mountain since 1930, but there were still many villages where we had no organizations. Our intention was to turn these virgin villages into revolutionary ones.

I had intended to go to the mountain at the back of Tumen as soon as the Luozigou battle was over. But I had to put off my departure and stay at Xiaowangqing for a while, since I had to obtain food and clothing for a Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army unit. It was already the beginning of hot period but the men

of the Qingshan unit were still wearing worn-out cotton-padded clothes and barely managing to survive on potatoes the size of sparrows' eggs. In consequence, the potato fields around the place where the troops were stationed had been all ravaged. The owners of the fields resented the Qingshan unit.

Relations between officers and men, who were ill-fed and ill-clothed, had naturally deteriorated, and the unit was turning into a gang of bandits. Some of them showed signs of wishing to surrender. The state of affairs in Kaoshan and Shi Zhong-heng's units was much the same. At that time Kaoshan unit had not yet been admitted to the KPRA.

We attacked Gayahe in cooperation with the Qingshan unit and divided the captured food and clothing among the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units and made another raid on the enemy in Diaomiaotai before we set off for the mountain behind Tumen. On my arrival at the mountain I found Han Hung Gwon, the company commander, had arrived before me. In the battle at Luozigou he had been wounded in the belly so heavily that his guts had fallen out of his abdomen, and he had been sent to guerrilla hospital. Now he had slipped away from hospital and had been secretly following our company.

The wound in his belly had almost healed up during the past month, but the marks of the suture were still reddish. Afraid that his scar might split again, I ordered him go back to the hospital. This giant of a man pleaded with a tear-stained face not to be sent back. So I instructed the acting company commander, Comrade Wang, to take good care of him even on the mountain, so that the wound would not be aggravated.

The original name of Tumen was Huimudong. It was a village where the Koreans had built huts and baked lime. The place was surrounded by limestone mountains.

The Japanese imperialists who occupied Manchuria after the September 18 incident extended the Jirin-Hoeryong railway from Chaoyangchuan to Huimudong and named the terminal Tumen. They built houses around the station, set up a branch office of the Japanese consulate, built a police station and a customs house and stationed a garrison there. Thus they had turned the quiet village which had existed on limestone into a crowded town of consumers constantly pestered by army and police. The new street was named Tumen and the old village at the foot of the mountain to the west retained the old Korean name of Huimudong. A railway was soon built across the border between Tumen and Namyang. From then on, Tumen was an eastern gate protecting the Japanese concession in Manchuria. On the opposite side of the river lay Namyang, an important town on the route connecting Korea and Manchuria.

In the latter half of the 1930s, Japanese intelligence services involved in preparing for aggression against the Soviet Union made their base in this town. As we have seen above, Tumen was a place of considerable military and political significance.

In many respects it was an advantage for us that Tumen became a base for our activity and an important point on the route to the semi-guerrilla zones in the homeland. We had formed an organization in Huimudong in the early days of our activity. This organization was under the influence of Oh Jung Song.

When I crossed the river to Onsong in September 1930 I was helped by the comrades from Huimudong and when I went to Jongsong in May the next year I also received assistance from them. It was with the help of this organization that Choe Kum Suk had obtained apples and pears to tempt my appetite when I was ill.

Tumen, a transit point which connected us with Onsong, could in effect be called a supply base for the guerrillas.

The objective of our operations on the mountain at the back of Tumen was to frustrate the enemy's scheme of "severing the people from the bandits." In those days the enemy called the revolutionary army "communist bandits." The Japanese imperialists made it their policy to isolate the revolutionary army from the people and strove frantically to achieve this. They devised various schemes, namely, an ideological conversion operation, the policy of concentration villages, the ten-household joint responsibility system, the five-household joint surveillance system, and surrender operations.

Under the tyrannical policy of "severing the people from the bandits" many of our organizations were destroyed and the people began to panic. Some people went so far as to sign surrender applications. This tendency was most glaringly evident in the southern part of Wangqing on the Tuman River.

We promulgated a slogan - Let us frustrate the enemy's isolation scheme by the unity of the people and the army! - and to implement it we set out to restore the organizations among the masses. We restored the organization in Nanyangcun where Oh Jung Hup was living, and we also formed new organizations with the Choes, based in Dalazi. After completing this work in the adjacent villages, we gradually moved towards Liangshuiquanzi, working among the masses, and infiltrating the lumberjacks and peasants. Once I led a small group to Xiongjidong, Mijiang, Hunchun County by way of Solgol, and re-established the organizations in Kyongwon (Saeppyol) and Hunyung across the Tuman River. As we did this, those people who had been distressed by the enemy's isolation scheme became active as their ties with the revolutionary army were strengthened.

During our operations from the mountain behind Tumen, I frequently visited the area of the six towns in the homeland in order to improve the guidance system of grassroots-level party organizations and other revolutionary organizations in various parts of the homeland and extend the work of building the party deep into Korea.

Since the formation of a party organization on Turu Hill in Onsong County in October 1930, a number of basic party organizations had also been created in the areas along the Tuman River through the efforts of hardcore members of the party leadership such as Oh Jung Hwa, Kim Il Hwan, Chae Su Hang, O Pin and the political workers, Lee Pong Su, An Kil, and Jang Kum Jin. Many basic party organizations had been set up in Hoeryong, Yonsa, Unggi (Sonbong), Musan, Kyongwon (Saeppyol), Rajin, Puryong, Sinam-dong in Chongjin and other places.

In August 1933, a training course on underground party work was given in Paksokgol, Kyongwon

(Saeppyol) County. The two-day training course, which was conducted under a tree near a charcoal kiln in Paksokgol, was attended by political workers and those leaders of underground revolutionary organizations who had been working in the northern region and other parts of Korea. The lectures on the building of underground party organizations were given by me, on questions of YCL work by Jo Tong Uk, on women's work by Park Hyon Suk, and on Children's Corps work by Park Kil Song.

It was about this time that a meeting of representatives of party and other revolutionary organizations in the homeland was held under our guidance in Onsong. The meeting took place in Jinmyong School in Phungin Workers' District (the present name of the place), Onsong County in February 1934. The main topic of discussion was expanding party organizations into wider areas of the country, and establishing the system of guidance for party organizations. The meeting also decided to establish regional organs of guidance such as district party committee.

As a result of this decision the Onsong district party committee headed by Jon Jang Won was formed. The meeting was important because it marked a turning-point in expanding the work of party building in the homeland in the first half of the 1930s.

At that time Choson Ilbo (the Korea Daily) reported that "The party meeting held in Jinmyong School decided on a few radical slogans and circulated them in print." The report gave a brief impression of the meeting.

The operations on the mountain behind Tumen gave rise to many amusing anecdotes. I still remember one story about a stingy landowner who was made to pay dearly for his niggardliness. I do not remember the name of the village where the landowner lived, but it was certainly a Korean village.

One day I let the soldiers take a rest on the mountain at the back of Tumen and went down in plain clothes to the village where this landowner lived. At that time civilian wear was not a suit in the western style but Korean clothes. We always carried these clothes in our rucksack. Without wearing these clothes it was impossible to work in the enemy-controlled areas. Those who spoke fluent Japanese carried Japanese clothes.

That day I was accompanied by my orderly Lee Song Lim and two other men.

It was late afternoon, and we had a few hours till sunset. I wanted to sound out the feelings of the people in the village, which we had not visited yet. I was also feeling bored after living in the mountain for days at a time. I intended to ask for help and form an organization in the village if the villagers were well-disposed. There were no Japanese soldiers or policemen there.

We made for the largest, most imposing house with a tiled roof and I asked if the master was in. There was no answer and the door was locked from the inside in the middle of the day. We took the handle of the gate and rattled it. Only then did we hear someone coming out, dragging his shoes lazily. A middle-aged man opened the gate and cast a frowning glance at us. This was the landowner who would be taught

a lesson.

"Sir, we are travelers. It's getting late and we're looking for lodgings. Will you be kind enough to let us stay overnight at your house?" I asked him politely.

The master spat abusive language at us, calling us crazy. He was unpleasant and ill-tempered.

"Why have you chosen to come to this house in the village? There is an inn a little over a mile from here. Do you think this is the village mill?" His manner of rolling his eyes and shouting abuse betrayed an ugly temper. Without any preliminaries he denounced us as crazy and treated us with contempt, as if we were beggars. I felt indignant. But I was tolerant and said politely once again, "Sir, I have pain in my legs and blisters on my feet. So I can walk no farther. Let us stay overnight here, please."

He yelled back at us, foaming with rage, "I say the inn is not far from here. Why do you cling to me like a leech? I haven't even met you bastards at a fair."

My orderly, standing behind me, begged for the man to have mercy on me. "Master, we have no money to pay for the inn. It is said that God blesses the kind-hearted. You could pretend that you are treating us to a feast, you may....

"Do you want me to give you money?" he cut the orderly off in mid-speech and spat, "What nonsense!" He shut the gate and disappeared inside.

This was the first time I received such treatment in ten years of revolutionary activity. There were many rich people in central Manchuria, where I had been engaged in underground activity. None of them was as cold-hearted as this landowner.

My orderly was quivering with rage. He had never imagined that his commander would be treated so badly by such a worthless country landowner. He suggested shooting the brute. He said he would at least like to fire a blank in his ear to scare him into fainting.

I, too, was on fire with rage. It is only natural that fellow countrymen should become more friendly when they meet in a foreign land. Even people whose lives set them against each other in their own land share a feeling of fellowship in a foreign land. This is the nature of human beings. The landowner who insulted us by calling crazy had not an iota of compassion.

Could human nature become spoilt in this way because the country had been ruined? There is a saying that misery loves company.

No nation is so compassionate as the Koreans. That is why we have the saying: an evil spirit cannot resist ritual prayers, a human being cannot resist compassion.

Koreans are especially hospitable to visitors, and this is a virtue. It is the kind-hearted custom of our people to accord cordial hospitality to their visitors. Although the head of our family was only a grave keeper, our family had always been kind to its visitors. If we had a visitor when our provisions had almost run out and we had to live on gruel, my mother used to add a bowl of water to the gruel pot so that the visitor might share the meal with us. In those cases, my mother and my aunt used to eat the thinnest portion of the gruel.

Even though the women of my family might skip one or two meals, they never complained about the family's poverty or misfortune. This was the true image of the Korean nation, which was engraved in my heart in my boyhood.

Since ancient times people in this country had been so hospitable that even a penniless man could have traveled throughout the country if he had chosen to. That is why foreigners who have been guests in an ordinary Korean home have spoken highly of our country as an eastern country of great courtesy.

Was it not Korean blood, then, running in the veins of that wicked landlord? How could he be so cold-hearted towards a fellow man?

He was immoral.

A nation whose power has decayed can be dispossessed of its country. A people without a country can be deprived even of their written and spoken languages and their surnames. But how can they discard their kind hearts? If all of the people were to become brutes like this landowner, the Korean people could never win back Korea.

It is fortunate, however, that only a tiny handful of Koreans were like the landlord. I was obliged to revise my views of the rich.

In the summer of 1933, a unit of the Chinese national salvation army stationed in Shiliping made a raid upon Shixian and, as one of the operations for collecting economic contributions, held a wife of a Chinese rich man for ransom. She had had her feet tightly bound to keep her feet from growing according to Chinese custom, and she had been detained for a few days in her simple underwear in Shiliping.

The unit sent a notice to her husband informing him that if a certain amount of money was brought before a certain date, his wife would be sent back home. The rich man, however, did not show up in Shiliping, saying that with that amount of money he could get married to a prettier woman. It was her own father, instead of her husband, who ransomed her. This showed what the ill-tempered rich people were like.

We went around the village again to find a lodging. We decided to ask for help at a thatched house instead of a tile-roofed house. We saw a thatched house not far from the landowner's house: the members

of the household were having supper with the doors of the rooms wide open.

I spoke to the master of the house just as I had done to the landowner. "Good evening, we are travelers. It is late and we are seeking a lodging. Can we stay overnight at your house?"

He rose and looked out at us, resting his hand on the upright of the door. "Come in and sit down. Join us in this humble gruel. We apologize, but it is our only meal. Please, come in, though the room is not in good order."

"Don't mention it. We are in no position to complain."

He led us into the room. Even though the room was shabby, his words and deeds showed how kind-hearted he was.

The husband asked his wife if there was another bowl of gruel. She said yes. At this the thought came to me that people who live in poverty were quite different. The common people possess good hearts but the rich do not. Their sincere invitation to join them at supper moved both of us.

"What will you do if we eat your supper? All we need is a lodging." We declined the offer with thanks, thinking it too much to eat their supper.

The man chided me for my refusal.

"There's no such rule of etiquette in the world. Guests are supposed to accept their host's kindness. I'm afraid you are declining it because it is not very tasty. But this is all we can offer. Wife, bring a few more roots of leek and a plate of bean paste."

The mistress did as told by her husband.

We were moved almost to tears by the warmth of their hearts; they were treating us as if we were their own kinsfolk. I sat at the table but the thought of the comrades standing guard on the outskirts of the village prevented me from taking up my spoon.

"Thank you, master! I'll eat it later. Help yourself first. Our comrades are outside the village."

"How many of you are still to come?" He looked worried as he asked this. Naturally he was worried about more visitors coming, because there was only one extra bowl of gruel. "There are two more comrades and they have blisters on their feet, they cannot walk. Master, they say there is an inn around here, is it true?"

"Yes, certainly. It is about two miles away. How can they walk all that distance with blistered feet? You

should stay here tonight and go there tomorrow morning, though you'll have to share gruel with us. Please bring the others here, too."

I asked him what sort of a man the landowner was.

He replied that, in a word, he was miserly and ill-tempered and added: "He has turned his back against the villagers but he is fairly friendly with policemen and officials. A few days ago, a young man who came from Korea to visit his relatives here, was arrested for no particular reason and tortured almost to death at the police station before being released and going back home. I suspect this was the landowner's work."

Meanwhile, it had become dark.

I ordered the orderly to send the men on guard duty to bring the men from the mountain, because we were going to stay the night in that village.

Some time later, the company commander, Han Hung Gwon, led the unit to the village. At the sight of 60 to 70 soldiers entering the village, the landowner realized something was happening and presented himself to our comrades, flattering them and saying, "How can I help you, sirs?" Then he fussed over the guerrillas and invited them to his house. How can a man live that way, spending his energy on double dealing?

Han Hung Gwon, not knowing his true motive, was very moved and said to me, "Comrade Commander, that landowner is kind-hearted, just like the landowner Jang in Xiaowangqing and the one in Tumen." The landowner Jang had given sincere assistance to the guerrillas, but had been banished from the guerrilla zone to Daduchuan by orders of the Soviet government. The Tumen landowner was a conscientious man who had responded to our request for cloth and cotton wool and other materials sufficient to make 500 uniforms for the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army, which was a difficult problem for us at the time. We made clothes with that materials for all the soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army in Xiaowangqing.

The Tumen landowner used to come to Shiliping to visit his relatives. Once our comrades somehow found out when he was coming and detained him in order to collect funds. When we returned from our operations behind the enemy lines, the comrades in the headquarters had released him, saying that the method was wrong. I sent for the landowner, who was fleeing from the guerrilla zone and frankly explained to him the situation with clothing for the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army and appealed to him for help. He promised to help us and went back home, and later he kept his word.

I briefed Han Hung Gwon on what had happened in the village.

"Comrade Han, don't be deceived by flattery. He is an ill-natured man who refuses to open his gate to a visitor."



When he heard this he gave a hollow laugh of blank dismay. Then, with his fist clenched in rage, he said:

"I see he is a wicked fellow. Such a man should not be forgiven. Let's try him and shoot him." I waved my hand to calm him down and stop him trembling with rage.

"No, don't do that. What is the use of executing a landowner? That will only upset the public pointlessly. It would be better to tell him not to lose his conscience as a Korean." "Then we must teach him a good lesson. That son of a bitch should not be allowed to get away with it."

"But you must not behave like bandits," I warned him lest he should go too far. When Han Hung Gwon came to his house, the shrewd landowner pressed himself close under his jaw and asked him who was the commander. His intention was to let the commander and a few other officers stay in his house, and do nothing for the other men, because they would have to be billeted on several villagers anyway. This cold-hearted man was quick in his calculations.

Han Hung Gwon introduced himself as the commander and suggested slyly.

"This household seems to be fairly well off. I think we can stay here for a month or two eating your rice. Even if we do, you will not run short of food, will you?"

"Well, I cannot guarantee two months, but I can afford to take care of you for a few days." The landowner's face turned pale for fear that the guerrillas might really stay in his house for two months.

With an air of indifference to the landlord's anxiety, Han Hung Gwon went on to say something that would really stun him.

"Master, how many pigs do you have in your house? Our men have not tasted meat for several months. I think you have a pile of a hundred sacks of rice in reserve, haven't you, though I am not sure about other houses?"

"Oh, my God, a hundred sacks you say? I've never had that much. Even though the other houses pretend to be poor and eat gruel, they all have enough rice."

"Whether the others have rice or not, you should treat us. You are rich, so you don't need to worry about it. If you have any conscience as a Korean, you must contribute your share to achieving the country's independence. You mean that we should eat the rice of the poor people who are short of food? How can the peasants farm if we eat up their seed grain?"

Intimidated by Han Hung Gwon, the landowner butchered pigs and offered the men rice. The men who had been billeted on peasants also ate rice brought from the landowner's. If he had treated us properly, he would have not suffered this misfortune.

After teaching him a good lesson, Han Hung Gwon returned to me, bringing a rush mat and a quilt from the landowner's to make up my bed. He was a man who enjoyed playing such jokes on people.

That night at the good-natured peasant's house we had rice which Han Hung Gwon brought from the landowner's.

"Will there not be trouble if we do this?" the peasant asked me apprehensively.

"Master, don't worry," I assured him, "there is nothing for you to worry about. You have only lent us your cooking pot. If the landowner finds fault with you later, tell him that you had nothing to do with what the guerrillas did."

"If you are guerrillas, I can set my mind at ease. It was foolish of me to recognize you as guerrillas."

The man and his wife had not known who we really were. Out of their simple kindness as Koreans they invited us to share whatever they were eating, whether it was gruel or bean paste. But the landowner was devoid of such courtesy. If a Japanese policeman had come to see him, however, he would have flattered him, offering him a cushioned seat.

This was how the rich differed from the poor. But not all the rich people were cold-hearted or totally lacking in love for their country. Chiang Wan-cheng, Chiang Wei-hua's father, was a wealthy landowner, but he was an ardent patriot of high reputation. I must also speak highly of the wealthy widow Paek because she was a renowned patriot who spared no money for the enlightenment and development of our nation. That is why she was later named Paek Son Haeng (virtuous deeds).

Most of the rich people, however, were miserly and cold-hearted, like the landowner we met.

There is some truth in the saying that charity comes from the granary, but it does not always apply. Was the peasant who treated us to barley gruel hospitable because he had a large stock of rice? In fact he had nothing but one sack of early-harvested barley in the corner of his room.

No matter how much money a man may have, he will be forsaken by the world if he has no compassion. Even though one lives in a hut, one can be morally rich, have many friendly neighbors and be held in high esteem by everyone, if one is kind to one's fellows. If a man's worth is judged by moral excellence, the landowner who turned us away must be called a miserably poor man not worthy of human respect.

In this case true virtue was found in a hut in which ordinary people lived, not in a grandiose house.

Lee Pong Su and his wife once contracted an eruptive typhus when they were working in Machang. At that time Lee Pong Su was the head of a hospital, and his wife An Sun Hwa was working in the hospital. She crawled out to bury their child, who had died of starvation, and covered the body with oak leaves.

Lee Pong Su had a feeling that soon he might also die just as his child had. He took off the new clothes which his comrades had brought him a few days before, folded them neatly, and set his last will and testament on them.

"These clothes have not been worn for long and I ask the comrade who finds this testament to wear them in my place."

This incident shows how superior the compassion of the revolutionaries was to that of the landowner.

Lee Pong Su miraculously survived and continued to work for the revolution, but his testament remained as proof of his humanity and still moves the people's hearts, an example of the noble and warm world of humanity which only communists can create.

When we returned to the guerrilla zone from the mountain behind Tumen, we gathered the soldiers together and told them about our experience in the village.

"Look! This is a clear example of people's class character. The poor peasant invited us to share his gruel, whereas the rich landowner drove us away from his gate, let alone inviting us to share his meal. He is a wicked man, isn't he? We must overthrow the exploitative society in order to do away with such wicked men."

The incident was good material for class education. This story about the rich landowner and the poor peasant became a common topic of conversation in the villages on the Tuman River. People who were told the story condemned the landowner as a wicked man and praised the peasant as a kind-hearted man. When our plain clothes squads approached the Vicinity of a village, the young people from the village came out to them and informed them which households were rich and which families had cattle belonging to the "People's Association."

In those days the cattle of the "People's Association" were raised in rural villages. After Japan occupied Manchuria, the "People's Association," a reactionary organization, had distributed its cattle among peasants to be raised. The animals were raised by peasants but did not belong to them; when they were fully grown, they had to be returned to the association. It was a mechanism for exploiting the peasants' labor. These animals had seals on their horns.

When they said that certain families had these oxen, the young people of the village meant that the guerrillas could slaughter them for meat without damaging the people's interests. The guerrillas picked out these oxen and butchered them. The Japanese became frantic at this, saying that the villagers were all bad people: How could the communist army know which houses had been raising the cattle of the "People's Association"? The people of the village must have informed them.

The peasants would answer them, "How could we know? We know nothing about it. They have a list. We could do nothing to stop them, they picked them out from the list."

Long experience had bred in my bones the feeling that the richer people were, the more cold-hearted they were, the more devoid of virtue. Wealth which is opposed to goodness and morality itself is not a source of virtue but a trap which swallows and destroys virtue. The landowner in the village on the Tuman River hurt me deeply. Because of him, my impression of the village was not good.

The incident hardened my resolve, when the country became independent, to wipe out the old society of immorality and corruption, in which the landowners and capitalists lorded it over others, and to build a beautiful and sound society where all the people would live in harmony like one family, with no gulf between the poor and the rich.

We are striving to make all our working people rich, not to have rich people who live in luxury, growing fat on others' sweat and blood, but materially and morally rich people who are honest, industrious, and create social wealth by their own labor. We cannot tolerate a capitalist society in which money is all-powerful. When an era in which everyone enjoys equitable material and moral wealth is ushered in, humanity will be free from all social evils for ever.

## 9.3. Crossing the Laoyeling Mountains

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We returned to the guerrilla base when our activities in the enemy-controlled area were over, but we had to leave Wangqing with the knapsacks still on our backs. Zhou Bao-zhong in north Manchuria sent a messenger to us, requesting our assistance.

I took his request very seriously. He was a Chinese friend and comrade-in-arms who had fought for the common cause in close liaison with me since we had worked together on the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee. The Luozigou battle had deepened my friendship with Zhou. He was ten years older than I. I regarded it as a noble internationalist duty to meet his request and made hasty preparation for an expedition to north Manchuria.

One day in late October 1934, when snow was falling in large flakes, the 170-strong expeditionary force of three companies selected from the soldiers in Wangqing, Hunchun and Yanji, left Duitoulazi and set out to cross the Laoyeling Mountains.

Nature is a mysterious force. Mountain ranges bound countries, and divide provinces and counties. Sometimes a mountainous barrier marks off differences in the levels of development of politics, economy and culture.

Laoyeling is a steep mountain range that demarcates east Manchuria from the north and south of Manchuria, north Jiandao from east Jiandao, and east Jiandao from west Jiandao. The features of the terrain on its northern and southern slopes present a sharp contrast. The southern side is a series of steep hills, whereas the northern side is a boundless expanse of vast plains such as can only be found in the Honam area, the southwest of Korea. Most of the people living in east Manchuria south of Laoyeling were from North Hamgyong Province, whereas many of those living north of Laoyeling were from North and South Kyongsang Provinces.

From the point of view of the level of ideological consciousness, the people in north Manchuria rather lagged behind those in east Manchuria. Consequently, the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people was also not as high as it was in east Manchuria. One day Zhou Bao-zhong confessed that the work of enlightening the north Manchurian people politically was more difficult than that of awakening the east Manchurian people. This was a serious problem faced by the north Manchurian communists in their activities. If we lightened their burden even a little, it would be conducive to the harmonious development of the revolution in northeast China.

We had planned large-scale operations in the south and north of Manchuria, as well as in east Manchuria and the homeland. Giving our best efforts to cooperation with neighboring units was the policy which we had maintained from the very start of our struggle. This was why we considered a meeting with Lee Hong Gwang and Lee Tong Gwang to be one of the main objectives of our march into south Manchuria and strove hard to achieve it. Helping north Manchuria also meant helping Kim Chaek, Choi Yong Kun, Ho

Hyong Sik, Lee Hak Man, Lee Kye Dong and other Korean communists who were waging a guerrilla struggle in this area.

The expeditionary force seethed with excitement from the very start. The prospect of a new place always arouses a rainbow-colored fancies. What is more, the men were mostly aged 18 to 20, and therefore most curious and eager for adventure. As I led the unit, I felt the same pride and joy as they did.

But from the moment the expeditionary force left Duitoulazi, I was haunted by an uneasy feeling, which seemed to hobble my steps. The farther away from the guerrilla zone we went, the more uneasy I became.

I was on my way to north Manchuria, when the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria were not yet completely free from enemy encirclement. The long-term special peace-maintenance scheme was a massive programme of "punitive" operations which the Japanese imperialists had worked out in order to encircle and overcome us by means of a protract-ed war, after they had suffered defeat by the summer offensive of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The main point of this programme was to divide the year and a half from September 1934 to March 1936 into three periods and launch their offensives in places where the public peace was comparatively secure, and continue until they could crush the last stronghold of the people's revolutionary army. Their scheme of encroaching siege by means of expanding their occupied area step by step over a long period of time could effectively strangle and suffocate the revolution.

Of course, our expedition to north Manchuria would make a great breach in the Japanese army's scheme for the siege.

An equally serious danger threatening the guerrilla zones was the ultra-Leftist anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle which was under way throughout Jiandao. In complete contradiction of the original goal set by the east Manchurian party committee, this struggle was exploited to meet the ulterior purpose of certain ambitious elements, position seekers, chauvinists and factionalist flunkies in the leadership. Their maneuvers were disintegrating the revolutionary ranks from within and threatened the very existence of the guerrilla bases.

The merciless iron club of a purge campaign punished faithful and true revolutionaries and patriotic masses en masse every day, without discriminating friend from foe. The majority of soldiers and civilians in the guerrilla bases were suspected of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case.

Worse still, the spearhead of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle was directed against Koreans, particularly against cadres and core elements who were working in important positions in the party, the army and mass organizations. The gun barrel of the purge was always aimed at the leading officials, fighters and most active workers whom the masses had trusted and followed. For example, Lee Yong Guk, the secretary of the Wangqing county party committee, was executed on a charge of being a "Minsaengdan" member. Commander of the Wangqing battalion Yang Song Ryong, who was imprisoned and accused of being a "Minsaengdan" member, and only released when I stood surety for him, was still under surveillance.

In this way, ambitious men and schemers in Jiandao used the excuse of a purge campaign to plot against true revolutionaries. Kim Myong Gyun, the head of the military department of the county party committee, and Lee Ung Gol, the secretary of the first district party committee, who were to be executed, on charges of being "Minsaengdan" members, escaped from the guerrilla zone.

When late October came, heavy snow fell and a strong wind blew in Manchuria. From olden times the people in the north had called this wind the Siberia wind.

On the day we left Duitoulazi, too, piercingly cold wind raged as if to check our march over Laoyeling. The Laoyeling Mountains looked like an arrow fixed to a bow. The name of the mountain range can be translated as old man mountain range, and it indicated a mountain range that was very high and steep. We spent all day scaling it. Lee Song Lim complained frequently about the steepness of the mountain.

As we were crossing the mountains Ko Pobae encouraged our comrades greatly by displaying his talent. I have already mentioned briefly that when Tong Chang-rong was in Longjing prison, Ko picked a pocket in order to get himself arrested by the police, and took a chance on meeting Tong in prison to inform him of our opinion. He was extraordinarily quick with his hands, so that he could, for instance, quite easily "steal" all the money in a big market. He could have lived in luxury simply by exploiting his skill, becoming richer than a millionaire, if he had set his mind to it.

It was a mysterious yet truly laudable act for such a man to come into the mountain and plunge into the crucible of the revolution.

However, skill with his hands was only one of his talents. His most wonderful achievements were his vocal dexterity and comedy. Placing his hands on his lips, he could produce all kinds of sound and he could twitch his face and set his eyes and lips askew. When he played such farcical tricks, even Wang De-tai, the 2nd Army Corps commander, who was very blunt and unsociable, would burst into roars of laughter with his mouth gaping open. When he jumped about on one leg, with the other folded up, nobody could help laughing.

When he strolled about markets and streets with a sack on his back, singing a beggar's tune, he looked like the most stupid of men, so he was easily able to deceive the enemy. He frequently employed this dexterity and the art of disguise when he went to towns and villages to sound out the enemy. For this activity he was known by the nickname Pobae (a treasure), apparently because he was as valuable as a treasure. Few of his comrades-in-arms called him by his real name. Even I called him by his nickname. His real name was not even widely known. Some people said he was born in North Hamgyong Province and others said he came from South Hamgyong Province or Kangwon Province. Ko Pobae himself did not know where he came from.

When asked where he was born he would reply that he was born in village of Korea. He did not know his native land because he had come to Manchuria when he was a baby and his parents died early. He was equal to any task because he had known bitter toil since his childhood. He could do the work of a

blacksmith, a builder or a barber, if necessary.

For some time Ko Pobae acted as a messenger between the north and east of Manchuria. He did not talk carelessly about what he did and where. When his comrades asked him "What are you doing nowadays. Comrade Pobae? Are you a guerrilla?" he said yes. When they asked him "Are you an inspector?" he also said yes. He always answered such questions with such a queer smile that his comrades could not tell whether he was joking or being serious. This was Ko's peculiar way of keeping his duties secret.

Just as Ko Pobae followed and respected me unconditionally, so I trusted and loved him absolutely. When we were scaling Laoyeling, two Japanese biplanes came flying low over the peak and then returned. Apparently the "punitive" troops who had been chasing us had informed their headquarters of the whereabouts of our expeditionary force.

On that day unusually heavy snow fell from morning to evening. All the mountain ridges and valleys north of Laoyeling were covered with such deep snow that we could not distinguish one valley from another. To make matters worse, a strong wind blew up in the afternoon, so that even Ko Pobae, who knew the terrain as well as the front yard of his own house, was quite at a loss as to which way to go, to say nothing of others who were strangers to north Manchuria. We lost our way at a point 20 miles from Badaohezi and halted our march. In the mercilessly pouring snow and severe cold my men's eyes were fixed on my face. Ko Pobae, who had been so cheerful stood before me with stooped shoulders, as if he had committed a crime.

"Every year some travelers lose their way and die, buried in snow-drifts on this mountain pass. Last year, seven or eight soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army died on this strange mountain. Perhaps we should turn back to a village and spend one night there until the snowstorm dies down, before resuming our march."

He suggested this timidly, looking in irritation at the northern valleys of Laoyeling, covered with white snow.

I did not accept his suggestion, because retreat in such a case would have been utterly destructive.

"No, we cannot do that. You have nothing to be afraid of in a place where you have worn out many shoes. This is Laoyeling, not Haerbaling or Mudanling, so we have no other choice but to find our way here. All we have to do is to go straight towards the north, using my compass. You have nothing to fear. Brace up. Our comrades in north Manchuria are waiting for us."

My words heartened Ko Pobae. He forced his way through the snow at the head of the column, making the sound of a motor engine with his mouth. At the sound of the engine all the men in the expeditionary force burst into laughter that reverberated across Laoyeling.

We marched until the next day and found a small Chinese village. Hardly had we entered this village,



when the "punitive" troops of the Japanese army which had been billeted on a neighboring village attacked us by surprise. So we fought our first battle in north Manchuria.

The "punitive" troops of the Japanese army or the puppet Manchukuo army in north Manchuria had never fought a battle with the people's revolutionary army. Their opponents were only such rabble as local bandits or mountain rebels who would tremble and turn tail at the sight of the Japanese army.

The Japanese "punitive" troops, who had been accustomed to destroying their foes by simple pursuit, attacked us that day in conceit, taking us for local bandits or mountain rebels. We quickly occupied a hill and returned fire, dispatching a platoon to attack the enemy from behind. The enemy was struck hard, and quite at a loss what to do. In this battle the enemy suffered heavy casualties.

The news of this battle was spread far across north Manchuria by the enemy. They created a great commotion, saying that laogaoli units had come from east Manchuria. "They are brilliant fighters. Who on earth commands the unit? It may be Kim Il Sung's unit which attacked the Dongning county town." From that time on the newspapers reported on our unit. In those days the enemy called our guerrilla army "communist bandits" or the communist party, or ambiguously, the anti-Manchukuo army.

The expeditionary force won the battle, but all the villagers had taken refuge, so we found ourselves left totally without support, with no way at all of obtaining food. If we were to stay in the village until we found Zhou Bao-zhong, we had to know the enemy's movements.

But we had neither an intelligence network of our own nor any acquaintances. In such a situation it was impossible for us to take the next step. Even Ko Pobae had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the Ningnan guerrilla army. We left the village and spent one night in an unknown valley. The next day Ko Pobae and O Tae Song went scouting and found Zhou Bao-zhong's camp. In that mountain camp I met Zhou, who was under medical care, with 20 to 30 men under his command. A wound he had received from a mortar shell in the Luozigou battle had festered badly and had not healed even though months had passed.

Zhou walked out, supporting himself on a stick, and assisted by his men. He came quite a distance from the hut to meet us.

"As you see, I am still in bad condition," he said, smiling sadly, raising his stick, and then squeezed my hand tightly. "I am very happy to meet you again like this. I hope you will give me a lot of help."

His greetings were short, but his voice and look showed how much he expected from me.

My reunion with Zhou was an event which symbolized a new chapter in the history of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. This meeting marked the start of the full-scale joint struggle of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the guerrilla units led by Chinese communists.

Just as we attached great importance to our cooperation with the armed forces led by the Chinese communists, so the Chinese communists in Manchuria were making every effort to implement joint operations with the armed forces led by Korean communists. When various Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army units such as the anti-Japanese nationalist army, the national salvation army units, the Red Spear Society and the Broad Sword Society were formed in many places of Manchuria in opposition to hang Kaisek's policy of non-resistance after the September 18 incident, and they challenged the Japanese aggressors, both the Korean and Chinese communists attached great importance to a united front with them and made great efforts to bring it about. There is no need to repeat here the great success we had achieved through tireless efforts.

After 1934 the activity of the Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army gradually declined. When the Japanese had stepped up their offensive, many commanders of the Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army had left for China proper, taking their units, and others had surrendered or had become bandits. Some of the nationalists like Shi Zhong-heng had converted to communism. The enemy called such units of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army "political bandits."

In this situation the anti-Japanese armed struggle in Manchuria developed through the building-up of an army with a well-organized administration, through an alliance between the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army led by Korean communists and various anti-Japanese nationalist army units under the influence of the Chinese communists.

Zhou said that the organization of the Ningnan anti-Japanese guerrilla army had not gone smoothly, and explained in detail. The backbone of the Ningnan guerrilla army consisted of the 20 anti-Japanese soldiers who had followed him when he left Luozigou.

When the eastern area bureau of Jilin Province was dissolved and the Suining central county party committee was organized, Zhou had taken charge of its military department and started raising an army, with his 20 men as its backbone. The ranks had soon increased to 50 men when a unit of Korean guerrillas joined his unit. After many negotiations his unit had merged with Ping Nan-yang's unit, which had its home base in the Erdaohezi area.

Zhou Bao-zhong had recommended Ping as the commander of the merged unit and he had taken charge of military affairs.

Ping's real name was Li Jing-pu. He was called Ping Nan-yang for a profound reason. Ping Nan-yang meant "pacifying the south." In those days the Japanese aggressors were concentrated in the area south of Ningnan County. Li Jing-pu intended to fight a decisive battle with the Japanese aggressors entrenched in this area. Thus his unit was named the Ping Nan-yang unit and its commander Li Jing-pu was called Ping Nan-yang.

As this anecdote shows, he was both courageous and patriotic. But strong in his anti-Japanese sentiment and courageous as he was, he suffered difficulties because of his undisciplined men. This also bothered

Zhou who, as the leader of the unit, held the real power over it.

When he met me, Zhou requested me to work with Ping Nan-yang in his stead.

"Ping Nan-yang is full of heroic aspirations, but he has a friendly feeling towards you Commander Kim because he was saved by a Korean communist."

I said that, grateful as I was to him for his confidence, I felt my shoulders burdened with a heavy responsibility. Zhou said with a smile, "I believe only in your extraordinary influence, which persuaded Commander Yu and Commander Wu."

He was also worried about relations with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units. In Ningan County and its vicinity there were numerous small and large AJNA units, many of which were hostile to the communists. This was a great obstacle which the Ningan anti-Japanese guerrilla army had to remove immediately if its operations were to be successful. Daping, Sijihao, Zhanzhonghua and Renyixia units, which made frequent appearances around the center of Beihutou west of Dongjingcheng, were AJNA units which had once joined with Ping and later broken with him. These units were hostile to the communists and, worse still, the Jingan army urged them to surrender, driving an even greater wedge between these units and the communists.

It was difficult to predict what they might become in the future. Shuangshan and Zhongyang AJNA units, which were engaged only in banditry in the northwest of Tongjingcheng, were under threat from the Jingan army. Chiang Ai-min's unit, the strongest of all the AJNA units, small and large, in the Dangdaogou area, east of Ningan, was vacillating following bitter experiences during a "punitive" operation by the 13th brigade of the Japanese army.

The units under Chiang Ai-min's command had once escaped to east Manchuria, pursued by the 13th brigade. These units had been plundering food and had eventually applied for surrender. Our comrades had managed to dissuade them from surrendering. Zhou Bao-zhong said that Chai Shi-rong's unit in Machang had become less active than before.

He complained of the results of the Zhanzhonghua incident in Ningan, which was similar to the Guan's unit incident<sup>14</sup> in Wangqing, saying that this mishap had prevented his unit from working overtly. The Zhanzhonghua incident was a deplorable event which had taken place before Zhou joined with Ping. When Ping's unit was suffering internal discord, the rebels offered wine to Ping and his followers, then disarmed them and fled. Ping had not even a Mauser. In an effort to re-equip the unit which now had practically nothing. Ping, together with his faithful subordinates, disarmed Zhanzhonghua unit in the Nanhutou area, which had been seeking a way to surrender. After this incident the AJNA units in north Manchuria branded the Ningan guerrilla army which was associated with the name of Ping Nan-yang as an enemy.

In the final analysis, Zhou's request was that I should play the role of an arbitrator in improving his

relations with the AJNA units so that his unit would be able to operate overtly.

Zhou was most seriously worried about the state of the revolutionary movement in the Ningan area. He was exasperated by the failure to develop the revolution in this area, as if his own inability and negligence were responsible for it.

"From the point of view of the east Manchurian people, Ningan is a place where no revolutionary wind is blowing. I don't understand why the masses are in such low spirits. No matter how earnestly we appeal to the people to rise up for the revolution, they remain aloof from us. Do you know the attitude of the peasants here? They say they can make a living even though the landlords bleed them white. They say, if they go into the mountain they can obtain a lot of land, and why should they shed blood for the revolution when they can till the land and earn a living? From the point of view of the common people, the vast areas of land may make them happy, but at the moment it dulls their class consciousness. I don't know whether we should be proud of the vast lands of north Manchuria or regret that they exist."

Listening to him I burst out laughing.

"Ha, ha, it is fortunate for the 400 million Chinese people that the vast land exists." Zhou Bao-zhong, too, laughed merrily, which smoothed the wrinkles from his face.

"Yes, it is. The vast territory and fertile land are a source of well-being for the whole nation. I was pointlessly worried. Comrade Kim, I have told you about my problem. Help me, please. I can only sleep at peace, if I can find a way to develop the revolution in Ningan, but I don't know how to do it."

I could fully sympathize with his problem. He was an able and well-informed man, but his health was too bad for the arduous north Manchurian revolution. His festering wound prevented him from displaying his ability fully. What is worse, he had few hardcore elements at his disposal.

In the hut in Badaohezi we spent a few days discussing ways of developing the revolution in north Manchuria. We concluded that going among the people was the solution to many difficult problems arising in the north Manchurian revolution. Awakening the people and mobilizing them was the only way to save the north Manchurian revolution from stagnation.

To this end, we had to conduct political work among the people and step up the military operations of the guerrilla army. The armed ranks would be expanded in the course of fighting, and the revolution would develop through struggle. If we remained idle and did not fight, we could do nothing.

Without intensifying our military operations it would be impossible to improve our relations with the AJNA units and win them over as allies or to restore Ping Nan-yang's image, which had been disgraced by the Zhanzhonghua incident.

We confirmed that we shared the same opinions on such matters.

When we met with Zhou in his hut, Wu Ping, the Comintern special representative to Manchuria, was also there, and he showed us the six-point anti-Japanese national salvation programme which he had brought from Shanghai. The original name of this document was the "Basic Programme of the Chinese People on Anti-Japanese Operations."

This document was published in the name of the National Armed Self-defense Preparatory Committee of China. It was signed by the renowned figures Song Qing-ling, Zhang Nai-qi, He Xiang-ning and Ma Xiangbai. Wu Ping said that the signatories to the document had automatically become members of this committee and that thousands of people had already signed it.

The six-point programme of national salvation reflected the policy of the anti-imperialist united front which the Chinese Communist Party proposed when the Japanese imperialists were trying to occupy the north of China proper by posing as the protector of China, and Chiang Kaisek was starting the fifth "punitive" operation against the communist army. In the Chinese revolution, too, the communists did their best to unite and mobilize all the national forces. I therefore considered the six-point programme as a document in season.

For 10 days we discussed these matters comprehensively with Wu Ping. As I spoke with him I learned that the Chinese communists had broken the siege of Chiang Kaisek and started the long march of 25 thousand ri under the banner of the northward advance against Japan, in accordance with the strategy of Mao Ze-dong. We were encouraged greatly by the fact that the Chinese revolution had gone over from retreat, following the failure of the first civil war, to a partial offensive, consolidating on its success.

The anti-Japanese national salvation movement launched in China proper, as well as the powerful thrust of the northward advance against Japan started by the Chinese communists, would create favorable conditions for the revolutionary struggle of the Korean and Chinese communists in the east and in other parts of Manchuria.

Zhou Bao-zhong attached one of his platoons to our unit for joint operations. The expeditionary force left the camp at Badaohezi together with this platoon. A few days later the first shot demonstrating the fraternal friendship and the proletarian internationalism of the Korean and Chinese communists rang out in Shitouhe near Lake Jingbo. The 200-strong Japanese "punitive" force which had left Beihutou after hearing about the appearance of our revolutionary army, became the target of our machineguns and was mowed down in the middle of Lake Jingbo.

Following this battle we struck a heavy blow against a Japanese army unit in the Fangshengou area. The myth of the "invincible imperial army" which had boasted of winning battle after battle in the vast area of north Manchuria began to disintegrate. This also constituted a breakthrough in the Japanese imperialists' plan for the siege of the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria.

The Ningan people rejoiced over our victory, and spread the news of the laogaoli army.

Ping Nan-yang, the commander of the Ningan anti-Japanese guerrilla army, was the first to visit us when he heard the news. As we were marching toward Xiqinggouzi after a meeting with the hardcore party members of a district party organization in Nanhutou, who later helped the Wangqing guerrilla army both materially and morally, Ping appeared suddenly before me together with one of Zhou's orderlies and repeated excitedly, "Congratulations!" without even introducing himself.

I ordered the marching column to halt and spoke with him informally.

"Commander Kim Il Sung, the whole of north Manchuria is buzzing with the news of your victory. My men are delighted at the news. Let me hold the hand which makes the Japanese tremble."

Holding my hand in both of his, he looked me full in the face with an expression of friendship.

"I have received a report that some of my men in the north of Dongjingcheng have been attacked by the Jingan army. Whenever we meet the Japanese or the Jingan army we have a hard time of it. The thought of it makes my blood boil."

"Then, shall we try taking a turn with the Jingan army?"

"Commander Kim, if we fight together with you, we will become bolder and learn from you. As Ping requested, I accepted his 40 men into our expeditionary force and sent Zhou's platoon back to his camp in Badaohezi, together with the orderly who had guided Ping to me. At the same time, I sent the soldiers of the Yanji company back to Jiandao, in view of the tense situation in east Manchuria resulting from the enemy's "punitive" operation.

When Ping came to me Zhou sent with him a messenger who had come from east Manchuria. This messenger told us about the situation in Jiandao.

As we were marching through Beihutou, I ordered the unit to leave only one set of footprints in the snow. Because we had to pass close by one of the enemy's assembly points, we had to conceal our tracks. Leaving one set of footprints meant that everyone in a rank of ten or a hundred men walked by stepping in the footprints of the man at the head of the column, so that it looked as if only one man had passed.

As he watched our companies teaching his soldiers how I had instructed them to march like a single man, to wipe away their trace, to disperse the unit during the march and to billet soldiers on a village, Ping commented that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was well-versed in guerrilla warfare.

Together with Ping's unit we destroyed two battalions of the Jingan army led by Lieutenant Colonel Takeutsi in the Xinanzhen area, wiped out another Jingan army unit in a joint operation with an AJNA unit under the command of Zhongyang on the River Dahailanghe, and attacked a cavalry company and the 6th infantry company of the Jiangan army in Laozhuanjia, Badaohezi.

As a result of these victorious battles, Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units which had been in difficult circumstances came one after another to join our expeditionary force. After meeting briefly again with Zhou in his camp at Badaohezi, we crossed the River Mudan in late December, defeated a Jingan army unit and raided a puppet Manchukuo police station in Xinanzhen at the request of Daping, Sijihao, Zhanzhonghua, and Renyixia units of the AJNA. We launched these battles in order once again to enlist in the Ningnan guerrilla army those AJNA units which had left Ping Nan-yang. While engaging in active operations on our initiative and dealing a succession of blows to the enemy, the Ningnan guerrilla army continually expanded its ranks by enlisting AJNA units and other people in local areas who volunteered to join the army.

"Commander Kim, I have nothing to fear now. I am convinced that we can defeat both the Japanese and the Jingan army. I don't know how I can repay my great debt to you," Ping Nan-yang said confidently, squeezing my hand, on the day when we fought the Jingan army in Xinanzhen.

"Don't mention it. I hope you will destroy as many of the enemy as possible. An army is toughened through battle, isn't it?" I encouraged him enthusiastically, grasping his hands.

During our expedition we also met Chai Shi-rong and Chiang Ai-min and discussed the anti-Japanese allied front with them.

Chiang Ai-min, who had been routed by the 13th brigade of the Japanese army, went to east Manchuria to meet me and then came back after hearing that we were fighting in north Manchuria. He appeared unbelievably cheerful and high-spirited for a commander who lost many battles.

"To tell you the truth, I went to Wangqing to request your assistance. Fang Zhen-sheng said that he was sorry he could not help me because they were also in difficult circumstances. Commander Kim, please help me." Chiang Ai-min spoke frankly about his problem without concern for his honor as the commander of a great unit.

Fang was a Chinese who became a regimental commander of our army after we came to north Manchuria.

We achieved a great deal through joint operations with Ping's unit and other large and small AJNA units. The military and political objectives we had set for the expedition were being achieved rather smoothly.

When we later returned to Jiandao after completing our expedition, we heard the glad news that Zhou Baozhong had successfully formed the 5th Army Corps of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army, based on the Ningnan anti-Japanese guerrilla army. Most of the Chinese AJNA units which had developed a strong militant relationship with us through the fighting in deep snow in north Manchuria joined the 5th Army Corps.

Many of the cadres of the 5th Army Corps were my intimate friends in the days of the expedition to north Manchuria. Ping Nan-yang became the commander of the 1st Regiment of the 1st Division and then was

promoted to division commander; Chai Shi-rong was appointed commander of the 2nd Division before being promoted to a deputy corps commander. Chiang Ai-min was in command of the 5th Regiment of the 2nd Division. His unit had many Korean communists who had shared bloody battles with us.

On hearing the news of the formation of the 5th Army Corps, I wished Zhou success, picturing in my mind the land of Ningan, far beyond Laoyeling.

Together with the battle of Luozigou, the first expedition to north Manchuria marked our first success in frustrating the enemy's plan for a siege, and made a significant contribution to defeating the enemy. Our offensive routed the main force of the 13th brigade of the Japanese army and the Jingan army unit in Ningan.

We shed much blood in north Manchuria. The political instructor of the Yanji company and the young orderly Lee Song Lim fell in battle. This was the bitterest loss to me.

Lee Song Lim was the first orderly whom we had recruited on our arrival in Wangqing. He had been orphaned by the Japanese "punitive" operation. We took him and raised him, providing him with clothes and teaching him to read and write. He had grown into a quite handsome boy. He would sleep, with his arm round my neck. Yang Song Ryong had said that a grown boy should not be indulged if he was to become a man and that he should be sent to the Children's Corps school.

Lee Song Lim cried and said he would not go.

Yang had begun to hate him since Lee began visiting the Children's Corps school to show off the small pistol which I had given him. One day, when we were at a meeting, he had gone to the school in secret and called out the snotty children who were playing in the yard to the willowy dike to show off his pistol. Before he had disassembled the pistol and reassembled it, the break was over. When the teacher came into the classroom to begin the new lesson, he was surprised, and called out the children's name. None of the children who had gone out to see Lee's pistol had come back.

Yang heard this story and suggested to me I should replace the orderly with another man because he might cause an accident.

But I did not accept his suggestion.

Lee Song Lim had been to Onsong and Jongsong with me, and stayed for a long time on the mountain at the back of Tumen. He was a plucky and courageous orderly who was not afraid of death.

I remember he was killed in battle near Tuanshanzi. We were fiercely attacked from two sides by the Japanese army and the Jiangan army.

As he was running to convey my orders to Ping's unit, he was surprised by the enemy. I saw his Mauser



after he died. The magazine was empty and there were several dead bodies of the enemy scattered around him. He made the enemy pay dearly for the blood he shed. We cried so sadly that Ping Nan-yang also cried loudly.

When I found Lee's dead body on the field of our victory the first thing I saw in my mind's eye was the Children's Corps school in Wangqing which he had visited as if it were his own home. In this school he was one of many childhood friends who were inseparable from each other.

How could I meet the Children's Corps members of Wangqing after burying Song Lim in north Manchuria? I choked on my tears, and there was a lump in my throat. When my comrades-in-arms suggested we break the frozen ground and bury him, I dissuaded them from covering his body with frozen earth because I felt as if he would come to life again and snuggle into my bosom. I could not turn on my heel knowing I had to leave my child orderly in this terribly frozen land.

Lee Song Lim, who complained of the steepness of the mountain as we crossed the Laoyeling Mountains, is now lying quietly in that valley with his comrades-in-arms, listening to the song of new life ringing across the vastness of Manchuria.

## 9.4. The Sound of a Harmonica Ringing across Ningan

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Nothing makes an army suffer more misery than being given the cold shoulder by the people for whom it is fighting. The reader may find it hard to believe that we were given the cold shoulder from the time we began crossing the Laoyeling Mountains. And he might ask, "Have the people, the creator, defender and carrier of morals, ever turned away their faces from the revolutionary army or treated coldly the army which defends their interests?"

I am obliged to contradict common sense and say that I have had such an experience.

Everyone knew that Ningan, with its fertile land, was a great granary. But, when we came down from the Laoyeling Mountains and entered north Manchuria, the people in Ningan hated even to prepare meals for us. If they had treated us inhospitably because they were in dire poverty, we would have felt pity for them. But they turned their backs on us because of misunderstanding and distrust, and this dumbfounded us, for we were accustomed to support and hospitality from the people. If our expeditionary soldiers in their snow shoes and puttees appeared in the distance, they would call their women into the houses and shut their doors, shouting, "The 'Koryo red army' is coming!" And then they watched our every move cautiously. Such unpleasant experiences hurt our pride.

We had to prepare our meals and sleep in the open for a good while.

groups, beating drums and gongs, clapping their hands and presenting bouquets to us. Some people would offer us hot water or boiled green maize. One day a pine arch was even erected in Macun to congratulate the soldiers.

But the Ningan people gave us a wide berth. We sent out scouts and set the underground organizations in action, but we failed to catch the voice of the people in this region. This was a much cooler welcome than we had expected in east Manchuria on the basis of information from Zhou Bao-zhong and Ko Pobae, who had often visited north Manchuria.

There was a village called Wolianghe in Ningan County. It was called Wolianghe because it had fertile land and plenty of food grain, but the people there ignored us completely, and did not even think of providing food.

We tried to gather them together to initiate political work, but they did not respond to our request. We could not even give them a lecture on current events. Lee Song Lim may have complained of the steep Laoyeling Mountains, but this barrier was rougher and steeper.

Some of my men said that Ninganites were cold-blooded people by nature, but I rejected this. The mind of the people may vary a little, but it was hardly possible that the people in this place were the only ones to lack the good manners and customs of Chinese or Koreans, who accord hospitality to their guests and take good care of them.

What, then, was the reason for this unfriendly attitude of the Ningan people, which stunned the men of our expeditionary force?

According to the historical record, in olden times Ningan was the capital of Palhae. This time-honored city once had a population of 100,000. This indicated that this place had a long history of development. The historical record also indicated that the land of this place was fertile and its people were industrious, frugal, simple-hearted, and trustworthy and respected justice and law.

After the capital of Palhae was moved to another place and its people were scattered in all directions, its population increased or decreased over the millennia and scores of generations, but the courtesy and civilized customs of the Ninganites were neither debased nor dishonored, but handed down without change. It was unreasonable to believe that the Ningan people were coldhearted by nature.

Some soldiers alleged that Ningan was not a suitable place for the communist movement. They said that, firstly, the level of consciousness of these people was too low to assimilate the communist idea, and secondly, that Ningan County had abundant land, whereas the number of farmers who cultivated it was comparably small, so there would not be any antagonism in social and class relations and, accordingly, a class struggle would not take place.

Such nihilistic assertions were refuted mercilessly. Is any particular place suitable for communism while any other place is not suitable for communism? Communists who say so cannot win the world. With this kind of communism we cannot realize the slogan "Workers of the Whole World, Unite!" which is written in The Communist Manifesto. The argument that there would be no antagonism in people's relations in a place where the population was thin and land was plentiful was a superficial view which resulted from an ignorance of reality.

According to such an argument, the class contradictions should have been acuter in densely populated Germany than in sparsely populated Russia and accordingly, the revolution should have achieved victory in Germany earlier than in Russia. I rejected such arguments as unfounded.

I said the fact that the Ningan people did not understand communism and were hostile to the communists should be explained by the crimes of the Japanese imperialists, who resorted to every conceivable means to destroy communism. When the communist movement became active in Ningan, the Japanese imperialists immediately launched a pernicious anti-communist propaganda campaign to drive a wedge between the communists and the people. In Ningan, where the people were relatively backward in their political and ideological enlightenment, the enemy's propaganda penetrated easily into the people's minds.

The early Korean communists who had spent their energies in factional strife were also to blame for the anti-communist tendency prevailing in the Ningnan area. Already in the mid-1920s, immediately after a communist party was founded in Korea, the Tuesday group established its organization under the magnificent name of the Manchurian general bureau of the Korean Communist Party, and set about expanding the power of its own group, effectively selling out the noble name of communism. They provoked the simple and good-natured people to engage in reckless demonstrations and riots by clamoring for the independence of Korea and the immediate building of socialism.

The ultra-Leftists broadcast an appeal to the Ningnan people to rise up in the May 30 Uprising. The main targets of this uprising in Jiandao were the Japanese government organs for colonial rule and the Chinese landlords, but in Ningnan the target was the nationalist organizations, such as the Korean General Association. The demonstration, which started in the county town, suffered a heavy blow at the very outset.

The May Day demonstration in 1932, too, ended by drowning the Ningnan county town in a bloodbath and exposing the core elements to repression by the enemy. As a result of these adventuristic demonstrations, the revolutionary organizations in Ningnan were destroyed as groups. After the May Day demonstration the communist movement in Ningnan went into a rapid decline. The party leadership stopped developing the armed forces and guerrilla zones and dispersed to Muling, Dongning, Wangqing and other places. Some people gave up the revolution and went back to the Ningnan county town.

The indiscriminate white terrorism of the Japanese imperialists and the Manchukuo army and police besmirched the image of communism in the eyes of the people.

The fear of prison and death which they faced at the end of their struggle made them tremble in despair. The nihilistic view was prevalent among many people that the result of revolution was death, and it would be pointless to take part in the communist movement.

The Chinese communists came and tried to rebuild the revolution in Ningnan, after the Korean communists had left declaring the attempt was futile and the revolution would not take root in the minds of the masses, but they also were dumbfounded at the cold attitude of the masses towards the revolution in general.

Some Korean nationalists were also to blame for spreading anti-communist poison in Ningnan. The remnants of the Independence Army which fled to Russia in fright at the large-scale "punitive" operations in the year of Kyongsin (1920), and then returned to Ningnan following *the Amur incident* were fanatical in their anti-Soviet, anti-communist propaganda. They slandered communism and the Soviet Union, saying that the dreadful incident in Amur had been provoked by the Korean communists in exile in conspiracy with the Soviet Union. The nationalists even went so far as to say that Kim Jwa Jin was killed because of the communists. Of course, this was a lie. But the innocent people believed it.

*(Lee Wha Rang: The Amur Incident is better known as the Free City Incident. By April 1921, the*

**Korean military units** in Manchuria were defeated in a series of battles with the Japanese and the survivors fled to Siberia. There were at least 36 independent armies; Lee Dong Whi, Hong Bom Do and other generals regrouped them into the **Greater Korea Independence Corps** (Taehan Tong Lip Dang). The Corps was allied with the Soviet Army and received Soviet equipment and training. At about the same time, the Soviet-Koreans formed their own military unit - the **Korean Revolutionary Military Congress** - and wanted to absorb the Independence Corps. Gen. Lee and other nationalists realized that the Soviet-Koreans worked for Lenin, not for the Korean independence, and refused to cooperate.

On June 27, 1921, the **Soviet Red Army** and **Soviet-Koreans** surrounded in a deceptive move an Independence Army corps of 7,000 men at **Alekseyevsk** (Siberia) and demanded that they surrender. A battle ensued and several hundred Koreans were killed. Many managed to escape. Some 1,700 captured Koreans were pressed into the Red Army and many officers were jailed or killed. Today, this infamous battle is known as the **Free City Incident**.

The **Soviet version** of this Incident differs. According to the Soviet historians, there were some 7,000 armed Koreans at the camp being reorganized into regular Soviet army organizations - divisions, regiments, battalions, companies and squads - and a modern military command structure. The nationalists refused to go along and started to sneak away. Naturally, the other armed Koreans tried to stop them from leaving and unfortunately, there were some shots fired. At any rate, the bulk of the nationalists managed to escape to Manchuria and joined the anti-Communist forces there.

The Comintern found the ring leaders of the Free City Incident guilty of factionalism, and Lee Tong Whi, Hong Bom Do and other nationalists returned to Siberia.)

The people in Ningnan were wary not just of communism but of any army. They hated all armies, regardless of their identity and their mission, because they considered every army they had seen to be hangers-on who emptied their granaries and took their money. To say nothing of the Japanese army and the puppet Manchukuo army, some Chinese nationalist army units who professed the anti-Japanese national salvation struggle, also took the people's money, grains and domestic animals. The Korean nationalists set up the Sinmin-bu, an administrative organization, in Ningnan, and exacted war funds and military provisions from the people.

What is worse, the local bandits who frequently took people hostage, could fall upon them at any time and aggravate their mood. So the feelings of the people, who had to submit to all of these factions, were beyond description. Taking this historical background into consideration, it would have been unreasonable to blame them for their cold-heartedness. It is not really of much significance that the expeditionary force did not receive supplies from the people. The greatest problem was that one of the major aims of our expedition, the aim of sowing the seeds of revolution among the people of north Manchuria, was not being achieved. If the people would never open their hearts to us, we would never find a way to revolutionize north Manchuria.

In order to summon the Ningnan people to rise in revolution we had to make a breakthrough somehow.

While taking stock of the party work in the Badaohezi district, we developed a deeper grasp of the reality of Ningan County with the help of Kim Paek Ryong, secretary of the district party committee. According to him, Badaohezi had been more effectively revolutionized than any other part of Ningan County.

Badaohezi was also known as Xiaolaidipan, the place where the Ningan county party committee and the Badaohezi district party committee were located. The word Xiaolaidipan was derived from the name of Kim So Rae (Xiaolai is the Chinese pronunciation of So Rae), who was the leader of the Taejong religion in and around Helong County.

I first heard about Kim So Rae from So Jung Sok when I attended the Jirin Yuwen Middle School. So Jung Sok once taught at the Konwon School in Helong, which was established by Kim So Rae. Kim So Rae was the founder and headmaster of this school and had close relations with So Il as well as the important figures of the northern military and political administration and the Jiandao National Association. As a man of a strong anti-Japanese sentiment, he supported the national salvation movement by sending his school graduates to the Independence Army units led by such renowned generals as Hong Bom Do and Kim Iwa Jin.

After the Independence Army withdrew from north Jiandao, Kim So Rae bought land in the Badaohezi valley and became a landlord there, supplying war funds to Kim Jwa Jin's Independence Army unit. Lee Kwang also obtained many rifles from him immediately after the guerrilla army was founded.

The revolutionaries in the Ningan area disliked him because he was the leader of the Taejong religion. Some of those who were ignorant of history mistook this movement for a Japanese religion. The Taejong religion was a pure Korean religion, which worshipped Hwanin, Hwanung and Hwangorn, the Gods who are described in the Korea-founding myth.

Kim Paek Ryong said that the Badaohezi valley was 20 to 25 miles long. There were many villages scattered in the valley and Koreans made up a considerable proportion of the inhabitants. Badaohezi, which had once been a thriving supply base for the Independence Army, became a base for the activity of the Ningan guerrilla army at the beginning of the 1930s.

Without any great hope, I employed the good offices of Kim Paek Ryong to send a political work team to a village in Badaohezi to inquire into the mood of the population and also to reconnoiter the enemy's movements. The team was made up of masters of propaganda and agitation.

However, Wang Tae Hung, the political instructor of the 5th company, who led the team to the village, came back to me looking exhausted. "We failed again. Any amusing story fell flat with them. I would rather preach the Four Books and Three Classics to the ear of an ox than talk to the Ningan people."

He dropped his head in despair after making his report. Listening to his words, Kim Paek Ryong heaved a sigh, as if it were his mistake that the Ninganites were treating the guests from east Manchuria so coldly.

"Anyhow, the Ningnan people are a real problem. We have made great efforts to persuade them, even sending an inspection group to east Manchuria to learn from their experience, but they are so stubborn. After the inspection group returned they established a Children' Corps school which enrolled about 50 pupils at first, but it all came to nothing."

What should we make of people who turned their backs on revolutionaries who defended and represented their interests? I pondered deeply on this question because I was facing such a sheer barrier for the first time in my life. Our efforts to revolutionize Fuerhe and Wujiazi had not gone entirely smoothly, but the people there were not so cold-hearted as in Ningnan.

In the thousands of years of Korean history the masses of the people had never been bad. In my life I had never had to distinguish between good and bad masses of the people. Those who besmirched history and sought to deceive it were a handful of people, the ruling circles. Of course, there were individual traitors to the nation, misers, swindlers, imposters, ambitious men and immoral men. But they were only a few whole grains among the cleaned rice. The great mass of the people, which we can regard as representing the whole of this world, has always driven the wheel of history forward honestly and sincerely. They produced turtle boats and built pyramids if necessary. When the times required their blood they dashed towards the enemy's pillbox, braving death without hesitation.

The problem was that we had failed to find a way to touch the hearts of the Ningnan people. The political work team led by Wang Tae Hung had clearly conducted a stirring anti-Japanese propaganda campaign. Did the Ningnan people need more of such speeches? They must have heard enough of them until to burn their ears. The Independence Army, the national salvation army, and even the bandits used to make such speeches. Could Wang's political work succeed on the basis of speeches?

Their mistake was that they tried blindly to teach the people. Since when did we regard ourselves as the people's teachers and the people as our pupils? No doubt it was the communists' mission to lead the people from darkness to light, but wasn't it impudent of us to pose as their teachers?

There might be many ways for us to penetrate the depths of people's hearts, but their hearts would accept only sincerity. Only sincerity could fuse our blood and their blood as in one artery. Unless we mixed with the people as their own sons, grandsons and brothers, we would be forsaken for ever by the people of Ningnan.

I was told that when the Wangqing children's art troupe played in Ningnan, the performance hall was crowded out every time. Both the children's art troupe and the guerrillas appealed to them in the name of the revolution, but the people had welcomed the former and turned their backs on the latter.

"Did you see the performance of our children's art troupe when they came here?" I asked Kim Paek Ryong.

"Yes, I did, their performance was excellent." He said the art troupe had set Ningan buzzing with excitement.

"Wherever the children's art troupe went there were crowds of people, I was told. A wonderful change to take place among the Ningan people, who did not like communist propaganda, wasn't it? What do you think attracted so many people?"

"The children behaved quite charmingly. They fascinated the Ningan people by their performances and influenced them by always laughing as brightly as the full moon in the clear sky. They behaved with people like their own fathers and mothers, so the Ninganyites, no matter how callous, could not but be moved."

"Their talent made them very popular in Wangqing, too."

"Of course, their performance was a success, but it was the children themselves who won the people's hearts. I myself was charmed by their good behavior. They cleaned up all of Badaohezi village. They used to get up early to make the village spick and span. In daytime they helped the peasants in the field."

Kim Paek Ryong praised the children's art troupe members repeatedly, making me feel proud of them.

"They have become sensible at an early age."

"The children endeared themselves to the villagers. When they saw the villagers, even in the distance, they raised their hands in salute. They followed the grown-ups, addressing them as 'grandfather,' 'father,' 'aunt,' 'sister' They were loved by the whole village."

The children's art troupe won the people's hearts because they gave their own hearts to the people. When we dropped an axe into an ice hole in the Tuman River, we spent half a day in sincere efforts to find it. Why? Because we were devoted to the people and loved them. When we showed them our sincerity, they never rejected it.

Wang's political work team made a mistake, because they failed to give their hearts sincerely to the people. They clung to their method only with the intention of revolutionizing the people of north Manchuria, but they never thought of loving them and becoming intimate with them. It was not strange that the people in north Manchuria had not opened their hearts to us.

First of all, it was a mistake to have started their contact with the people with a speech. How valuable the lesson we learned from the activities of the Wangqing children's art troupe, which first gave the people their own hearts and then tugged at their heartstrings with songs!

I made up my mind to change the form of our political work and discussed the matter with our commanding officers. I then instructed the company political instructors to bring all our good Harmonica



players to the headquarters. When they had gathered I checked them one by one.

Hong Bom from the Yanji company played the Harmonica well enough to perk up an audience. He sometimes produced the sound of an accordion concert on his harmonica. A soldier of the Wangqing 5th company was famous for Harmonica playing, but he was a novice compared with Hong.

Hong Bom had practiced the Harmonia from his primary school days. A visitor to his house once left a Harmonica in his room and did not come again, so it naturally became Hong's favorite. Practicing on this instrument for several years he developed his talent admirably, but the Harmonica became worn out and its gilt came off. Fortunately its sound remained unchanged.

I saw his Harmonica as we were preparing for the expedition in Duitoulazi and thought I should obtain a new one for him. But I had no chance to do this before we had to leave for north Manchuria.

Many of the guerrillas and other people in Jiandao knew of Hong Bom's career. He was an ordinary soldier, but he became a topic of interested discussion among the people because of his extraordinary talent in playing the Harmonica. Harmonica players were always loved by their comrades-in-arms.

Hong's native town was Jongsong, North Hamgyong Province. He followed his parents to Jiandao and took part in the revolutionary movement from his young days. Once as a Red Guards man he joined in the mass struggle to frustrate the Dunhua-Tumen railway project. After the dissolution of the Hailangou guerrilla zone, he moved to Wangougou, carrying his knapsack with a Harmonica in it, and joined the guerrilla army.

I instructed Wang Tae Hung to take the Harmonica concert group to the village where he had failed once and to try to move their hearts. And I requested Kim Paek Ryong to buy as many Harmonicas as possible, with the help of the underground organizations.

That day I visited the secretariat of the Ningnan county party committee to prepare the propaganda materials for the people. While I was talking to the comrades at the secretariat, Wang, who had been to the village with the Harmonica concert group, appeared before me with a broad smile on his face.

"Comrade Commander, it was a success. Those uncouth persons opened their hearts to us at last."

Wang was a commanding officer of a particular character, who first reported the result, and then explained what he had done. The activity of the Harmonia concert group was extremely instructive. It won the hearts of the callous people who had turned their backs on the revolutionary army.

The group started by clearing the snow from the front yard of a house in the center of the village. After posting a sentry on this fairly large area of ground, Hong Bom and another man played a Harmonica duet as the first item on the program. The rest of the group danced to the tune of Harmoniacs. Two or three boys who were spinning tops in a nearby lane ran towards the fence of the yard to watch the performance.

Other children also came running towards the show from other lanes, hitching up the waistbands of their trousers as they came.

The Harmonica duet began with The Song of General Mobilization, then changed into The Children's Song and How Far Have We Come? The children, charmed by the beautiful melody of Hong's Harmonica, followed the song and clapped their hands. Some children ran about the village shouting that the "Koryo red army" soldiers from Jiandao were dancing. When the grown-ups heard the news, they watched the revolutionary army's entertainments from a distance with folded arms. Then some of them approached the performance and gazed at the "musicians" of the "Koryo red army."

When 40 to 50 people had gathered to see the performance, the Harmonica concert group played Arirang. This attracted the whole village, and the audience rapidly increased to one hundred, two hundred and at last three hundred.

At this moment Ko Pobae appeared and sang the Melancholy Song of Pyongan Province. The hundreds of villagers were captivated by his sorrowful melody and encircled the yard in a tight ring, straining their ears to catch the sounds issuing from the mouth of this soldier of the "Koryo red army."

Ko stopped singing halfway and began delivering a speech in a new dramatic tone. "Dear villagers, where's your home town? North Kyongsang Province! Kangwon Province! South Hamgyong Province! South Pyongan Province! Don't ask me where I come from. Don't think I'm putting on airs. I don't know where I was born. I know only that I was born in a coastal village in Korea. I arrived in Jiandao, crossing the river on my parent's back. I don't know whether it was the Tuman River or the Yalu River. I am such a dunce."

The audience was amused by his oratorical talent, laughing and whispering in response. In an amusing manner, like an old story-teller, he told how he wandered about Jiandao like a dried leaf and how he finished off Japs in many battles after he became a guerrilla soldier. Then, as if he had simply turned over a gramophone record, he changed his subject quite naturally into a speech intended to awaken the people to the need for the revolution. "Dear villagers, what is our unanimous desire? We wish we could return home. But the Japs stand on the road to our homeland. Should we leave those barbarians alone? No, I can't. So I joined the guerrilla army with a rifle in my hand. We came to Ningan to destroy the Japanese. I was told that the Japanese soldiers in north Manchuria are more arrogant."

When his speech reached this point, a Japanese army cap appeared from nowhere on his head. He had hidden it in the waistband of his trousers and transferred it in a flash to his head. Then a moustache and spectacles appeared on his face. The audience immediately grasped that he was made up as a Japanese army officer.

In this comic make-up Ko Pobae stretched himself in a yawn and walked round the yard two or three times with his hands folded behind his back, stretching his jaw and twitching his face in a funny fashion. The people were reminded of a Japanese army officer taking a walk in the ground of his barracks

immediately after rising from his bed.

The audience tittered at first and then split their sides in laughter.

As soon as laughter calmed down, Ko went round the audience one by one, laughing in different kinds according to their sex and age - an old woman's voice before a grandmother, an old man's voice before a grandfather and a bride's voice before a young lady. They laughed themselves into convulsions, until the tears came running down.

After winning over the villagers in this way, the Harmonica concert group launched into anti-Japanese propaganda and appealed to the people to support the revolutionary army. The Harmonica concert group was able to have such remarkable success in the very place where the political work team failed the previous day, because their propaganda catered honestly to the feelings of the villagers.

Drawing on this experience, we began to mix more closely with the people and revolutionized tens of villages in Ningan one after another by various methods. The iron barrier which had separated the Ningan people from the "Koryo red army" from east Manchuria was removed at last. Where the "Koryo red army" had once passed by, the ranks of the Communist Party increased in numbers, and the Young Communist League, the Women's Association, the Children's Corps and other revolutionary organizations expanded rapidly.

The people who opened their hearts wide to the communists experienced the greatest pride of their life in supporting and assisting the revolutionary army.

Among such people I still recall many unforgettable men and women such as old man Kim in the Tianqiaoling timber mill, old man Jo Thaek Ju in Dawaizi, the old Chinese woman Meng Cheng-fu in Wolianghe and old man Lee in Nanhutou.

Old woman Meng frequently gave the expeditionary force valuable information about the enemy's movements, though she once suffered all sorts of hardships when she was arrested by the Japanese police together with the wife of her husband's cousin.

Old man Lee in Nanhutou was under constant surveillance by the enemy. The enemy set fire to his eight-kan house (a kan is equivalent to 36 square feet) because he supported the guerrilla army. Once he was arrested by the military police and severely flogged. Despite these bitter experiences, he frequently visited our revolutionary army's camp, bringing with him food and footwear for the soldiers.

"Are you not afraid of the enemy, grandfather?" I once asked him.

"Yes, I am afraid," the old man replied. "If the enemy knew that I sent supplies to the revolutionary army, my whole family, including my three sons, would be killed. But we have no other choice. We cannot remain indifferent and consider only our own safety, while you revolutionary army soldiers are enduring

every possible hardship in order to liberate the country, with no place to sleep comfortably and no decent meals."

The people in north Manchuria cherished ardent love for their country and for justice. Their love for the country was no less warm than that of the east Manchurian people. The only difference was that their love had been hemmed in by a much thicker and higher fence.

The people open their hearts without hesitation to those who sympathize with them and understand them, and embrace them with burning enthusiasm. But they slam the door against those ingrates who have never thought about the fact that the soil in which they grew up was the people, those impertinent fellows who consider that the people are duty-bound to serve them, and they have the right to be served, those bureaucrats who think they can rule over the people as they like, those exploiters who regard the people as a cow which produces milk any time they want, those windbags who shut their eyes and remain indifferent when the people are suffering agony, though they always say that they love the people, all of these hypocrites, loafers and swindlers.

None of my comrades-in-arms now alive can recall the first north Manchurian expedition. Only a few out of those 170 men returned to the liberated homeland. I think O Jun Ok and Yon Hui Su were among the Wangqing company soldiers who returned.

When we were operating in Ningan, Kang Kon was a Children's Corps member. Judging from his age alone, he could well have lived till now and taken part in the revolution. But he fell in action on the front line in early autumn of the year when the great Fatherland Liberation War broke out. At that time he was the Chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army.

Ko Pobae later served as a regiment political commissar in the 5th Army Corps under Zhou Bao-zhong's command.

Some people say he fell in action and others say that he went to the Soviet Union and died there, but I do not know which is the truth. When I received the news of the death of such a talented optimist, who always set the whole of Jiandao laughing with his ceaseless jokes and wisecracks, I could not believe it. It seemed inconceivable to me that such an optimist could have died.

The majority of the Harmonica concert group who opened the path to north Manchuria with Ko Pobae remained in north Manchuria at Zhou Bao-zhong's request or died in fierce battles on the way back to east Manchuria. I heard nothing about the rest of them afterwards.

I cannot find any way to clarify what happened to them. Even their names have grown dim in my memory.

One day half a century after the first north Manchurian expedition, I received the happy news that one of the participants in the expedition was living in Pyongyang. When I looked at the picture which the

officials involved sent to me, I saw that it was Hong Bom, the leader of the Harmonica concert group.

The severe snowstorm by which we were threatened in north Manchuria, and the unprecedented arduous march we had made through the snowstorm had left their clear imprints around his eyes. His face was changed beyond recognition by the ceaseless toil of the years of a long life, but to my joy, his unusually long neck, like a stork's, still reminded me of how he looked in his younger days.

Was this really the famous Harmonica player Hong Bom who basked in the love of all the people of Jiandao? Why had this treasure, a participant and witness of the first expedition to north Manchuria, only now announced his presence after living near me all this time? I told the officials to ask him why.

He had not called on me because he was too simple, and too modest.

"I took part in the anti-Japanese revolution, but I rendered no distinguished service. If I have ever done anything I can feel proud of, it is that I took part in the first expedition to north Manchuria under the command of our leader. After returning from north Manchuria I caught a fever in the backwoods of Sandaowan, and suffering from it for a long time, I was unaware even of the dissolution of guerrilla zones. Having lost all contact with the unit, I returned home. If I had said that I was an anti-Japanese war veteran, the Party would have cared for me like a precious treasure. But I did not wish to be a burden to the Party." These were the words of Hong Bom, an anti-Japanese war veteran.

At the age of 70 he was working as a guard at the Jonsung security substation. He was living in a single-room house. While the musicians of the new generation who were born in the 1950s or 1960s were moving into new three-room or four-room houses, this Harmonica player of the guerrilla army, who went through all the hardships of the long-drawn-out war against the Japanese, contented himself with a single-room house. He did not desire any special treatment or any privileges.

All our anti-Japanese war veterans are such people.

Hong Bom is said to have kept all his life the Harmonica which I bought for him in Ningan.

When our historians called on him to collect historical materials, Hong Bom used this Harmonica to play the revolutionary songs which we had sung during the north Manchurian expedition. They said that Hong was an excellent player.

He died after moving to a new flat in Kwangbok Street provided by the Party.

Our veterans, who had endured severe trials such as the north Manchurian expedition and the arduous march, continued to overcome all manner of hardships together with us even after returning to the liberated homeland.

What a profound and appealing truth is contained in the old saying that the hardships one experiences in

one's younger days are worth more than one's weight in gold! Hardships and trials are the mother of all blessings.

## 9.5. The Snowstorm in the Tianqiaoling Mountains

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Late in January 1935, our expeditionary force set out on its return journey after carrying out its military and political tasks.

When it left Duitoulazi, Wangqing, the unit had been 170 strong, but now there were only 50 to 60 men left. After the Yanji company left for east Manchuria at the beginning of the campaign, the Hunchun company, too, had withdrawn from Ningan. Their withdrawal had been necessary because of the pressing need to defend the strategic center of the revolution against the enemy's schemes of siege. We had suffered many casualties in a succession of battles lasting three months. By the time the wounded soldiers had been evacuated to safe places, only one third of our force remained.

There was no source of reinforcements. When the expeditionary force stayed in the villages, many young people volunteered to join us, but we sent them to Zhou Bao-zhong's unit. Zhou Bao-zhong was deeply concerned about our return journey. "Available intelligence says that the enemy is tracking you frantically, Comrade Kim Il Sung. Apparently they wish to make you pay dearly. What hard blows they have suffered from you this winter! Frankly, I am concerned for your safety." He looked at me anxiously.

"Thank you. The snowstorm in Laoyeling may cover our tracks again. Don't worry too much. In any case, we shall return safely," I said with a light heart, feeling grateful to him for being so considerate.

"Commander Kim, you are about to go through the jaws of death, but you are as carefree, and optimistic as ever."

Zhou Bao-zhong advised us to take the safest and the most reliable route for our return march. In addition, he reinforced us with a detachment of 100 men from the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army. The route he had shown us was a roundabout way along the Tianqiaoling and Laoyeling Mountains and Barengou. It was not like the well-beaten path we had taken on our campaign to north Manchuria by way of Duitoulazi, Laoyeling and Badaohezi. The new route was a trail along mountain ridges which lay far away from enemy camps. Zhou said that the enemy could not even imagine that we would take this route.

Ping Nan-yang knew this route better than Zhou Bao-zhong. He stroked my arm as he said: "If you slip away by the trail through Tianqiaoling Mountains everything may go well. There are timber mills there which have plenty of food. The 'punitive' troops seldom come near Tianqiaoling, I assure you."

Tianqiaoling literally means a bridge under the sky. It is a steep mountain range which looks like a dangerous bridge. Following the advice of our comrades in north Manchuria, we decided to take the roundabout route of Tianqiaoling-Laoyeling-Barengou to Jiandao. Two or three other mountain passes in Laoyeling had already been blocked by the enemy. Our comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria gave us a hearty send-off as we left Zhou's mountain lodge. Our hearts bled as we left for Jiandao, without even burying Lee Song Lim and many other fallen comrades, leaving them lying on the frozen ground without a pillow for their heads, without a tombstone to mark their resting-place.

Farewell, comrades-in-arms! When the country has won independence we will come again to see you. We are now returning, leaving you behind on the frozen ground in a far-off foreign land, but when liberation has come, we will carry you on our backs to the hills at the back of your home villages, we will set up tombstones over your graves, build stone offertory tables, plant flowers around them and hold memorial services for you every year. Good-bye, comrades.

With this thought I ordered the whole unit to take off their caps and pay three minutes' silent tribute to our comrades-in-arms who had fallen in the wilderness of north Manchuria. That day heavy snow fell all day long, piling up ankle-deep, as if to console and cover our fallen comrades lying in their summer clothes on the unknown hills and valleys of Ningan. The snow covered our footprints, assisting up hiding our tracks.

Even the heavy snowfall, however, could not completely conceal our march from the enemy's field glasses. While we were taking a short break on a 700-metre-high mountain ridge after eating the lunch we had received from the north Manchurian comrades on our departure, Japanese "punitive" troops appeared in the far distance. It was a surprise to see the enemy in pursuit of us in this primeval forest, despite all the assurance Ping Nan-yang had given upon his oath of honor.

The men became wide awake, and began wondering whether they had come the wrong way. Some of them even complained that now they would be unable to relax as they had wished to do on their way back. I thought that in this mental state it would be impossible for them to fight their way back successfully.

I felt they needed bucking up.

"Comrades, we have been living in enemy encirclement for years. We have been surrounded on all sides, even from the sky. Wherever we guerrillas were, the enemy was always all around us. When have any of you ever marched without an enemy in pursuit? How many marches have you made without hearing a gunshot or without fighting hand to hand, in the history of this war against the Japanese? We must be ready to fight on this march, too. Fighting is the only way to break through the enemy and reach Jiandao."

All the men bucked up at my words.

We sent out a reconnaissance party, which raided the enemy and took two scouts prisoner. Under their interrogation the prisoners now and then mentioned the name of the commander of a unit of the Jingan army, Yoshizaki, who had suffered many defeats in previous battles with us. In order to redeem his ignominious defeats Yoshizaki was pursuing us with a reinforced unit. These were the "punitive" troops who were chasing us.

The Jingan guerrilla army, which had been organized immediately after September 18 incident, as a special detachment to help the Kwangtung Army under the direction of its staff officer, Major Komatsu,



was the predecessor of the Jingan army, which consisted of both Japanese and Manchurians. In November 1932, the Jingan army was placed under the command of the puppet Manchukuo army, which was founded at that time, but two thirds of its officers, including its commander Major General Fujii Juro, were Japanese. The Jingan army had a cadet corps, most of which were 17 or 18 year-old secondary school leavers from Japan. The weapons and clothing for the Jingan army were supplied by the Kwangtung Army. The Jingan army was known as the "red armband army" because its soldiers wore red armbands.

They had been trained in the spirit of "always fighting in the battlefield" and imbued with "SeianTamashii" (Jingan spirit) as well as "Yamato-Tamashii" (Japanese spirit). Most of the Chinese in this army were the children of the propertied class and spoke Japanese fluently. The aim of this army of faithful dogs of the Japanese imperialists was to counter the guerrilla warfare of the communists with its own guerrilla warfare. In fact, therefore, the main objective of this army was to annihilate our guerrilla army.

At the outset, the Jingan guerrilla army was a force of 3,000, which was a little more than one regiment of the Japanese army. Yoshizaki was the commander of the 1st infantry regiment of this army. Yoshizaki unit was the most tenacious and the most bestial of the Jingan army. Even the strongest of armies had to anticipate a bloody battle if they were engaged by this "punitive" force. Yoshizaki always had sufficient reserves for the immediate replacement of his casualties, he was ready for a prolonged engagement with the expeditionary force of the people's revolutionary army. But we had no reserves to replace our loss.

We had to exchange fire with the pursuing enemy four or five times every day. When we marched, the enemy marched, and when we camped the enemy camped. They stuck to us like leeches until our tongues were lolling out of our heads from the chase.

As Zhou Bao-zhong had said, the Jingan army knew that I, Kim Il Sung, was in command of the unit, how strong we were and what tactics we were using. They also knew that there was no communist force in Tianqiaoling and its vicinity which could help us. In those days, the Japanese army had an efficient intelligence service. We were fighting an enemy who knew everything about us.

The enemy continually brought up fresh replacements, clamoring that to kill one communist at the cost of a hundred men was a success because he could replace that many whereas we could not. The real intent of the Jingan army was to exterminate our expeditionary force from Jiandao even at the cost of 1,000 men. The enemy believed that if the expeditionary force was annihilated, that would be the end of Kim Il Sung, and that without Kim Il Sung the Korean communist army and its resistance to Manchukuo and Japan would collapse.

The Jingan army was a genuinely dogged and brutal army. Worse still, the snowstorms that year were so violent that we could hardly distinguish between friend and foe. Only by issuing a challenge could we tell the enemy from our own men and start a battle.

The soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army who had been in our company left us, unable to endure this severe trial. This tenacious and brutal enemy, pursuing them closely in the biting cold was a challenge beyond the imagination of the Chinese nationalist soldiers, who lacked the spirit of self-sacrifice. They did not protect us, but we protected them to the very last.

The food which Ping Nan-yang had prepared for our march soon ran out. For several days we had been trying to allay our hunger by licking snow balls. In the totally uninhabited wilderness of the forests, snow was the only thing we could get. We organized death-defying squads and raided the enemy camp several times, but the booty was not enough to feed the whole unit. When they were in the battlefield, the enemy did not carry much food with them either.

No matter how difficult the situation was, we had to get as far as the Tianqiaoling timber mill, for Ping Nan-yang had said there was plenty of food there. With this hope we quickened our march, encouraging and helping one another.

Whenever we obtained food I offered my share to the men. Sometimes we divided a few pounds of maize among the whole unit. In such cases I often put the maize for my share into the mouths of young soldiers and allayed my hunger with snow. But how could snow give us any strength? We climbed up the slope desperately through the snowstorm.

Han Hung Gwon aroused our curiosity by saying that snow contained some nutritive substances. I thought the other men would refute him. But few of them spoke out against him. Most of them simply said that water might be more nutritious than snow, in order to amuse Han Hung Gwon. I also spoke to support them, trying not to throw cold water on the joke which made them forget their hunger. It was an ennobling though sad sight to see these men endeavoring to endure their hardships by amusing themselves with such a hypothesis.

I was told that during the long march of 25 thousand ri the Chinese comrades boiled leather belts and drank the water. We could also have done so, but we had no time to boil anything. Our march was so arduous that sometimes I had to stiffen my resolve by picturing in my mind the scenes in the novel Iron Flood which I had read in Jirin. Every night I stood sentry just like one of the men. In such a crisis it would have been improper to do only the things that a commander was supposed to do.

Just as the situation most urgently required the commander's abilities and skills of leadership, the men suffered another blow. I caught a chill on Tianqiaoling, and it was so bad that I could hardly walk. It was lack of food, sleep and rest that led to such a serious state of affairs. A high fever and a terrible fit of shivering at last fell me into a snowdrift. If I had warmed myself at the campfire when I first began to shiver with cold, the illness would not have become so serious. But I ignored it for fear that my comrades-in-arms would worry about me. Consequently my limbs became cramped and at last I lost consciousness. I barely came to my senses, even after my comrades-in-arms massaged my arms and legs for a long time.

I was told that if a person with this sickness drank a cup of honey and warmed himself on a heated floor,

he could sweat the cold out, but it was impossible to expect such luxury in an uninhabited wilderness at a height of 1,000 meters above sea level.

Han Hung Gwon and the men made a sleigh and spread a blanket of fur on it. My comrades seated me on the sleigh, wrapped me in a blanket and a roe deer skin, and took turns to pull the sleigh. They were so anxious for my safety that they felt like praying to God to halt the enemy's pursuit, but the enemy remained obdurate. To cross steep mountains while containing the enemy's pursuit and pulling my sleigh was exhausting mental and physical toil.

Yoshizaki reinforced his pursuing troops with Kuto's company. Kuto was known as the "king of punitive operation." He was awarded the title of "war hero" after his death for his merited services in Manchuria. The remains of this "war hero" are said to have been preserved in the Yasukuni Shrine. When he appeared in Tianqiaoling, Kuto gave his men the following orders: Kim Ii Sung has lost his ability to command due to his serious illness. So we need not attack him. Simply pursue his unit until they are exhausted. Pick them off one by one while pursuing them. That way we will kill all his communist army within a month.

Using this tactic Kuto removed many of our men from the battle roll. The enemy's marksmanship was remarkable.

When I recovered consciousness, I saw only 16 men around me. I strained my eyes to look for more of them, but there were only 16. Where had the other comrades gone? Were those priceless comrades buried under the snow of Tianqiaoling? Such fancies sometimes flitted through my mind.

"Where is Wang Tae Hung?"

I was so parched with thirst that I could not make myself heard. So I drew out my Mauser from under the blanket and wrote letters on the snow with its handle. I looked up feebly at the company commander, Han Hung Gwon. He hung his head instead of giving an answer. I saw his Adam's apple moving up and down under his bearded jaw.

"The comrade political instructor fell in action," replied the platoon leader, Kim Thaek Gun, in a tearful voice. He was the man who had taken such great pains to nurse me when I was struck down by an eruptive typhus in Shiliping. His face, too, was bushy with a beard. Tear drops were trickling from his eyes.

When we were encircled by the enemy, the company political instructor, Wang Tae Hung, had formed a death-defying squad with Kim Thaek Gun and several other comrades, and they had fought hand-to-hand in an attempt to break through the surrounding enemy. He felled five enemy soldiers using his bayonet and the butt of his rifle. Then he, too, fell into the snow, never to rise again.

Wang Tae Hung was one of my most beloved military and political workers, as well as a brilliant fighter respected by everyone. Because his name was like a Chinese name and he spoke Chinese as fluently as

Korean, people often took him for a Chinese, but he was a pure Korean. He played his part in helping the army and the people of north Manchuria. His fluent Chinese had made him welcome to Chinese people wherever he went. It was not without reason that Zhou Bao-zhong had insisted to have him under his command.

I regretted now not having left him with Zhou.... I mourned bitterly for my departed comrades-in-arms, feeling as if my soul and body were torn apart.

"The situation was so critical that we could not bury the comrade political instructor's body." The mournful and remorseful voice of the platoon leader, Kim Thaek Gun, rang in my ears.

"There is plenty of snow here in north Manchuria. You could at least have buried his body in snow." The words were on the tip of my tongue. But the power of reason suppressed them. Kim Thaek Gun had known very well what he should do, but the situation had been too pressing for the generous man to bury his dead comrade.

I wrote on the snow again using the handle of the Mauser.

"Do you remember the valley where Wang died?"

"Yes, how can I forget it?" replied Kim Thaek Gun.

"Well, when the thaw sets in, we will come to bury him." Whenever I wrote on the snow, the men moved the sleigh ahead little by little so that the letters would not overlap one another.

But we were not able to go back to Wang.

Many other comrades-in-arms also lay unburied there on Tianqiaoling. When I recall them, I still feel my heart rending asunder. I feel that I owe a debt which I can never pay. How can I express my regret?

After liberation, when Jo Ki Chon completed his epic poem Mt. Paektu, he first called on me to show me his manuscript. I was the first to listen to his poem. Of course, his poetry was composed of jewel-like sentences, but I was fascinated by the content. Many passages of his poem touched my heartstrings.

*You woodcutter; who works these mighty cliffs,  
Cut carefully the trunks of these great trees?  
Here in the wood they watch over the souls  
Of warriors who died to save their country.  
You traveler upon these grandiose peaks,  
Touch not the rocks that lie along the road?  
Beneath them - who can tell - there yet may lie  
The skeletons of warriors who died to save their people.*

In this passage the writer expressed powerful feeling in describing the emotions of the political worker, Chol Ho, as he crossed the Yalu River to work in the homeland, after burying Yong Nam who was shot by the enemy.

As Jo Ki Chon chanted this passage both he and I shed tears. Listening to this passage I recalled the many Wang Tae Hungs whom we had left unburied in north Manchuria, as well as many Tianqiaolings. The skeletons of many of our revolutionary precursors and comrades-in-arms lie buried in the fields, mountains and rivers of Manchuria.

When I was Premier I once heard a story from a senior official of the Ministry of Education. One day, a professor of the history faculty of Kim Il Sung University met with a wartime comrade-in-arms at his house. They chatted and reminisced over their old friendship. The guest made friends with the professor's only son, who was a kindergarten toddler. The boy was sitting on the guest's lap, fingering his collar, buttons and ribbons. When he touched the guest's hand, the boy got a shock.

It was an artificial hand, so it was not warm and it had no blood.

"Uncle, why is your hand like this?" the boy asked, holding the artificial hand in his. "It had to be amputated because it was wounded in the war against the Americans."

"Do People's Army soldiers get wounded?"

"They may get wounded, and sometimes they may get killed."

When he heard this, the boy grew sulky. He did not believe that People's Army soldiers could be wounded or killed, because he believed that they never should be. The guest had offended the child's belief.

Until that time our illustrated books and films for children showed many enemy soldiers being killed, but very few People's Army soldiers, and so the children had believed that the soldiers of the People's Army or the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army could never be wounded or killed.

Our educators and writers have not taught the younger generation just how many lives were lost for the sake of victory in the revolutionary wars against the US and Japanese imperialists. We scaled the peak of victory in the great anti-Japanese war by enduring indescribable hardships and building a staircase out of the dead bodies of our comrades.

How could there possibly not be any sacrifice in the fight against this formidable enemy, the imperialists, who are deaf to any appeal or petition and are immune to terrorism?

Death does not discriminate between friend and foe, between justice and injustice. The only difference is

in its significance; the death of a revolutionary soldier saves ten lives, the deaths of ten soldiers, a hundred lives, of a hundred soldiers, a thousand lives. That is the significance of the death of revolutionary soldiers.

Shortly after I heard about Wang's death, I fainted again. I was suffering from a high fever, feeling as if my whole body were burning and this was accompanied by a dim state of consciousness in which I could not distinguish reality, dream and hallucination. I was crossing Oga Mountain Pass, carrying a stretcher with Wang Tae Hung. On the stretcher Cha Kwang Su and Zhou Bao-zhong lay side by side with their heads on their arms. Strangely enough, I have never thought of Cha and Wang as being dead. Living men mix quite easily with the dead men and it is not in the least awkward. We have a long way to go and there is a high pass before us, but under the scorching sun of summer we breathe hard and feel very thirsty. The higher we climb up the mountain the more thirsty we feel.

When my patience runs out I run to a pool and try to drink the still water. At that moment I hear a familiar voice saying, "Don't drink!" My mother, dressed in white clothes, together with my younger brother Yong Ju, is standing on the pass waving her hand. "Don't drink, that water's poisoned," says my mother. Looking into the water I am surprised. The pool is teeming with tadpoles the size of grapes. Why does she say the water is poisonous? To my eyes it looks like honey water or the clean water in the well at daybreak. I lie on my belly to drink the water. At that moment my mother warns me a second time. "I said you must not drink!"

I was awakened by her warning. I looked up at the mountain pass, but I could not see either my mother or my brother. No doubt it was only a dream, but it was a voice calling me which broke my dream. "Brother Sung Ju, for goodness' sake, open your eyes and come to. If you do not rise, our country will never rise again."

At the sound of this voice I recovered consciousness. Someone was looking full in my face, bending his body over the sleigh. It was Wal Ryong, a Young Communist League member, who had followed me, copying papers for me and helping me in other work, since the days when I worked in Jirin.

The snow-covered forest reflecting the bloody color of the setting sun was gliding past behind the sleigh. The cold twilight sky was spinning above my head. Wal Ryong followed the sleigh calling me "Brother Sung Ju, Brother Sung Ju," tears trickling from his eyes. And another man, apparently O Tae Song, threw himself upon me and cried.

"Comrade Commander, if you die, Korea will be hopeless."

My comrades-in-arms who had been walking silently in front of and behind the sleigh burst into tears all at once. I wished to tell them not to cry, but I could not open my mouth. I was crying, too. And then, I lost consciousness and lapsed into a coma.

The next morning, when I regained consciousness and opened my eyes, free for a short while from the

high fever, I saw the sleigh was in an open place and my 16 comrades were collapsed around it.

They were no longer in a position to take care of me. Instead, I had to console them. They were exhausted from hunger, thirst and ceaseless fighting for many days. They had endured innumerable hardships to save my life. For years we had triumphed over indescribable ordeals in Jiandao, but I had never seen them so haggard and so ragged as they were now. My heart was heavy as I thought that we still had a long way to go, but these comrades, once so strong, were now so completely exhausted that they had collapsed on the ground.

What was to be done? Had they any strength to rise again and return to Wangqing?

They might be buried in this snowstorm for ever. What could I do if I were left alive alone? I had been able to fight all along, triumphing over every trial under the anti-Japanese banner, because they had looked up to me and supported me and because I had believed in them and relied on their strength in my struggle. Without them I could neither survive nor carry through the revolution. As they had saved my life, I must save their lives. Only when I rose again could I rescue them from graves in the snow and carry on with the revolution. But I did not have the strength to lift a finger. Alas! What could be done?

My consciousness dimmed again, as if shrouded in mist. I felt my heart breaking in frustration at the thought that the cause of my life for the sake of which I had soared in the blue sky like a fearless phoenix, was going to end here, with my wings clipped.

Suddenly I felt alarmed at the thought that if we could not get to our feet again, our people, who looked up to us in the hope of national resurrection, would be grieved and disappointed. I trembled as if I had suffered an electric shock.

The Japanese imperialists would gloat over the grief of the Korean nation, and would take pleasure in our despair. If we went down on our knees, the millionaires and militarists of Japan would be delighted. The Japanese imperialists were waiting for us to starve and freeze to death or surrender to them in despair. History had not yet given us the right to die. If we became a handful of dirt without fulfilling our duty to history and the times, we would be unfilial sons not only to our families, but also to the nation that gave us birth and brought us up. We would never be unfilial sons.

I continued to think, raising myself by rubbing my drooping eyelids with snow dust.

If our revolutionary army disappeared for ever, buried in the snow and ice on Tianqiaoling, the Japanese repression of our people would grow still more oppressive, ten or a hundred times worse. The Japanese imperialists were making frantic efforts to exploit our people and make our nation their Emperor's subject even as we fought against them.

The Japanese imperialists were exploiting the Korean nation in order to recoup the losses caused by the economic blockade imposed upon them following Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in

1933. The plan for the increased production of grain and the policy of increased production of cotton and silk enforced by governor-general Saito in the 1920s accelerated the class differentiation of the Korean rural communities and forced many of peasants to desert their farmland and villages as paupers; the policy of industrializing Korea, the policy of encouraging gold production and the policy of producing cotton in the south and sheep in the north being applied by governor-general Ukaki were transforming the poor economy of our country into an appendix to the Japanese war economy. Steel, coal, cotton and sheep were all shipped to Japan to increase her wealth and to strengthen her armed forces.

The Korean language had been reduced to the status of a dialect. Progressive books were subjected to Japanese censorship. There were increasing numbers of military-drill grounds and prisons in the homeland. It was said that the notorious blood-stained Sodaemun prison in Seoul was being expanded because it was overflowing with our patriots. Japan's monopolists, warlords and their stooges were in crazed pursuit of the ideal of militarism, in their ambition to conquer the world. The Sino-Japanese war would break out any time now.

It depended on when the Japanese warlords pulled the trigger. Because of the German and Japanese fascists, black clouds were gathering over the west and the east, threatening a new world war. When the counterrevolution was so rampant, how could we revolutionaries, who were resolved to defeat it, linger in despair, lamenting over our present adversity?

Even if the sky fell we had to do everything we could to stay alive and carry through the revolution. If we did not return alive, who could manage the piles of work in east Manchuria which was awaiting our return? If we sank to our knees here, the Korean people would become the lifelong slaves of the Japanese imperialists.

Suddenly a poetic thought flashed in upon me. It was just the concept of a poem which became the song known nowadays as the Song of the Anti-Japanese War

*Louder is the sound of Japanese combat boots  
Trampling upon our lovely land  
Humiliating tens of millions of our people  
Murdering, plundering and committing arson.  
My parents, your brothers and their wives and children  
Are shedding blood at the point of the Japs' bayonet.  
My house and your farmland are reduced  
To ashes and desert land by the enemy.  
Rise and unite, the working masses  
Do not betray our firm resolve, fight on.  
Let's shout hurrahs of triumph  
After defeating white terrorism under the red flag.*

I shook Wal Ryong, who was lying near the sleigh, sat him up, and dictated the words of the song to him. Wal Ryong and I were the first to sing this song. One after another my comrades rose and we sang



together.

At about ten o'clock in the morning, we found the timber mill in Xipailinzi. We entered it hungry even for maize gruel and hoping to sweat out our chill. That day my fever went over 40 degrees C. The only remedy in our situation was to eat maize gruel and drink Chinese liquor mixed with raw sugar.

If I sweated it out I would feel better, but I had been shivering with cold on the sleigh for a long time, so my illness was going from bad to worse every moment. Watching me suffer high fever and coma, my comrades felt our expeditionary force had no hope of finding a way out. Nobody felt that we would escape this crisis and return to Wangqing. They had apparently concluded that we had failed and they left absolutely everything to the company commander, Han Hung Gwon.

Han asked old man Kim, an employee at the timber mill, to boil up maize gruel. At that time we had eaten nothing for whole two days. At first my comrades took this old man for a Chinese because he was dressed in Chinese clothes and spoke in Chinese. When he learned that we were Korean guerrillas from Jiandao, the old man said that he was a Korean. He also said that his son was Kim Hae San, a commander of the guerrilla unit fighting in Badaohezi. Kim Hac San was one of the participants in the winter Mingyuegou meeting in 1931. After sending his son to the guerrilla army, old man Kim raised crops on the mountain in summer to earn his bread and did odd jobs in the timber mill in winter in order to buy salt, cooking oil and the like.

Shortly after our exchange of greetings with the old man, Han Hung Gwon received a report from the reconnaissance party that the enemy's punitive" troops were approaching the timber mill.

At that moment Wal Ryong was boiling water for me on the fireplace in a pan without a lid, while drying my wet shoes. He cried to think that all was lost now that the commander was not recovering and there was no chance for us to break through the enemy encirclement. When he left Jirin after me his resolve had been really firm. He said that he would die if I died.

Old man Kim came into the kitchen with firewood in his arms and asked him why he was crying.

"The commander is ill..., the 'punitive' troops have encircled us ring upon ring... within the hour they will rush into this mill, but we cannot find a way out. That's why I am crying. If we are to escape we must cross the river.... The river is deep and not frozen, so we cannot cross it. The other way for us to escape is to cross the bridge, but a company of the 'punitive' troops is keeping watch there. We are surrounded on all sides by the enemy."

Having heard Wal Ryong's complaint, the old man suggested to him a brilliant idea for breaking through the encirclement "Young man, don't worry too much. While there's life, there's hope. My master is a stooge of Manchukuo. He will come here soon. If he does you can arrest him. You must force him to lie to the 'punitive' troops so that they will not come to the timber mill. Then you can stay here until evening. The next step can be discussed in the evening."

Wal Ryong reported Kim's words to Han Hung Gwon. Han talked with the old man on behalf of our party and they worked out a plan of escape.

Han followed the old man's advice, tying up the master of the mill and criticizing him. "You scoundrel, who allowed you to manage a timber mill? We Although he was not a military expert, the old man was a bold operation planner, the equal of a volunteer army commander. This father of a guerrilla army commander was a quite uncommon person. His plan for our escape was a brilliant idea which the average commanding officer could scarcely have conceived. Once again on that occasion I learned that the brains of our people were a fount of wisdom which could discover a solution for any difficulty in the world. My faith that in times of difficulty we must go among the people has been derived from such experiences.

I left everything to Han Hung Gwon, saying that as I was a helpless invalid he should deal with everything as he considered appropriate. When night fell, Han demanded that the master prepare five horse-drawn sleighs. There were many horses in the timber mill. Platoon leader Kim Thaek Gun, a brilliant fighter, took the first sleigh together with the master, and I sat on the third sleigh.

The sentries of the Japanese and Manchurian mixed unit saw us and challenged us from the darkness, "Who goes there?" As we had instructed him, the master said calmly, "My men are ill and I am taking them to hospital, and I am going to Ningan to buy something." The sentries recognized the master's voice and shouted "Pass!" without even approaching the sleigh.

The five horse-drawn sleighs crossed the bridge at a lightning speed. The sleigh bumped so terribly that the vibration of the wooden bridge shook me even through the fur on which I was sitting. Under the bridge the river was roaring in full spate. This river was a major tributary of the River Mudan.

"That's well done! May it never be otherwise."

After the sleighs had crossed the bridge old man Kim embraced Han for joy.

This adventure, which was like some legend or detective story, ended well for us, the next stage also going smoothly, as we had planned. But for old man Kim, I would not have been plucked from the jaws of death, and together with me the expeditionary force would have been destroyed there in the backwoods of Tianqiaoling. The old man did us a great service.

He was a kind-hearted person who helped us without flinching from sacrifice, a worthy father of a guerrilla army commander.

It was strange that whenever my life was in danger, benefactors such as old man Kim would appear before me and save me at the critical moment. A housewife in Jiaohe, whose name I had no opportunity to ask, protected me from being arrested by the enemy and old man Ma afforded me and my comrades a chance to relax after we had suffered hunger and cold on the heights of Luozigou. And now old man Kim, whom we had never seen before, had saved the expeditionary force and its commander from destruction

on Tianqiaoling.

When I tell this story some people say that I was lucky. But some others regard it as fate. They do not consider it luck when benefactors appear to help patriots who devote their all to the country and the people. I would not wish to say who is right and who is wrong.

Because on many occasions in my life I have received aid from benefactors, I can say that luck has always been on my side. It is natural that the luck should be generous to men who devote their lives to the people.

If the people had not known that our guerrilla army was an armed force of righteous men fighting for human emancipation, and if the image of the guerrilla army had not left a mark of nobility and beauty in the people's minds, we would not have been helped by old man Kim on Tianqiaoling, and such a mysterious story as the incident on Tianqiaoling would have never been recorded in the annals of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

## 9.6. In the Bosom of the People

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On that fateful night, when we successfully passed three sentry posts, we camped between the walls of a roofless burnt-out house in the Dawaizi valley. My comrades spent one night and one day nursing me in this ruin. Their nursing was far from qualified medical care. They just built a campfire and sat around it, taking turns to massage my arms and legs. Next morning, some of my 6 men wandered over the mountain ridges in search of the houses of the Koreans who were said to be living there without registering names in the Manchukuo census records.

However, it proved no easy job to locate the refuges of people who had turned their backs on the world in order to avoid observation by the Japanese army and police and Manchurian government officials. At midnight they found a log-cabin on the mountainside of Laoyeling amid dense primeval forest of pine-nut trees, white birches and *Abies nephroleps*. This was the house of old man Jo Thae Ju which has become well-known among our people as the "solitary house at Dawaizi." Choe Il Hwa, the author of the reminiscences "Long Life and Good Health to the Leader," was the eldest daughter-in-law of old man Jo.

On a ledge midway up the mountain ridge there were two single-room log-cabins separated by a ditch between, as like each other as twins in size and form. Old man Jo's nine-member family lived in the cabin north of the ditch - his wife, his eldest son Jo Uk, his daughter-in-law and his grandchildren. His second son Jo Kyong's five-member family lived in the other cabin, south of the ditch. The eaves were too low; these were more like dugouts than log-cabin. Their roofs were covered thickly with earth on which several young pine trees were planted to camouflage their existence. This camouflage gave our reconnaissance party a lot of trouble in finding them as they wandered about the mountain.

Travelers passing through Laoyeling had never known of these shelters inhabited by people with an unusual outlook on life, who hid their very existence from the world. Only three liaison agents who traveled between north and east Manchuria knew the location of these shelters. Our reconnaissance party hardly had time to explain why they had come before old man Jo shouted to his son Jo Uk and grandson Jo Yong Son to bring guerrillas there right away, saying that even if the sky fell, Commander Kim Il Sung could not be left to suffer from this serious chill. He asked his daughter-in-law Choe Il Hwa to boil some water and prepare thin gruel.

From the Jo's house to the mined house where we were was more than five miles by the shortest route. When Jo Uk and Jo Yong Son arrived at our camp with our reconnaissance party, my men were sitting around the campfire boiling water for me, and I was in a coma. They took me on their backs and set out for Jo's house. Wal Ryong brought up the rear erasing our footprints with pine twigs.

Old man Jo who had known the sweet and bitter sides of life from childhood, asked a few questions of company commander Han and said that my disease was a cold fit, a serious illness caused by fatigue and

lack of nourishment and that it could be life-threatening but I would recover within three days if I got warm and sweated out. He added that the treatment of this disease required absolute rest.

"The reason why Commander Kim has not recovered consciousness so far is that the blood is not circulating smoothly in his body. If the blood circulation improves he will get better. So don't worry, go and relax in my second son's house," the old man said to company commander 1-lan, as he and his daughter-in-law massaged my arms and legs.

These words lifted my men's spirits. Their faces had been long from worry about, since I had been totally incapacitated for several days.

Accompanied by Jo Yong Son, the soldiers crossed the ditch to Jo Kyong's house. Old man Jo's family and my two bodyguards stayed with me.

After giving me boiled water mixed with half a bowl of honey, the old man watched the reactions of my body, sometimes feeling my forehead. Some time later he offered me thin gruel mixed with honey. My bodyguards, who nursed me that night together with old man Jo, said later that after I took the gruel some color returned to my face and I awoke from the comatose state in which I had not been able to distinguish dream and reality.

I felt refreshed, as if I were breathing the air of a balmy spring day, and my body and soul felt as buoyant as a flake of down. Around me I saw no sleigh covered with fur, no more of the snow-covered forest scenery through which we had made our tedious journey, no snowstorm, no coldness and no ear-splitting cracks as the pursuing enemy shot at us. Nor was there any more splitting headache, chill and high fever. How could this be? What had made such a clean sweep of the disease which had brought me to the threshold of death and caused me untold distress?

I gathered myself and strained my ears to hear the sound of the wind brushing against the window. The buzzing of the flaps of the papered window was like the sound of the biplane which we had encountered on a mountain peak in Laoyeling when we were leaving Duitoulazi. My eyes met the gaze of a strange old man, looking down at me with gentle eyes under his grey eyebrows.

In the old man's calloused hand, which was lightly holding my right wrist, I felt the warmth of my grandfather's hand in Mangyongdae as he touched my forehead and cheeks in my childhood.

"Where am I?" I quietly asked this mysterious old man who was watching over me.

My simple question produced such a strong reaction on the old man's face that I cannot describe it in words, written or spoken. The placid smile on his lips instantly extended to his cheeks and eyes, bringing a mysterious radiance to the wrinkled face of this old man who was as soft and unsophisticated as a ploughed field. It seemed I had never seen such a pure and trustworthy man before in my life.

Wal Ryong, who was sitting beside the old man, burst into tears and reported in a single breath how our expeditionary force had survived the crisis and reached this Dawaizi valley from the timber mill in Xipailinzi.

"Thank you, grandfather. I owe my life to your family."

"Don't mention it. God gave birth to you General Kim, and you have been saved in this log-cabin by God's will, not by my family."

The old man raised his head and looked up at the ceiling as if I had really come from the sky. His compliment made me feel awkward.

"Grandfather, I don't think I'm worthy of your compliment. It is too much to compare me with a general born of the Divine will. I am the son and grandson of the common people; I was born into a nameless peasant family. As a soldier of Korea my services have been too little."

"You are too modest. The whole world knows what distinguished services you have rendered in war. I am a mere ignoramus who makes a bare living tilling plots at land in these backwoods, but I have heard all the news going the rounds of the three provinces of northeast China. Hey, my boys, this is the famous General Kim, who attacked the Dongning county town in the autumn of the year before last, leading the Korean army and Commander Wu's unit. Come here and bow to him."

The old man spoke in a passionate tone to his children as they came in through the kitchen door, together with the guerrillas who had woken up from their sound sleep at dawn to be told by Wal Ryong that I had regained consciousness. I sat up under the blanket and accepted their salutations.

In this log-cabin on a remote mountain the location of which was not even registered in the government census record, which even the postman did not visit, laughter filled the room at that ungodly hour.

"We are now merrily laughing," the platoon leader, Kim ThaeK Gun, said with tears in his eyes. "But when we suffered great hardships, surrounded by the enemy, we thought we had no hope. We thought we would all die."

"You comrades made great efforts for my sake. It is lucky that you at least have survived. I will never forget your devotion and your heroism until my hair turns gray."

I would never forget the way my comrades-in-arms looked at me with tears in their eyes. That image from 50 years ago is still fresh in my memory. But I have forgotten the names of half of them. I would greatly love to hand down at least their names to posterity, but my poor memory betrays me. These 16 names have been buried among thousands of names of people connected with me directly or indirectly over half a century. In order to recollect all the names which have been buried in the history of the anti-Japanese revolution, we would need a full historical record.

But unfortunately we do not have such a record. We did not take up weapons to fight in the anti-Japanese war in order to leave our names in the historical record, but in order to create a new age in which the working masses would be masters. However, I cannot justify myself with such excuses. I am a former guerrilla army commander who has forgotten the names of half of those comrades-in-arms who snatched me from the jaws of death.

"Grandfather, what is your native district? Why were you driven out into such a remote place?"

Setting my hand on his rake-like hand, on which the veins stood out clearly, I looked tenderly at his wrinkled face, which seemed to reflect the political history of half a century.

"My native district is Samjang Sub-county, Musan County. I was unable to endure the depredations of the Japanese, and left my native land at the age of twenty-nine and came to Helong," replied the old man sadly.

After he crossed the Tuman River, the old man had been a tenant farmer for about 30 years. Two years after the June Tenth Independence Movement Jo's family crossed the Laoyeling Mountains and began to reclaim barren land registered for the Japanese rice field project. The severe trials suffered by an ill-fated peasant family as part of the history of a ruined nation flashed before my eyes like a film on a screen.

After crossing the Laoyeling Mountains old man Jo drove fence stakes and laid foundation stones in the Dawaizi village, where three Korean families and five Chinese families lived. Afterwards the number of Korean houses increased to ten. In this remote mountain village, too, the Anti-Japanese Self-Defense Corps, the women's association, the Children's Vanguard and the Children's Corps organizations began to strike root. But the backlash of the September 18 incident swept away all these organizations. The "punitive" operations reduced the village to ashes.

The people built new houses on the sites of the burnt ones and continued determinedly building up their lives. In the spring of 1933, their houses were once again enveloped in flames and some people were burnt to death.

In the spring of 1934, Jo Thae Ju's family built a log-cabin deep in the mountain of Laoyeling, approximately seven miles away from Dawaizi and then moved into it. This was the house in which I began to recover after drinking foxtail millet gruel mixed with honey. His nine-member family built a hut at the entrance of the valley five miles away from the log-cabin and tilled mountain plots there. In the farming season, when they were shorthanded, the whole family slept and took their meals in the hut to save time. They harvested the crops as soon as they were ripe and carried them on their backs to the log-cabin, where they stored the grains in a cellar, hulling them with a tread-mill little by little just before eating them.

Old man Jo was satisfied with this simple, primitive self-supporting economy. His family only went to

the Ningan county town when they needed to barter. They could not avoid these trips to the market if they were to obtain such goods as clothes, footwear, matches, salt, needles, thread and the like. This was their only connection with the outer world. Urban civilization came nowhere near the spot at the end of the world, where there was no road, no horses, no vehicles, no electricity. The children were totally isolated from education. Old man Jo's admonitions took the place of classes, and mother Choe Il Hwa's old stories and songs, which could be counted on one's fingers, were all the literature and art they could enjoy.

"Grandfather, are you not lonely in this remote mountain?" I asked the old man feeling a deep emotion close to resentment for him.

The old man smiled sadly at my question.

"The loneliness is beyond description. But because we can avoid the disgusting Japs, we feel we live on the fat of the land. The paradise of Ryultoguk cannot be better than here."

The word Ryultoguk shocked me. How could this god-forsaken place be compared with Ryultoguk? Had the ideal of the Korean nation fallen down such depths? Japan was sending her emigrants to colonize the fertile lands of Korea, and our compatriots had been driven into a closed mountain valley like some mouse hole in desolate Manchuria. What prison could be more terrible than this place?

Yes, it was undoubtedly a prison. It differed from a common prison only in that it had no warder and no fence of its own. The warder of this prison was the army and the police of Japan and Manchukuo and the fence was their threats. Old man Jo took the anachronistic view that this prison was Ryultoguk in order to console himself.

His thinking that the prison where he was detained was a paradise disappointed me. I thought that if every Korean tolerated reality as old man Jo did, Korea could never be restored.

"Grandfather, the fate of Koreans has become so miserable that you call this place a Ryaltoguk. Samsu and Kapsan which are known as places of exile, could not be more desolate than here. As long as the Japanese are entrenched in Korea and Manchuria, Ryaltoguk and the reign of peace are inconceivable for us. You must know that someday the 'punitive' troops will enter this valley, too."

I opened my heart though I knew that the old man might be upset by my words. Old man Jo twitched his eyebrows and looked at me for a while with sad eyes.

"If those devils attack even this valley there will be no place left for Koreans to live. Damn it! What terrible evils torment our people.... Whenever I had to move to a new place I cursed the five ministers who sold our country."

This was what old man Jo and I talked about that dawn.



Beginning the next day I left my bed to take a walk and to read. A few days later I began doing some light manual work. In the daytime I gave military and political classes and in the evening I took part in a concert with my men. Whenever we had a concert, the two or three men who were staying at the old man Jo's house took me across the ditch to Jo Kyong's house. In these narrow and gloomy mountain refuges, the guerrillas abided strictly by their daily routine, just as they had done in Wangqing.

Three or four days later I was ready to order our departure. I had thought that it was unreasonable and went against common sense for a number of able-bodied men greater than the 14 members of the family to be living on them and taking so much out of their poor living earned from slash-and-burn tillage.

But company commander Han Hung Gwon objected to my decision. He dissuaded me persistently, saying that exposing myself to cold again after suffering from a cold fit would be tantamount to suicide, and he could not consent to such an adventure. He even dissuaded me from going for walks in the forest.

The food grain which about 20 able-bodied men consumed in taking three meals a day was by no means a small amount. Even at the rate of the daily rations supplied to a grown-up nowadays, we would have consumed four straw-sacks of grain if we stayed for 20 days. In any case, we ate most of this family's food.

However, old man JO neither showed any reluctance nor betrayed in any expression of his face the burden which he had shouldered for our sake. On the contrary, when we said that we were sorry to have caused him so much trouble, he never allowed us to continue saying that it was the duty and job of the people to support the army of their country, and it could not be a burden. He was really a very large-hearted old man.

Mother Choe Il Hwa, too, was very kind-hearted. Because her family were slash-and-burn farmers they had no rice, but she cooked food which tempted our appetites three times a day using foxtail millet, beans, barley, oats and potatoes. Sometimes she served ground bean mash and coarse bean curd boiled in bean paste. She was sorry that she could not serve me meat to restore my strength after my illness.

"I have not raised any domestic animals for fear that our house would be discovered, but now I really regret not having raised an animal. If we had at least a chicken I would cook it and serve it to YOU General.... I would gladly travel dozens of miles to buy meat, but I cannot, for fear of the mad 'punitive' troops. How cruel the world is...."

The heartfelt kindness I sensed in her harsh yet generous voice was exceptionally warm and profound.

"Mother, when you say things like that I feel awful. I am a son of the common people who knows what is it to live on vegetables and dried-radishleaf soup. So you need not worry about meat. You said that you were sorry you could prepare only coarse bean curd, because you had no brine, but I can feel putting on weight from the coarse bean curd and ground bean mash."

"I had been told that the men folk of Phyongan Provinces are hot-tempered, but you Commander are very tender-hearted. You make me think that if I had a daughter I would marry her to a boy from Phyongan Provinces. I want you to empty your bowl at every meal, simple though the food may be, and recover your health completely under this roof."

Whenever I took a meal, the woman squatted anxiously in the kitchen hearth. She worried that I might stop eating without emptying all the bowls.

Even when I had no appetite, I used to eat up all the dishes on the small table with cabrioles in response to her sincere concern. Then a faint smile would appear on her lips. These people's sincere concern for us was quite pure. If such sincerity were to be compared to a river, I would call it a "clear stream" or crystalline "stream." Such sincerity is boundless, it cannot be measured by length or weight.

A man who enjoys the love of the people is happy, and a man who does not is unhappy. This is the view of the nature of happiness which I have maintained throughout my life. Just as in the past, I still feel nowadays the greatest pride and joy in enjoying the love of the people. I consider this the true meaning of life. Only those who understand this true meaning can be the genuine sons and faithful servants of the people.

Thanks to the sincere efforts of Jo ThaeK Ju's family I quickly recovered my health. I frequently went for walks in spite of Han's warning. Sometimes I helped the family to chop firewood and pound grains in a tread-mill.

More than ten days had passed since we entered the Dawaizi valley and were granted the tender care of Jo's family. I thought we should return to the guerrilla zone. I felt as though many years had passed since we left Wangqing. In fact we had left it only three months before, but I was anxious to know what had been happening in the guerrilla zone and what the zone would look like when we returned to Wangqing. The future seemed uncertain to me.

While we were working in the area around Badaohezi, messengers from east Manchuria had warned us many times that a purge had created some disturbance in the minds of the people in Jiandao. Some of them complained that the struggle of the anti-"Minsaengdan" clique was crushing the revolutionary base itself and others said that if the purge was stepped up, the guerrilla zone would collapse in a year or two.

I reaffirmed my resolve to return to the guerrilla zone and eliminate the harmful consequences of the ultra-Leftist anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle as soon as possible. One day I walked for a while in the forest and then went back to Jo Kyong's house to announce my decision to company commander Han Hung Gwon.

The company commander was sitting on a tree stump near the house looking vacantly into the northern sky. When I saw him sitting there as motionless as a wooden statue with his arms folded on his chest, I

felt he was wrapped in deep and heartbreaking thought. When I came closer, Han stood up, rubbing his eyes. When I saw his eyes were reddish, I was a little frightened. Had something bothered him during the night? Or was this stout-hearted man suffering from some agony which he could not reveal to anyone?

"Company Commander, what is the matter so early in the morning? You are not like the Han Hung Gwon I know."

After asking this question I walked around him. For some reason he watched me with a gloomy expression. He blinked tearful eyes, heaved a deep sigh and said slowly:

"We had dozens of men when we began our march to north Manchuria, but now only sixteen are left alive. What great efforts we made to build up our company!"

With deep emotion we both recalled the days when we were building up the 5th company. The 5th company had been organized on the basis of some men from the 2nd Wangqing company, which was in Shihping. I went to the Luozigou area leading a group of men from the 2nd company and increased the ranks by recruiting young men there. This was the 5th company, led by Han Hung Gwon.

The 5th Wangqing company was also under my personal command. In the days when I commanded a battalion and a regiment, I always took this company with me to harass the enemy from behind his lines. The 5th company was one of the strongest elite companies, among all the guerrilla units in east Manchuria with rich combat experience. But this company now had to return to the guerrilla zone, reduced to skin and bone after the loss of many comrades. It was natural that Han should writhe in agony and bury his head in his hands.

"When I think of the losses the 5th company has suffered, I, too, feel my heart breaking. But I take comfort in the fact that we gave great help to our comrades in north Manchuria. From that point of view, we had great success, didn't we? Comrade Hung Gwon, this blood has not been spilt in vain. Let us extend our ranks again and make the enemy pay a thousand fold for the blood of our comrades-in-arms."

The words I spoke to Han were also addressed to myself.

Han Hung Gwon continued looking up into the northern sky with his lips tightly closed. A few words of consolation could not heal the wound in his mind. The grief of a man was clearly beyond measurement by depth and density.

His silence neither disappointed me nor offended me, but merely doubled my trust in him. A few days later I ordered the men to march, despite old man Jo's objections. As we lined up in front of the log-cabin to bid farewell to the old man, our faces were grave.

"Grandfather, I came to this house on a man's back, but now I shall return to the guerrilla zone on my own two feet. But for your family, I would not have recovered or survived. I will never forget your kind

help."

I regretted my inability to find better words of gratitude for old man Jo. The depth of my emotion seemed to be directly proportional to my lack of command of language.

Old man Jo was upset by my words.

"I hardly deserve your compliments, for I have not even served you a piece of meat. I am sorry I must say good-bye to you so soon. Commander Kim. But I will not detain you because you must leave for the sake of Korea. When the country has become independent we will leave this mountain valley and return home. We put all our trust in you Commander Kim."

"We sons of Korea feel we are guilty of a serious crime when we see you living in hiding in this foreign land where you came to find a way to survive. But, grandfather, the day will surely come when you will

live in bright sunshine. When spring comes, the enemy's 'Punitive' operation will become more violent and gunshot will be heard frequently, even in this valley. You should move towards Luozigou You will be safer there, where the wind of revolution blows strongly". After giving him this advice, I left the valley of Dawaizi.

Mother Choe Il Hwa had packed three days' provisions for our journey in our knapsacks. She had prepared them by Pounding and Polishing foxtail millet and barley through the night. She also gave us chili bean paste and cooked rice balls wrapped in the white birch bark to eat on the way. Her eldest son Jo Yong Son guided us to Barengou forcing his way through the deep snow in Laoyeling.

Some time later gunshots were frequently heard near Jo's house. Our Prophecy came true. Jo's family left Dawaizi in secret one midnight with bundles of food and threadbare clothes and moved to Taipinggou, where they became tenant farmers.

In June 1935, I met his family again in Taipinggou. An east Manchurian expedition force which had annihilated a rabid Jingan army unit in Laoheishan was staying in Xintunzi, near Taipinggou conducting vigorous work among the masses. We also sent able political workers to Taipinggou. All of them had benefited from Jo's hospitality at Dawaizi. They met old man Jo Thaek Ju on the road by chance and reported to me about it.

I visited Jo's house that very day. Half a year before I had been carried unconscious to his house on the backs of my comrades. In all the vast north Manchurian plain there were only 16 men, totally exhausted, left in my company. But this time I called on the old man in good health and in command of a large army. I wanted to meet the benefactors who had saved me from death and taken tender care of me with all the sincerity that a man could offer, but the gift I was carrying with me was too Small and too light to express all my gratitude. All I had in my hands was a few pounds of meat and some money with which his family could buy food for a month or two. How good it would have been if the few pounds of meat

had been dozens of domestic animals and the money had been an ox-cart laden with gold coins!

I was ashamed that I could not repay the full extent of my debt.

But I quickened my pace, full of vigor, my head held high. My package may be small, but it was good luck for us to meet again alive. It was a truly great happiness that both JO's family and I were in good health.

In a small room which clearly betrayed poverty, the large family of more than ten was living in rags, in dire misery, but they welcomed me with a broad smile on their faces. I sat on the porch with the old man and shared past experiences. He was curious to know how the revolutionary army had destroyed the Jingan army and I was concerned about the poverty of Jo's family.

"Grandfather, how do you till the land and gather firewood without an ox?"

This had been worrying me since my stay at Dawaizi.

"We do it ourselves, all fourteen of us working like a horse or an ox, pulling the plough and carrying the firewood."

He seemed exceptionally calm and objective as he spoke without exaggeration of the poverty which he had suffered for 60 years, apparently regarding it as a matter of course.

"It must be a Herculean task to support your large family."

"Yes, it is a heavy task. But tilling the land is nothing compared to the hardships you go through, General Kim. We are in good spirits nowadays even though we are badly off." "Is there anything that makes you so happy?"

"We feel as if we had become rich because your army has repeatedly defeated the Japs. When we hear news of the revolutionary army destroying the enemy, we forget our hunger. I had hardly any hope left when I saw you off in Dawaizi. I wondered how an army the size of my family could Possibly do such great work. But yesterday I saw hundreds of your soldiers as you returned in triumph from Laoheishan I slapped my knee, saying to myself, 'Now everything will go well. Korea will surely win!'

When he lived in Dawaizi, the old man talked mostly about the people's welfare, but to my surprise he was now interested only in the results of the revolutionary army's battles. He had become a different man in half a year. The feeble and nonresistant hermit who had rejected the world and turned his back on it had changed into an optimist who lived in hopes for the future after returning to the life with which he had once broken.

If the army fights well the people will become more courageous this was what I felt when I met old man

Jo that day.

As I was leaving his house I left some money to help him out and the next day I sent him a white horse which we had captured in the Laoheishan battle. The horse was rather lean, but I hoped that his family could fatten it up and use it as a draught animal. It was a trifling repayment for the kindness which Jo's family had shown to me. Money or wealth could never be adequate to repay my debt to his family'

In the turbulent events of the subsequent years I lost contact with Jo's family. During those years I was active mainly in the Mt. Paektu area. After moving to the Mt. Paektu area I never visited Taipinggou In the autumn of 1959 I discovered the whereabouts of the Jos. I received a report that a group of visitors to the old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, which was sent to northeast China, had discovered mother Choe Il Hwa in Ningan.

My greatest benefactors whom for Scores of years I had tried to find by tracing rumors were still resolutely alive, but in another part of the world. I wanted to cross the border right away and run towards Ningan in order to bow to them in thanks. I wanted to meet them in the homeland where the dream of our martyrs has come true and express the deep emotions which we had pent as we missed each other for such a long time, to retrace old footprints which are now covered with moss.

However, between her family and me there was a harrier called the national border. Our meeting called for a complicated procedure: but such obstacles could not cool my earnest desire to meet them.

How I wished to be a commoner with an ordinary passport, even for a few months, so that I could travel, wearing canvas shoes and puttees, carrying a knapsack on my back and eating rice balls and some times crossing water up to my knees with my trousers rolled up, as I did in the guerrilla army, so that I could look round the old battlefields, covering the graves of my comrades-in-arms with turves, and exchange greetings with the benefactors who helped and protected me at the cost of their own lives.

Apparently every politician longs for a commoner's life. It is only natural for a head of state to envy a commoner's life.

After liberation I had many opportunities to visit China and the Soviet Union. In Manchuria and Soviet Central Asia there were many comrades-in-arms and benefactors whom I wanted to meet. But the official duties of a Head of State did not permit me to include private concerns in my itinerary. I had to devote all my thoughts to the reconstruction of a country which had been devastated in two great wars - the anti-Japanese war and the anti-US war.

If I had visited the Soviet Union or China as a commoner, I would have had no difficulty in meeting all those people with whom I came into contact during the anti-Japanese war. This is the reason I sometimes envy a commoner's life.

If I say I feel restricted in my personal and daily life because I am the Head of State who leads the

country, some people may ask doubtfully, "How can this be?" If I say I am going to some place to give personal guidance, some officials will say, "Mr. President, the weather is not fine there." If I say I am going somewhere to meet certain people, they say, Mr. President, there is a swamp on that route, so the car cannot go in that direction." Of course, they do this out of consideration for me, but such concern means that I am not free.

The following year mother Choe Il Hwa returned home with her family. After various twists and turns lasting 60 years, the hateful wanderings of this family, which began with old man Jo's move to Helong, concluded with his descendants' returning home to Pyongyang. Just imagine the feelings of the Jos at the sight of the independent homeland, a country of freedom and a state which was now rising magnificently on the debris, beneath the banner of self-reliance.

Choe Il Hwa returned home at the historic moment when the whole country was in turmoil over the repatriation of Koreans from Japan, a process which the world called a "great national migration from capitalism to socialism." In this ecstatic mood of repatriation the Jos returned home.

By that time Choe Il Hwa was 67 years old. Her hair was grey as if she carried the snow in the shade of the Dawaizi valley on her head. When she met me she cried and grasped my hands as the wife of Yang Se Bong had done.

"Mother, why are you crying on this happy day, when we met again among the living?" I took out my handkerchief to wipe away her tears, but she raised the tie of her dress to her eyes.

"I am crying at the memory of the days when you were suffering from a cold fit."

"Don't mention my suffering. You and grandfather Jo did a great deal to help me. My feelings of gratitude to you made me keep trying to find your family after liberation, and I sent many people to Manchuria. Our ways parted in the summer of 1935 in Taipinggou. I was told that you had moved to Ningan because the 'punitive' operations became so violent. How did you get along afterwards?"

"We used the white horse to gather firewood and sold it to eke out a living. Had it not been for the horse you gave us, we would have all starved to death."

"I am glad the white horse was of use. Is it true that grandfather Jo Thae Ju died in 1953?"

"Yes. While he was alive, my father-in-law talked of nothing but you, Premier. Whenever he heard a rumor that American planes had bombed Pyongyang, he could not sleep, saying 'General Kim Il Sung must be safe' or 'He is suffering too much.'"

I was deeply moved to hear from her that the old man had not forgotten me until he breathed his last, and had wished me good health. The people's hearts remain unchanged. Everything in the world has changed, but the people's love for us has never changed. This love handed down from yesterday will be carried

forward in the future. It will never be stained by adversity and misfortune, but shine for ever like a jewel.

"If only he had lived seven years longer, grandfather Jo could have returned home. It is a great pity. Even today, I also sometimes think of the log-cabin in Dawaizi. Have you ever been there since you left it?"

"No, I haven't. I do not think I could live there again."

"You need not go to that mountain valley again. You have suffered too many hardships in the course of your life, and you must live in comfort for the rest of your days, cared for by your children. I will find a house for you."

When she called at my house on April 15, 1961 to congratulate me on my 49th birthday, Choe Il Hwa presented me with a fountain-pen. She was shy as she explained her gift.

"Mr. Premier, the white horse you gave our family became, as it were, this fountain-pen. We fattened up the white horse and used it for farming as you told us to, but we bartered it for an ox for fear that the Japanese would requisition it as a war-horse. Our living depended on that ox. After liberation we registered the ox in a Chinese cooperative society. Before I returned home I received the purchase price for the ox and I bought this fountain-pen with the money. I present this fountain-pen to you with wishes for a long life and good health and success in your work. I hope you will accept it as a token of my very best wishes."

I felt profoundly moved as I looked back upon the many trials and ordeals of our people's history, a history epitomized by the Jo family, who traveled a long road on which a white horse became a fountain-pen.

"Thank you, mother. I will live long and serve the people as you wish."

On August 15 that year, when all the families of the country were celebrating the 16th anniversary of national liberation, I called at mother Choe's house on the Taedong River. Children's laughter was ringing in the rooms full of the fresh spirit of life in a new home. I had personally chosen the site of this block of flats for writers and anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans and had scrutinized its design. In those days there was no better block of flats in Pyongyang.

Pyongyang citizens compare the Kyongsang-dong area where Choe lives with the yolk of an egg.

"Mother, do you like this flat?"

"Of course, I like it. I have never lived in such a fine house."

She opened the window wide to look out on the river. She was obviously proud of her new house. A cool breeze was blowing from the river, gently ruffling her hair, turned gray by many hardships.



"I selected your house on the riverside because you lived in the remote mountains all your life. Won't you miss the mountains sometimes?"

"No, I prefer to see the Taedong River. I feel I am putting on weight living here by the river."

"But still you may miss the mountain life. Dawaizi was a barren land where life is very hard, but the air there was fresh. If you miss the fresh mountain air, you should climb up Moran Hill. I thought you might miss the mountain, and I chose this house near Moran Hill so that you could go there to walk. When better houses are built in future, I will give you a new home"

"Mr. Premier, I am satisfied with this house. All I want is to live near you."

She came out to the entrance door of the block of flats to see me off. When I held out my hand to say good-bye, she grasped it tightly and asked me a serious question.

"Mr. Premier, have you any experienced doctor near you?" I was embarrassed by the irrelevance of her question.

"We have many doctors. Why do you ask?"

"I was thinking of the days when you were suffering from that cold fit. Who will take care of you if another virulent disease should strike you?"

"Don't worry, mother, I am in good health. Even if I should contract such an illness, I am not afraid, because I am near you, who are so experienced in curing fits of cold."

After I left Choe, I looked round the main streets of the capital sunk in deep thought. There was an animated holiday atmosphere in the streets. Sungri Street and the People's Army Street, in which the movement to build 20 thousand flats was launched, and all the main streets of Pyongyang had been improved with magnificent public buildings and multi-storied blocks of flats. In the eight years since the war, tens of thousands of Pyongyang citizens had left their dugouts and moved into the newly-built blocks of flats which were one of the wonderful achievements of postwar reconstruction.

And yet, the work of construction was only just beginning. As yet, most of the citizens of the capital were still living in shabby dugouts and old-fashioned one-room houses. They had made painful sacrifices and suffered appalling hardships, enduring the crucible of the anti-Japanese and the anti-US wars, trials which no other people in the world had ever experienced.

No people in the world had shed so much blood, braved such cold winds and missed so many meals as our people did. For these people we had to build more good houses, make more nice clothes and build

more fine schools, holiday homes and hospitals. And we had to bring home more of our compatriots in foreign lands, who yearned for their homeland. This was what I had to do with my life, for the sake of the people who had cured me of my sickness and plucked me from the jaws of death.

These thoughts kept me awake at night.

Choe Il Hwa died several years ago, and was buried in the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery. Her son, Jo Yong Son, who guided us to Barengou, and her daughter who used to fetch us water are now a grandfather and a grandmother in their seventies. It is wonderful good fortune that they can spend the latter half of their lives in the liberated homeland. It is thousands of miles from Pyongyang to Dawaizi.

Almost 60 years has already passed since we set out from that isolated valley covered with deep snow, but the sound of the swaying forest which protected old man Jo's solitary house from the raging snowstorm still rings in my ears.

## 10.1 A Raging Whirlwind

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The days of trial passed as in a dream. The ranges of snow-covered mountains that had obstructed our way were now far behind, and the expedition to north Manchuria, marked by bloody battles and tormenting experiences, had ended in victory. The Korean communists now had fresh hopes of developing the revolution by following up their success. Though exhausted by illness, I stood on the top of a peak of the Laoyeling Mountains with my men, shouting triumphantly and gazing down at the hills of Wangqing.

The fatigue that had accumulated for months in the smoke of battle and severe cold seemed to vanish in an instant, and I fit my heart swelling with joy as if I were already standing on the hill behind my hometown. On my return to Wangqing, however, I was bedridden for several days; I had a high fever that had attacked me again in the wake of the fit of cold I had suffered from on the last leg of the expedition. On top of that, the ominous news that a whirlwind of "purge" had made havoc of the guerrilla zone reached my sickbed. The men nursing me were indignant at the crimes committed by the Leftist elements who had disrupted the guerrilla zone.

Party members, Young Communist League and Women's Association members, who just a few months before were working in the Wangqing valley in the cause of the revolution, had scattered, abandoning the guerrilla base that had been built and defended at the cost of their blood, hurling curses upon the authors of the murderous scheme and its executors. I shuddered, my heart chilled. A crushing despair, frustration took over my senses: the Universe seemed to have come to a standstill in one instant, and everything in the world to be crushed under the weight of a glacier.

This tragic event dwarfed the trial we had experienced on the heights of Luozigou. Crossing the Tianqiaoling Mountains while suffering from a severe cold, with only 16 men under my command, was not a trifling matter, but it was nothing compared to what I had to deal with in connection with the issue of the "Minsaengdan". The obstacles that had stood in the way of the expeditionary force were distinct. They were the pursuing enemy and the cold that was attacking me.

We had broken through the enemy siege with the help of a kind old man, Kim, and, thanks to the old man Jo Thaek Ju, my benefactor, we had escaped death of hunger, cold and disease. The people had opened the way out of our crisis.

The revolution was demolishing itself through the tragic events taking place at the guerrilla bases in Jiandao. There should not have been any contradiction or antagonism between those who were demolishing people and those who were being demolished.

Nevertheless, the former defined the latter as their enemy and removed them mercilessly from the

revolutionary ranks. The overwhelming majority of those who were being tried for the "purge" were tested fighters, ready unhesitatingly to lay down their lives for the revolution.

By what criterion were we to distinguish between friend and foe in the monstrous "sweeping campaign" in which the revolution was demolishing the revolution? Who was our enemy and who our friend? The "purge" headquarters labeled the hundreds and thousands they had executed as their enemy. Was this judgment to be regarded a sound one? Or then, how were the people directing the "purge" to be defined? Whom were we to support and whom to oppose?

These were questions put to all communists by the events in east Manchuria which was tottering, shocked by the bloodshed of thousands of revolutionaries. I was tormented both in mind and body.

But there was neither a renowned doctor nor any effective medicine to cure my illness in Yaoyinggou. Only several of my men, who had a meagre knowledge of folk remedies, sat at my bedside by turns, solicitously applying cold clothes on my forehead.

The people of the Xiaobeigou village sent me honey and roe-deer blood, trying to help cure my illness. Old Chinese men brought tea and brewed it, inquiring about me. They bade the guerrillas to take good care of me, saying that my health was essential for the defense of the guerrilla zone and for the anti-Japanese struggle.

Honey, tea and roe-deer blood were all good remedies, but I sent them on to my comrades-in-arms who were ailing on their return from the expedition. Some of them were suffering from a bad cold, some from frostbite, and some from colitis or bronchitis.

One day, though ill myself, with Song Kap Ryong's help, I went to Visit my sick comrades. The sight of their ragged clothes pained me. They were still in their battle dress that had been stained with the smoke of powder and were ripped by bullets.

The desire to provide them with abundant food and clothing took firm hold of me. those comrades-in-arms who had endured the severe Winter cold with me in the shadow of death. I sent my orderly to the sewing unit. At the time of our leaving for north Manchuria on the expedition the previous autumn, I had given Jon Mun Jin the assignment to prepare summer clothing for the unit for the following year. I told the orderly to bring the first batch of approximately 20 uniforms for the men who were back from the expedition if the assignment had been carried out.

In those days the sewing unit was located in a forest at Solbatgol. far from Dahuangwai; it consisted of only several people including Jon Mun Jin and Han Song Hui. Jon was a veteran who had joined the guerrillas after some training in dressmaking in Dongning County, while Han was a recruit who had become a guerrilla after working for the Children's Corps in Yaoyinggou.

It was not Jon Mun Jin but Han Song Hui who arrived with the orderly, bringing the uniforms to

Yaoyinggou. Han had been taking care of Jon, who was pregnant, in the forest of Solbatgol which was as good as a desert island, and had been waiting for months for the return of the expeditionary force from north Manchuria. On seeing me sick in bed. Han burst into tears.

After seeing that the men had changed into the new uniforms, I sent Han Song Hui back to the sewing unit.

But the next morning Han, whom I had thought to be back at Solbatgol, appeared before me as if that was how it should be, holding a tray with some pine-nut porridge on it.

"Comrade Ok Bong, how come you're here again? Has something happened?" I asked in perplexity.

Ok Bong was her childhood name. She had another nickname, too, Yong Suk. She bowed her head, as if guilty of some crime.

"General, forgive me... I didn't go back to Solbatgol yesterday."

I just couldn't believe her, for both in her Children's Corps days and since her enlistment in the army she had never disobeyed orders. She was a very loyal, innocent and obedient woman. The fact that she had disobeyed me could be a serious matter.

"My feet refused to take me back. Even if I had gone back leaving you, General, bedridden, would sister Mun Jin have been glad to see me?"

I was, of course, grateful to her for such profound concern.

While stuffing packets of foxtail millet and oar weed into her knapsack, I tried to convince her, "Many comrades here can take care of me, so don't worry about me. You must return quickly to Solbatgol today. What would happen to Jon Mun Jin if you weren't with her? I've heard that she's expecting this month, and she can't take care of herself."

"General, I'll obey all your instructions but not this one... Sister Mon Jin said she would never forgive me if I returned without having nursed you," the girl argued earnestly. "Please understand me, General. Is it right that no woman guerrilla takes care of you when you're in such a bad state?"

"Comrade Song Hui, go back and take care of Comrade Mon Jin, for mercy's sake."

At this moment, the company commander Lee Hyo Sok got her out of her predicament,

"Comrade Commander, Han Song Hui is not a midwife. How can a girl who has never given birth help a woman in childbirth?"

They persuaded me. The company commander promised to find an experienced woman to send to Solbatgol.

From that day on, Han Song Hui solicitously nursed me day and night. She brought me pine-nut porridge on a tray at every meal. Probably on her order, men of the 4th Company had gathered pine-nut cones, digging them out of the snow in the forest near Yaoyinggou. The company commander himself went out with a pole every morning to pick the cones.

Han Song Hui took excellent care of me, sometimes sitting up the whole night through. She said she would not be worthy of being called a Korean if she failed to bring me back to health through her nursing. One day she cut off her hair and made pads and soles for my shoes. Just this one single deed was enough to convince me that she was a woman of great sympathy, that she would rejoice over her friends' happiness or cry over their misfortunes, or even would offer pieces of her own flesh to the needy without flinching.

Blood is thicker than water. The whole of her family were revolutionaries of strong sympathy and humanity. Her father Han Chang Sop was one of the forerunners, like Lee Kwang, Kim Chol and Kim Un Sik, who had worked for the anti-Japanese revolution at Beihamatang and in the surrounding area from the outset of the struggle. In charge of an organization of the Anti-Japanese Association in Dafangzi, he had worked hard to obtain provisions for Lee Kwang's special detachment, and in the spring of 1932 he fell, stabbed to death by a soldier of the Japanese "punitive" troops. Her elder sister, Han Ok Son, was burned at the stake. Her elder brother, Han Song U, perished in battle.

My comrade-in-arms Han Hung Gwon, who mostly operated with us in the enemy-held areas from Wangqing until the guerrilla base was dissolved and later distinguished himself as the commander of a detachment of the allied anti-Japanese forces in north Manchuria, was Han Song Hui's cousin. Han Hung Gwon and his four brothers had all died heroically on the battlefield.

Han Song Hui and her elder sister had resolved to join the guerrilla army in order to be revenged on the enemy who had killed their father. When about to leave their home, the question arose as to who would remain to take care of their mother and the house. The sisters discussed the matter heatedly. Han Song Hui was as yet too young to join the army, so she was on the defensive the whole time during the argument.

"Don't look down at me because I'm younger," she retorted. "I do all the work you do and I'm as tall as you are, sister."

"You're tall enough, but you still smell of your mother's milk," the elder sister calmly counterattacked. "You mustn't look up at a tree you can't climb, as the saying goes. Be a good Children's Corps member and take care of Mother at home"

Neither of them would give up the honor of joining the army.

While her daughters were arguing about their future lying in bed, their mother had heard scraps of their conversation. She sewed two knapsacks all night long of exactly the same size and shape out of the one cotton skirt she had. The next day she filled the knapsacks with parched rice flour. Only then did the daughters realize that the two knapsacks had been prepared for them just like a dowry that a mother would offer to her daughters who were to take leave of their mother.

That day the mother summoned her daughters and said:

“Your mother does not want to be looked after by you, my daughters. We have not yet won our country back, so you need not think of taking care of me as your filial duty. I can get along without your support. You may join the guerrilla army right now.

“Mother!” The daughters exclaimed, throwing themselves into her arms. From the bottom of their hearts they pledged loyalty and left their mother in tears. In the spring of 1934 we recalled Han Song Hui to the sewing unit which was directly under headquarters supervision. We expected a great deal from her.

If there was any weakness in her character, it lay in her cheerful attitude towards everything. She was too soft a woman and surprisingly good-natured, but she lacked the alertness needed by a soldier. This lack was the cause of her being captured by the enemy and ended in her giving up the revolution half-way.

One day, having received my instruction to come to the main body from a detachment, she, with other soldiers, was moving north, and in the forest of Erdaohezi, Ningan County, was surrounded by the enemy. Not knowing that dozens of soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army were approaching her with rifles at the ready, she was humming while washing her hair at a brook. While we were organizing a new division after advancing to the Fusong area, she was undergoing trying days as a prisoners being interrogated by the enemy, in Luozigou.

There was a conscientious Korean among the guards keeping watch over the prisoners, who secretly sympathized with her. He had been working for the revolution before his capture. He had signed a letter of surrender and was now living in disgrace. When he knew that the hangmen were going to execute Han Song Hui, he advised her to escape. He said he would discard his rifle and run away with her to Korea or deep into a mountain where they could live in a hut. She agreed and succeeded in fleeing with his help. Later the man became her husband.

We all lamented at the news of her capture. Some women guerrillas felt so bad that they lost their appetite. That was natural because they had lost a comrade-in-arms whom they had loved as if she were their own younger sister. The veterans who fought in Wangqing and knew her worth still recollect her lovingly.

It is said that Han Song Hui's children regretted their mother's past immensely, saying that it would have been good if their mother had stayed with the guerrillas until the country was liberated as other women

fighters had.

Of course, it would have been much better if she had not been captured by the enemy and had continued to fight.

But a revolution is not traveling on a highway, still less a 100-metre race in which the athletes make off at the starting signal and rush on without meeting any obstacle on the way until they reach their goal.

A revolution can be said to be an endless journey of people who forge ahead towards victory through success and failure, through advance and retreat, upsurge and setback, which one may repeat or which come in the wake of the other, whatever the turns and twists that can take place in the course of these long endeavors.

It is said that whenever her sons and daughters blamed her, Han Song Hui would reply: "You needn't worry about the stains in the records of your parents. The Workers' Party of Korea does not lay the blame for the parents' mistakes on their children. Our leader does not consider the children responsible for the crimes committed by their parents. That is his policy. Everything depends on you yourselves. Therefore, don't worry, only be loyal to the leader."

I believe she was right. She was honest and pure and preserved her firm faith in the Party until the last moment of her life.

Thanks to the pine-nut porridge, the venison and foxtail millet gruel cooked by Han Song Hui I managed to leave my sickbed in three days' time.

Company commander Lee Hyo Sok informed me in detail then of the whirlwind of the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign in the guerrilla zone.

He enumerated which cadres had been murdered in which counties, and which commanding officers had been executed in which counties on charges of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case. If his account was accurate, it could be easily assumed that most of the senior cadres of the counties and districts and most of the company and higher rating commanding officers of the guerrilla army had been purged. The Koreans who could write and make speeches had all been eliminated. All the hard-core elite of men and officers of my unit, who had remained in Wangqing when I went on the expedition to north Manchuria, had been executed. Those who had not yet been executed had been ousted from their posts of secretary, association chairman and district Party committee member.

The "Minsaengdan" was the product of the intellectual development of the Japanese imperialists' colonial rule of Korea. They had set up the "Minsaengdan" to undermine the Korean revolution through stratagem and trickery. Failing in their attempt to rule over Korea with guns and Swords and in the guise of a "civil government", fussing about "Japan and Korea being one" and being of "the same ancestry and the same stock", the Japanese imperialists aimed at brewing fratricide among the Koreans to destroy the



revolutionary forces and to resolve their worries in the maintenance of peace.

Greatly alarmed by the rapid development of the revolutionary situation in Manchuria after the September 18 incident (in 1931?Tr.), Governor-General Saito saw to it that the "Minsaengdan" was formed in Yanji in February 1932 by instigating pro-Japanese nationalists, such as Park Sok Yun, who had been sent to east Manchuria as a member of the Jiandao inspection team, Jon Song Ho, an influential man in the Yanbian Autonomy Promotion Association, Park Tu Yong, advisor to the Manchukuo army in Yanji, and Kim Tong Han, a first-rate anti-communist agent.

The "Minsaengdan" clamored ostensibly for the "right to national survival", the "building of a paradise of freedom" and for the "Koreans autonomy in " as if it were its highest aim to solve the problem of the Koreans' livelihood. But, in effect, it was a spy organization for stratagem manufactured by the Japanese imperialists to paralyze the anti-Japanese spirit of the Korean people, isolating Korean communists by harming them through trickery and disrupting the revolutionary ranks from within by driving a wedge between the Korean and Chinese peoples.

The reactionary nature of the "Minsaengdan" was clear from its organizational policy" or its "programme" and other documents preaching the "industrialization of life" under Japanese imperialist colonial rule, that it was the "only way for the Korean nation to survive". The enemy described the period of his colonial rule over Korea and Manchuria as the optimum, "absolute period" for "securing the right to survival and its expansion"; he depicted Korea and Manchuria, which had been turned into a land of gloom under his colonial rule, as a "land" of "freedom" and "autonomy", while clamoring for a "paradise of freedom to be built" in Jiandao by the Koreans.

The Japanese imperialists tried to break the good-neighborly relations between the Korean and Chinese peoples and communists and their revolutionary ties by creating the impression that the Koreans had welcomed imperialist Japan's occupation of Manchuria and her colonial rule, that they had territorial ambitions for the Jiandao area.

The real nature of the "Minsaengdan" as an organization of dyed-in-the-wool anti-communist stooges can be easily seen from the records of its projectors and those who became the head, deputy head and director of the organization after its formation.

Jo Pyong Sang, director of the Kyongsong Kapja Club, Park Sok Yun, vice-president of the Maeil Sinbo (Daily News ?Tr.), Jon Song Ho of the Yanbian Autonomy Promotion Association and Kim Tong Han projected the scheme of the organization and exerted all their efforts for its formation. They advocated patriotism and love of the people, professing themselves nationalists and revolutionaries, but they were, without exception, traitors who had long been converted by the Japanese imperialists.

Park Sok Yun, for instance, at the age of sixteen, took the first step towards his pro-Japanese career when he went to Japan to study, and then continued his studies in comfortable circumstances at first-rate universities, such as the faculty of law and the postgraduate course of the Tokyo Imperial University, and

University of Cambridge in England. He is said to have annually received approximately 3,000 won for educational expenses, a colossal sum, from the bureau of education of the Government-General while he was studying in England.

After his studies abroad he was installed in prominent posts. He worked as a journalist of the Tong-A Ilbo, the vice-president of the Maeil Sinbo, part-time councilor of the Foreign Ministry of Manchukuo commissioned by the Japanese Foreign Ministry, and then as Consul General of Manchukuo to Poland. Later, he was a member of the Japanese delegation, led by Matsuoka Yosuke, the Japanese Foreign Minister, who afterwards signed the neutrality treaty between the Soviet Union and Japan, attending a General Assembly session of the League of Nations held in Geneva in 1932. These uncommon records are sufficient to show how well he was trusted by the Japanese ruling circles.

In order to allow him to build up his reputation as a nationalist, the Japanese imperialists permitted him to write editorials denouncing their colonial rule and to stand up in a frontal confrontation with the governor-general against his scheme of changing the Koreans' surnames into a Japanese manner, and to involve himself towards the end of the war in the Pacific (Second World War) in the Nation-Building Union headed by Ryo Un Hyong<sup>1</sup>. However, the Korean people in the Jiandao area did not accept him favorably because of their bitter feelings against the "Minsaengdan" in which he was involved.

Immediately after liberation, while living in hiding in Yangdok under the assumed name of Park Tae U, he was arrested and tried severely as a traitor to the nation. At the court of justice he confessed that his political idea had been to effect the Koreans' "national autonomy" under the Japanese imperialist rule, that he had believed that Korea should take a course of political development like Canada had or the Union of South Africa, the British colonies, and that he had been on intimate terms with Governor-General Saito and had worshipped Ishihara Kanji, a Japanese renowned for his theory of a world conquest and one of the inspirers of the idea of an East Asia Union, precisely because of this political idea.

He doggedly denied that the aim of the formation of the "Minsaengdan" was to destroy the Communist Party and the guerrilla army. He stated that the initial purpose of the "Minsaengdan" was only to "secure the right to survival", that the organization had become a spy organization of stooges directed by imperialist Japan after he had left Jiandao, that he had been surprised at the news of the havoc caused during the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, and that he had been a mere puppet controlled by the Japanese.

History will be the only judge of the degree of authenticity of Park Sok Yun's confession. However, the fact that he was a faithful dog and stooge of Japanese imperialism can never be protested, regardless of his confession.

While Park Sok Yun, who played the role of midwife in the birth of the "Minsaengdan", was influenced mostly by the Japanese, the Russians had the greatest effect on Kim Tong Han, a minion who carried out the "Minsaengdan" scheme in the field. He began his career with the communist movement. He was admitted to the Communist Party in Russia immediately after the October Revolution. As a member of

the military department of the Koryo Communist Party and then as commander of the officers' corps, he displayed his mettle to the full as a man trained in a military academy. In the early 1920s, however, he was arrested by the Japanese imperialists in the Maritime Province and quickly turned coat to become a pro-Japanese agent working on the anti-communist front.

After the "Minsaengdan" was dissolved, he, with the permission of the Kwangtung Army, organized the "Jiandao Cooperative Association" as its successor and with a hundred reactionaries even formed what he called righteous home guards. As the commander he resorted to every conceivable action to "mop up" the revolutionary army. He assimilated himself to the Japanese to such an extent that he was taken for a Japanese who had been born in Korea. He was a dyed-in-the-wool traitor who went so far as to clamor for the Korean nation to regard Japan as their motherland and to serve it devotedly. According to a report of the Manson Ilbo, he succeeded in forcing as many as 3,800 communists to surrender.

After his death, the Japanese imperialists erected a bronze statue to him and a monument to the "Jiandao Cooperative Association" in the park in the west of Yanji.

It is necessary to delve briefly here into the "Minsaengdan strategy" which was advertised as a "successful" ideological trickery campaign derived from the Japanese imperialists' "strategy of peace maintenance in Jiandao", as a success "in exposing the entire number of revolutionary organizations in Jiandao Province, in arresting 4,000 people involved in them and in undermining the social footholds that supported the organizations.

Although it was clear from the outset that the aim of the "Minsaengdan" was not for the nationalists to solve the problem of the people's livelihood in Jiandao, the Japanese imperialist aggressors made every effort in those days to present it under the mask of nationalism.

The Japanese spared no effort in advertising the "Minsaengdan" as an organization designed to save the people from poverty; however, the revolutionary organizations in east Manchuria soon discovered that its masterminds frequently visited the Japanese consulate through its back door. The enemy was unable to hide for long the true color of the "Minsaengdan" from the vigilant people. We promptly laid bare its real nature through revolutionary publications and public lectures, on the one hand, and organized a mass campaign to combat the "Minsaengdan", on the other. The people who had been deceived into joining the "Minsaengdan" by its specious signboard immediately withdrew from it, and those who had been inveigled into subversive activities as enemy agents were exposed and executed by the masses.

The "Minsaengdan" was dissolved soon after its inauguration. The Japanese imperialists had hardly managed to implant anything of its organization into our ranks.

But if that were so, how was it possible that the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle continued when there was no "Minsaengdan", and that the massacre of innocent people on the false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case continued for three years in the guerrilla zones of Jiandao where there was the Party and a government of people?

The Japanese imperialists' stratagem was fundamentally responsible for that.

The "Minsaengdan" which had sprung up under Governor-General Saito's full support and with the active backing of the Japanese consulate in Longjing was dissolved in accordance with the will of the newly-appointed Governor-General Ugaki at the time of a troop dispatch in April 1932 to Jiandao of the Japanese army in Korea. But this was a mere formal disappearance. The movement to revive it was promoted secretly and briskly by Kim Tong Han, Park Tu Yong and others.

In the spring of 1934 Kato Hakujiro, the provost-marshal of Yanji (the commander of special security forces in north China at the time of Japan's defeat), and Takamori Yoshi, commanding officer of the Independent 7th Infantry Garrison Battalion, discussed the matter of peace maintenance in Jiandao again with Park Tu Yong and other pro-Japanese elements and agreed to revive the "Minsaengdan". That was the second stage of the "Minsaengdan" stratagem.

They made it clear that the operations of the "Minsaengdan" were an ideological stratagem directed against the East Manchuria Special District Committee under the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee and defined the basic direction of its activities to be to pursue - firstly, a "policy of undermining and disrupting the Korean guerrilla army by Strong actions"; secondly, a "policy of blocking the supply of provisions to the Korean guerrilla army"; thirdly, a "policy of instigating Korean guerrillas to surrender or to defect"; fourthly, a "policy of protection, settlement and surveillance of those who have surrendered or defected"; and, fifthly, the "vocational training of those who have surrendered or defected and the arrangement of their jobs". All the operations for the stratagem were to be supervised by the gendarmerie in Yanji.

The "Jiandao Cooperative Association" was set up in September 1934. This was a special organization which was to "deal with all the people who would become renegades" as the activities of the "Minsaengdan" were stepped up, to "confirm their backgrounds and assumed surrender, and undertake their brainwashing". The "Minsaengdan" was merged at the time into this organization.

The "Jiandao Cooperative Association", headed by Kim Tong Han, took sly advantage of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle conducted by the East Manchuria Special District Committee and resorted to all manner of deceit.

Japan's master hands of stratagem grasped the special feature of the organizational structure and command system of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army in east Manchuria as a major political advantage for their deceptive ideological campaign against the Communist Party and the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. They considered the fact that the people's revolutionary army consisted of both Korean and Chinese communists to be a fatal weakness of the armed forces.

They were sure that the Chinese cadres did not trust the Korean communists and were constantly observing them, and that, therefore, there was antagonism between the Chinese and Korean communists. Using this special feature profitably, they tried to drive a wedge between the communists of the two

countries. They adopted a propaganda policy for the ideological campaign of the "Minsaengdan", whose major content was to spread the idea that "the Koreans are shedding blood in Manchuria for a cause that has nothing to do with Korea's independence and the liberation of their nation.

What are they fighting for? Why are the Koreans, the majority, fighting under the command of the Chinese, shedding blood in a meaningless battle? Come to your senses quickly! The road to surrender or to defect is open..."

After the dissolution of the "Minsaengdan", the Japanese imperialists inspired their special agents and stooges to spread the rumors that a large number of "Minsaengdan" members had wormed their way into the guerrilla zones. They intrigued against stalwart cadres and revolutionaries to make them suspect each other and to guard one against the other.

The enemy himself said in his "experiences of undermining the Communist Party in Jiandao", a secret letter, that although they had first sent groups, each consisting of ten "Minsaengdan" members, into the guerrilla army, they had all been captured and executed so that it was impossible to infiltrate into it; therefore, they had employed tactics of brewing distrust between the Koreans and Chinese, workers and peasants, superiors and subordinates in order that the communists would begin to fight among themselves.

The Japanese schemers were surprisingly skilful in their machinations to disrupt the revolutionary ranks from within. Take one of the methods they employed for an example. When a cadre of the East Manchuria Special District Committee was on a local inspection tour, they dropped a letter along the inspector's route, a letter addressed to a cadre of county or district level who had been to the place on a guidance mission.

What would the inspector, therefore, think of the addressee?

The ultra-Leftist development of the struggle against the "Minsaengdan" can also be explained by the vile political ambitions of some Left opportunists and factional flunkeys of all description at the helm of the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, the East Manchuria Special District Committee and the county and district Party organizations of different levels.

While the Left opportunists, who had a monopoly of the leadership among the communists, attempted to subordinate the advancing revolutionary struggle of the Korean communists to the scheme of realizing their political ambition, the factionalist sycophants who were still in the habit of factional strife, tried, with the support and connivance of the Left opportunists, to mercilessly dispose of all those who obstructed the achievement of their factional aim in order to expand their forces by taking advantage of the struggle against the "Minsaengdan".

It was the "Minsaengdan" that supplied the pretext for snatching the post somebody else was already occupying. The opportunists and factionalist sycophants declared, "You belong to the 'Minsaengdan',

therefore you have to resign your post or die". There could be no appeal against such a sentence, nor would it have had any effect even if it had been made.

The rumor about the "Minsaengdan" infiltration spread by the Japanese imperialists added fuel to the flames of greed for hegemony and promotion of those who wanted to replace all the senior cadres of the Party, mass organizations and army with people of their own faction. The soaring number of the results of the "purge" that had been undertaken in the name of the "Minsaengdan" were of enormous benefit to the schemers who were working to destroy all the revolutionary forces in the guerrilla zones.

In the final run, the enemy and friends joined in with the crushing of the guerrilla zones. Such a monstrous alliance had never taken place in the history of revolutionary war in any part of the world.

The brutal, absurd and crude way of combating the "Minsaengdan", which dwarfed the martial laws of fascist states and religious punishments in the Middle Ages, was attributable to the vicious Japanese imperialists' stratagem and the political imbecility and despicable aim of some of the cadres of the East Manchuria Special District Committee.

The indications for identifying "Minsaengdan" members in those days were almost limitless and could be classified into hundreds of categories.

If a cook of the guerrilla army had failed to boil rice well enough, that was a reason for charging her with involvement in the "Minsaengdan". If a grain of sand was found in the cooked rice, or if a man ate rice with water, the cook who had prepared the meal or the man who ate it with water was condemned as "evidence of having attempted to cause diseases to the people in the guerrilla zone" and as an "action of the 'Minsaengdan'."

A person with loose bowels was charged with an act of the "Minsaengdan" because it would weaken combat power; an instance of moaning was considered to be an indication of "Minsaengdan" because it would paralyze the revolutionary spirit; an accidental shot was condemned as an act of the "Minsaengdan" because it would let the enemy know the location of the guerrillas; a verbal expression of homesickness was called an act of "Minsaengdan" because it would encourage nationalism; a hard-working attitude was denounced as a sign of "Minsaengdan" to hide its identity, and so on. Everything was used to incriminate people no matter how an excuse was made. By this criterion no one could be free from a charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan".

The man at the head of the Helong County Committee of the Anti-Imperialist Union, nicknamed Kodo, was arrested by self-defense corps men while conducting political work among the people at Changrenjiang. He was dragged to an execution site with over 30 other patriots. The self-defense corps men stood them in single file and cut their throats one by one.

Naturally, Kodo's also. But, strangely, his head did not fall off. The skin and flesh of his nape slipped onto his back, with his whole body drenched in blood. It was a fatal wound, more painful than death. The

executioners left while Kodo lay unconscious. Coming to at night, Kodo pulled the skin and flesh back to his nape, enduring the terrible pain, and bandaged it with a strip torn off his clothes. He then crawled fifteen miles on all fours through steep mountains and reached the Yulangcun guerrilla zone.

However, the Leftists took him to a tribunal of the masses when he was still suffering from the wound. They said that he was an enemy agent who had injured his neck on purpose and had come to the guerrilla zone to worm his way deep into the revolutionary ranks. The Leftists read out a lengthy accusation, but none of the masses approved it. The men who had arranged the trial decided to refrain from passing the death sentence on him until he was identified through a period of examination, but they assassinated him anyway.

The ultra-Leftist wave of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle was the roughest of all the counties in the Helong County. That was because those at the helm of the Party organization in this county dealt unjustly with the people's fates to fit in with their ulterior political purpose.

The spearhead of the "purge" was directed at stalwart people who were exemplary in revolutionary practice, who enjoyed a high reputation among the masses, who did not flatter or compromise with injustice.

Kim Song Do, of all the Korean cadres, combated the "Minsaengdan" in an extremely ultra-Leftist manner. While the East Manchuria Special District Committee was located in Wangqing, he led a loose life there. Taking his wife along, he organized drinking bouts and played cards frequently with cadres of the special district committee and county Party committee. As his wife gave herself the airs of a modern woman, neglecting the house, the Children's Corps members had to do all the household chores for her. Kim Song Do, declaring the opium poppy flower to be beautiful, got the people to plant poppies, to collect the juice from their fruits and to deliver it to him. For all this he continuously chanted "clean politics".

It was preposterous that Kim Song Do, who led such a scandalous life, "purged" true revolutionaries by charging them with involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case. He even went to the length of forcing Children's Corps members to write confessions that they had joined the "Minsaengdan".

Kim Kun Su, as the head of an agitation station at Dongxingcun, Longjing, had rendered distinguished services by his political work, was caught in the meshes of the political intrigue hatched by the Leftists and was dragged to an execution site.

At the last moment of his life, he announced at the execution site, "I am not a 'Minsaengdan' member. If I am really under suspicion, cut off my ankles instead of killing me. If my ankles are cut off, I won't be able to run away. If you only cut off my ankles instead of killing me, I'll be able to weave mats with my hands and thus contribute to the revolution. I lament dying without working any further for the revolution."

"Look, that fellow is acting like a 'Minsaengdan' member even when he's going to be executed," the men who directed the "purge" said and beat him to death with heavy sticks. The iron hammer of the "purge" fell also on the heads of guerrillas beyond the bounds of the Party and mass organizations.

Yang Thae Ok, with the peasant-like nickname of "Scraping Hoe", was an exemplary guerrilla. He, too, was labelled as a "Minsaengdan" member and was tried by a mass tribunal on the charge of having deliberately damaged the lock of his rifle.

He had received the nickname when, in company with the head of his organization, he had captured a weapon from a member of the anti-contraband squad at a restaurant in Sanpudong. At that time two men of the squad had been smoking opium in the restaurant, and another stood guard at the entrance. Yang Thae Ok grappled with the guard, now one, now the other on top, but the guard was stronger. Yang Thae Ok, therefore, pulled his hoe out of his waistband and scraped the guard's face with it.

While the guard held his face in his hands in agony, Yang snatched the rifle from the enemy and ran up to the mountain near Sanpudong. As he ran up the mountain, he was tempted to try shooting it. He pulled the trigger softly, but there was no sound. The rifle was on its safety catch. He unlocked it with a blow of his hoe. The damage he had done to the lock of the rifle with his hoe became the cause of his discharge from the guerrilla army and his deportation from the guerrilla zone in later days.

Most of the people stigmatized as "Minsaengdan" members and subjected to capital punishment or deported from the guerrilla zone by the Leftists and factionalist sycophants were brave, stalwart fighters like "Scraping Hoe". Could it be possible that these fighters had captured weapons from armed policemen in broad daylight by threatening them with sham pistols or scraping their faces with hoes at the risk of their own lives in order to work for the "Minsaengdan"? Were the organizers of the tribunal and judges who declared them guilty such idiots that they could not discern that these fearless fighters had no reason or need to involve themselves in the "Minsaengdan" or in counterrevolution?

No, they were no idiots. This was not a question of the power of reason. Could there be such idiots among the revolutionaries who lacked the power of judging even such cases? According to the testimony of fighters from Antu, hundreds of Koreans in Chechangzi alone had been murdered on false charges of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case.

Zhou Bao-zhong, who was deeply involved with the east Manchuria Party organization and was well-informed of the state of affairs in Jiandao, testified in his reminiscences that 2,000 people had been killed, labelled as "Minsaengdan" members.

In order to exaggerate the results of the "purge" the masterminds of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle tormented the "Minsaengdan" suspects beyond endurance - members of Party organizations, mass organizations and even activists in the Children's Corps - with cruelties inconceivable to communists. Kim Song Do, Song Il and Kim Kwon Il, who had led the purge ended up in being given the verdict of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" and were shot.



Song Il and Kim Kwon Il were fine people, but they flattered their superiors instead of establishing Juche, and made inadvertent mistakes. I was surprised to learn that they had shouted "Long Live General Kim Il Sung!" when they were executed. They would often argue with me about major political lines. No doubt they had come to their senses at least at their execution and had soberly reflected their actions.

Park Hyon Suk was one of five excellent modern women in Wangqing. She had sparkling eyes, so that the people of Xiaowangqing called her the "woman with morning-star eyes". Well-informed in art, she worked as the head of the children's department in Wangqing for some time. She was still young, but was relatively well experienced in underground work. Her father-in-law Choe Chang Won (Choe Laotour) was in charge of the Anti-Imperialist Union in his county.

When Park Hyon Suk was still Choe Hyong Jun's fiancée, Children's Corps members in Mudanchuan, who were under her guidance, frequently delivered messages between her and her fiancé. When she gave them money the children would buy things to be sent to the guerrilla army. She would send the gifts to underground guerrillas and to the fighters who were hurrying with organizational preparations of a special detachment.

The enemy, who was secretly keeping watch over Park Hyon Suk, ordered her arrest. One day the "woman with morning-star eyes" had gone to her colleague's house to congratulate her friend at her wedding ceremony. The policemen had followed her there. They molested the master of the house, demanding that she be handed over.

The "woman with morning-star eyes", who was hiding in the garret, appeared, announcing her presence to the policemen, lest the master of the house should get into trouble. She was imprisoned and brutally tortured, but did not yield to the enemy. When villagers had come to see her, she had written revolutionary songs and sent them on to her comrades, hiding them in a rice cake container, in order to encourage the villagers and her comrades. The police released her later.

On the day Park Hyon Suk married Choe Hyong Jun, three policemen from Baicaogou had come to her house to spy on her. They said they wanted to see how a communist girl was going to be married. They watched the wedding ceremony, drinking and eating, and even asked the bride to sing. She sang a revolutionary song. Listening to her singing, the drunken policemen, not knowing that the song was intended to agitate people to rise in revolution, said that she was an excellent singer and even demanded that she sing some more.

Her husband, Choe Hyong Jun, was also loyal to the revolution. He was a good husband at home and a good revolutionary fighter, but unfortunately a bullet pierced his leg and he became lame. From then on, he was not as successful in his work among the local people as he had been before. He had no horse to ride, still less a vehicle. Nevertheless, he limped many miles to perform his duties.

It was obvious, therefore, that he was unable to do as much as the others did. The "purge" headquarters labeled him as a "lethargic element", suspected him to be involved in the "Minsaengdan", persecuted him

and kept watch over him. Park Hyon Suk was dismissed from the office of the leadership on the excuse that she was the wife of a "Minsaengdan" member.

I heard the rumor in this context that she was going to divorce him.

I persuaded her not to. I said that the issue of the "Minsaengdan" was a passing one, that it would be settled sooner or later, and that Choe Hyong Jun had been excellent at underground work from the outset, had been a good fighter ever since he came to the guerrilla zone, a revolutionary with considerable theoretical knowledge. I asked her why she was going to divorce him, and even criticized her.

Later we sent her to the Soviet Union. If she is still alive, I wonder how she will recollect her days in Wangqing where even the trees and the grass were trembling in the hot wind of the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign.

Everyone in the guerrilla zone, men and women, young and old, vacillated. The bitter thought prevailed: "A revolution is a puzzling thing. They kill each other for no special reason, even inventing crimes against each other. That's what they do. The Koreans have reclaimed the barren land in Jiandao and have pioneered the revolution. But now these pioneers are being murdered and ousted. What's the real intention of those who do these things? What is this, if not a purge to snatch hegemony? If a revolution is a way to seize power through killing one's friends without hesitation against moral obligations and breaking the ties of friendship, 'what's the use of working for such a revolution?

I'd rather take my family back to my hometown and follow the plough, or go to a temple in a mountain to become a monk and travel around, tapping a wood block than play the fool." The mad wind of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle rusted the people's outlook on life and the revolution.

The people who had not been awakened to political awareness, naturally, abandoned the revolution and ran away to the enemy-held area or to uninhabited lands. Since they were maltreated by the revolution for which they had come to work, and since they were displaced from their homes, where else could they find a place to settle down? A revolution is Fan undertaking for survival, not for death. It is a cause for living a life worthy of human beings; it is a just cause for which one would lay down one's life gladly and honorably, if necessary, on the battlefield in order to remain immortal.

But how could one expect immortality here? Revolutionaries were being slaughtered indiscriminately by the people with whom they had shared bread and board only yesterday. That was why, after liberation, I declared that the people, who had been forced to flee to the enemy-held area and to "surrender" because of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, were innocent. How could they be guilty when they had left the guerrilla zone because, though wanting to work for the revolution, they were forced to flee from dishonorable death by those who prevented them from fighting for the revolution?

The water of the rivers in Wangqing and the River Gudong became thick with blood because of the indiscriminate manslaughter, and the people's wailing continued incessantly in every valley of Jiandao.

Disillusioned by this state of affairs, Shi Zhong-heng, too, left Jiandao. On leaving for north Manchuria he had said: "I have to go. I cannot live here any longer with its bad smell of blood. How can such atrocities be perpetrated in a land governed by the Communist Party? Those at the helm of the Party in east Manchuria are disgracing the Communist Party."

Sensing the gravity of the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign, I met many people to obtain details of the true state of affairs.

The people of Yaoyinggou lived in dugouts in the forests because of the enemy's intensive "punitive" attacks in those days, while soldiers of the revolutionary army lived in barracks built along the edges of the guerrilla zone and protected the people. The barracks of the guerrillas were approximately at a distance of four miles from the village.

Accompanied by my orderly I went to the village and, while talking with the elders, Hong Hye Song had arrived to see me. After chatting with the old people, I met her.

"The people at headquarters are too harsh," she told me. "I cannot bear the wrongs any longer. I've endured all the hardships here in Wangqing gritting my teeth, but I cannot endure mental torments. I'd rather go to the homeland and fight underground there than work for the revolution in Jiandao, being maltreated in this way. Let's go there. We won't be able to set up a guerrilla zone as we did here, but we'll be able to fight underground, won't we? Let's go to Korea. We can obtain the money needed for our work from my father, even if it would cost the whole of his drugstore."

She bit her lip, looking at me with tear-filled eyes. With a wave of my hand I warned her to lower her voice.

"Comrade Hye Song, how can you say a thing like that at such a time?"

"I said it because I believe in you, General."

"Walls have ears. So please don't say things like that."

I was very sorry to have heard her confession. If even Hong Hye Song had made up her mind to leave the guerrilla zone, how many people would remain in Wangqing to carry out the revolution? The thought made me gloomy. She loved the guerrilla zone more ardently than anybody else. And the people in the guerrilla zone, too, were so fond of her. She was a daring underground operative, a vivacious, enthusiastic children's teacher, and also a part-time doctor who, though not licensed, was efficient in both diagnosis and treatment.

Some cadres of the east Manchuria Party organization and the Wangqing county Party organization had cured three-year-old scabies thanks to her treatment. The people she had cured of this ailment were

grateful to her and never failed to greet her. The cadres praised her, saying she was a gifted woman.

Hong Hye Song regarded herself as a necessary and even as an indispensable person to the guerrilla zone. And here she was suggesting that I desert. This single fact was enough to incriminate her as a "Minsaengdan" member and to subject her to capital punishment. I was grateful for her trust in me, to have confessed what lay hidden in her heart. What horrible atmosphere had enveloped the guerrilla zone to make this girl, who was so full of ardor and fighting spirit, consider running away! Jiandao, now strewn with her dead comrades, was no longer a land of promise or the sweet home she had loved with unstinted devotion.

Because of all this, I refused to comply with her suggestion.

"Comrade Hye Song, we cannot. It's not only one life that is at stake. If we're unable to endure the sufferings and choose to take an easy way out at a time when the revolution is at stake, how can we consider ourselves true communists? Though it is painful and disgusting, we have to stay here to settle the issue of the 'Minsaengdan' and continue the struggle. This is the only way for revolutionaries to take to save the revolution."

She gazed at me while I spoke, wiping away her tears.

"Please forgive me. I said it all because the prospects are so bleak. I've been waiting anxiously for your return from north Manchuria in order to tell you all this, General. But I'm not alone in this. "People in the 'Minsaengdan' jail have been waiting for you, Comrade Commander. 'When will Commander Kim return? Is there no news from Commander Kim? Is there no way to let Commander Kim know the situation in east Manchuria?' they say, while waiting impatiently for your return. And we had only the rumor that the entire north Manchuria expedition party had died. The Japanese said the same thing in their newspapers."

Hong Hye Song pressed her hands to her breast, trying to curb her bitter feelings. Remorse rent my heart at the sight of the tear-drops forming in her eyes, just as if they were drops of blood.

Her words made me ponder over my responsibility of a man fighting for the Korean revolution. If I could not stop the reckless, blind manslaughter being perpetrated in the name of a "purge", threatening thousands and thousands of lives at a juncture when the revolution was about to be crushed in this way, or it might revive and rise again, then I was not entitled to call myself a son of Korea, and there was no need for me to remain alive.

I proposed to the leadership of the east Manchuria Party organization to convene a meeting to rectify the mistake in the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign. An inspector from the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, almost at the same time, also suggested the convocation of such a meeting.

A few days later, I received a letter informing me of a joint meeting of the military and political cadres of

east Manchuria that was to be held at Dahuangwai.

Prior to my departure I called in at the barracks of the cooks. I went there to see Hong In Suk, a woman who they said had been depressed for several months because of being suspected as a “Minsaengdan” member. I had obtained some fabric in north Manchuria and was going to give it to her as a present. My comrades-in-arms had warned me, saying that, if I gave a gift to a person suspected of involvement in the "Minsaengdan", I would be handing the "purge" headquarters material against myself.

But I ignored their warning. Could kindness ever be a crime?

## 10.2. A Polemic at Dahuangwai

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It would be incorrect if someone were to think that I had started a polemic about the “Minsaengdan” issue at the Dahuangwai meeting with the people at the helm of the east Manchuria Party organization. The argument had begun already as early as October 1932. My unit, which had started moving towards north Manchuria, had stopped over at Wangqing for some time.

During my first days in Wangqing, I guided the Party work in district No. 1 (Yaoyinggou). There I saw that the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign was being conducted haphazardly, in an ultra-Leftist manner, by officials of the county and district Party organizations, contrary to revolutionary principles.

One morning I was looking around the village, accompanied by Lee Ung Gol, head of the organizational department of the district Party committee. Someone screamed in the office of the district Party committee. I stopped.

"Who's that?" I asked.

For some reason Lee Ung Gol looked embarrassed.

"People from the county Party committee are questioning a man named Lee Jong Jin." "Why? Is he a 'Minsaengdan' suspect?"

"It seems so. The man has denied it for three days, but they keep on torturing him to squeeze a confession from him. I'm so distressed at the sound that I can't work properly all day long. Let's go by quickly."

"Why is he suspected?"

"He worked in the enemy-held area and returned a few days later than expected. That must be the reason."

"Can that be a reason?"

"Comrade Commander, be careful of what you say. One word like that can be the cause of being labelled a 'Minsaengdan' member. The whirlwind of the 'Minsaengdan' has made it very hard to live here."

I walked into the office in spite of Lee Ung Gol's advice.

A man from the county Party committee and some Red Guards of the district were brutally questioning Lee Jong Jin. As I entered the room the cadre from the county Party committee thrashed the victim furiously as if to show off to a stranger how splendidly the Wangqing people were conducting the class struggle.

Lee Jong Jin had been a servant of a Chinese landowner for more than ten years. His wife had been killed during the enemy's "punitive" atrocities, and he had left his two children in the care of other people to join the revolution. After he came to the guerrilla zone he had worked as Party secretary of a branch of the district. The masses had held him in high esteem. There could be no reason for such a man to involve himself in the hostile organization and counterrevolution. How could his delayed return from work, an inadvertent mistake in work, be the cause of suspecting him for involvement in the "Minsaengdan"?

I gave the cadres from the county and district Party committees some needed advice and made them stop the questioning.

"Comrades, as far as I understand there's no reason for dealing with Lee Jong Jin as a 'Minsaengdan' member. It isn't right to whip him without exact evidence simply because he made a mistake in his work. The 'Minsaengdan' should be combated prudently on the basis of scientific evidence," I said.

The questioning was suspended, but after I left Yaoyinggou and went to Macun, Lee Jong Jin was murdered.

The incident occasioned the spreading of the news that Commander Kim Il Sung from Antu had stopped the county Party cadres from questioning a "Minsaengdan" suspect and had denounced them. The news reached the ears of the cadres of the Wangqing County Party Committee and the East Manchuria Special District Committee. The news spread throughout Yanji, Helong and Hunchun beyond the bounds of Wangqing.

Some people commented apprehensively: "What disaster did he wish on himself by interfering in the matter? He seems to be blind to fire and water." Others said: "Commander Kim did that because he hasn't experienced Wangqing. He's a man from Antu, isn't he?" Still others praised me cautiously, saying: "Anyway, he's a man with plenty of guts."

What I said and did in the office of the district Party committee was, in effect, the beginning of my arguments with the Leftist elements on the issue of the "Minsaengdan". The polemic intensified from the beginning of the year 1933 when the purge in connection with the "Minsaengdan" issue was most scandalous in the guerrilla zones of east Manchuria. That year many Korean military and political cadres and revolutionaries, who had been stigmatized as "Minsaengdan" members, were either killed or ran away.

I also was nearly caught in the "Minsaengdan" intrigue. The chauvinists and factionalist sycophants, who were swaying the "purge" to an ultra-Leftist mess, tenaciously attempted to connect me with the

"Minsaengdan".

The evidence they advanced was ridiculous, including what they called the case of a kidnapped landowner from Tumen.

A Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army unit of over a hundred soldiers, stationed in Liushuhezi in those days, had requested me to help them obtain clothing. We had persuaded a landowner to help us in this matter, a landowner whom the nationalist army had captured for obtaining economic aid, but failed. With the help of the escaping landowner we had procured cloth and cotton enough for 500 uniforms. The event was called the "case of the kidnapped landowner" from Tumen. We had provided all the nationalist army soldiers in the Wangqing area with clothing from the aid goods.

Judging from the situation at the time, it was quite probable that, if they were not properly clothed in the severe winter cold, the soldiers of the nationalist army would defect or surrender to the enemy. By itself, without cooperation of a friendly army like the national salvation army, the revolutionary army would have found it difficult to maintain the guerrilla zone.

Kim Kwon Il, who was promoted to the office of Wangqing county Party secretary as a successor to Lee Yong Guk, denounced, in league with some cadres of the East Manchuria Special District Committee, the guerrilla army's procurement of winter clothing for the national salvation army with the help of a landowner as an act of Rightist capitulation; he said that Kim Il Sung, who was in command of the army and connived at and encouraged the work of the "Minsaengdan", must be held responsible.

The fact that they fussed about responsibility even by mentioning my name showed that they had, in fact, schemed to do away to the last man with the Korean cadres with any authority to speak in east Manchuria. They went so far as to make the ridiculous allegation that a large number of "Minsaengdan" members had wormed their way into the Wangqing guerrilla army because Kim Il Sung had neglected the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign. They tried to bring me to the "purge" tribunal by hook or by crook.

Their intrigues led to a frontal clash between them and me.

I refuted them with a strong argument that the procurement of clothing for the national salvation army with the help of the landowner could never be a Rightist act, still less the work of the "Minsaengdan", and then I unhesitatingly expressed my opinion about the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign:

"Since combating the 'Minsaengdan' means combating spies, nobody has the right to be indifferent to it. I do not wish to see the 'Minsaengdan' infiltrate into our ranks, either. But I cannot remain an onlooker at the murder of innocent people perpetrated on the excuse of purging the 'Minsaengdan'. Such an act of murder undermines the revolution and benefits the enemy.

Can we remain silent? Take a look - what kind of people are they, whom you've labeled 'Minsaengdan' members? Aren't they indomitable fighters who have shared all our hardships in the guerrilla zone with



death hovering? Why would fighters like that join the 'Minsaengdan' which is against the revolution? Your arguments are untenable."

The Leftist elements became angry at my statement and shouted, "Do you object then to the line of the anti-'Minsaengdan' struggle?"

"If your line of anti- 'Minsaengdan' struggle is for killing your friends who are loyal to the revolution, I cannot support it. If you're selecting 'Minsaengdan' members, you have to truly identify them on the basis of scientific evidence. Why are you disposing of people one by one who are working for the revolution, enduring hunger and hardships in this mountain? Isn't this strange?" I refuted.

I criticized them incisively and brought the matter to a critical point. The Leftist elements on the East Manchuria Special District Committee said that I lacked knowledge of the "Minsaengdan".

"Well, if you say so, I myself will see the people you've defined as 'Minsaengdan' members", I said. "If you want to hear what the prisoners say, you may be present at the hearing."

A company commander nicknamed Hunter Jang (his real name was Jang Ryong San) was among the "Minsaengdan" prisoners kept in the goal at Lishugou. His father was a renowned hunter in the Wangqing area.

Jang Ryong San had learned marksmanship by frequently accompanying his father when hunting. He was such a crack shot that once he had prepared dough and then hunted eight roe deer to cook dough-flake soup. During the battle to defend Xiaowangqing he had sniped at least 100 of the enemy. He was one of my dearest commanding officers. This man had suddenly been labeled as a "Minsaengdan" member and was locked up in a goal no better than an animal shed. What did I feel on seeing him there?

"Hunter Jang, speak up clearly! Are you really a 'Minsaengdan' member?" I asked him point-blank.

"Yes, I am," he admitted dully.

"If that is so, why did you shoot so many Japanese?"

The Leftists who had followed me to the goal to listen were looking at me triumphantly. I calmed down and reasoned with Jang Ryong San.

"Look here, Hunter Jang. The 'Minsaengdan' is a reactionary organization formed by the Japanese and serves them. And you've killed more than a hundred of them. Isn't that strange? Speak the truth even though you're threatened with a sword at your neck. Speak frankly."

Only then did he burst out sobbing, grasping my hand. He spoke appealingly, in a hoarse voice:

"Comrade Commander, why would I join the 'Minsaengdan'? I've denied it, but they wouldn't believe me, only flogged me. I had no alternative but to say I'm a 'Minsaengdan'. I'm sorry to have thrown mud at you."

"It isn't important whether you throw mud or black ink at me. The point is that you're a dishonest man - you say you're a 'Minsaengdan' to the tyrants who torture you, and deny it in front of me. I don't need a coward who says two things with one mouth."

I was so infuriated when I left the jail that the Leftists did not dare to speak to me. That day I met Tong Chang-rong and lodged a strong protest against him.

"I see that your work is questionable. The 'Minsaengdan' must not be combated in this way. How come you arrest and lock up innocent people on a charge of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan'? The 'Minsaengdan' must be combated in a democratic way, not by a few high-ranking authorities, but through mass discussion to identify friend from foe. A 'Minsaengdan' must not be produced through torture and intimidation. Nobody in Wangqing but you regards Hunter Jang a 'Minsaengdan' member. I stand surety for him on my life. You must release him at once."

I told the Leftists that the so-called "Minsaengdan" suspects in the guerrilla army must not be touched without the political department's permission. On my return to the unit, I punished the commanding officer who had turned over Jang Ryong San to the "purge" headquarters at his discretion.

That day the East Manchuria Special District Committee released Jang Ryong San as I had demanded.

Later Jang was sent to Zhoujiatun, Ningan County, to procure provisions. He fought well there until the last moment of his life.

The Park Chang Gil incident, widely known to the public, was also a sort of trial. It occurred while we were stationed at Gayahe. One day we brought a cow of the "People's Association" from a village near Tumen and had it slaughtered for the soldiers and the local people. Many of the people, who had eaten the beef, suffered a bowel complaint.

My comrades-in-arms crowded into my lodgings, saying that all the comrades were ailing after drinking the water from a well poisoned by the "Minsaengdan", and that they were afraid many may die. If that had been true, the whole company would have perished. I ordered the company to climb the hill at the back of the village and alerted them against a possible enemy attack.

Strange as it may be, I myself did not feel any stomach-ache until a long time had passed, nor was there any sign of the enemy attack I had anticipated. I summoned the company commander, the political instructor, the Young Communist League secretary, the youth worker and other officers of the company and asked them if they, too, believed that the well had really been poisoned.

"Yes, probably," the officers answered unanimously, without considering the matter. "But I have no stomach-ache although I ate the beef late in the evening and early this morning," I said. "If other people suffer from stomach-ache, the company commander and I should also suffer, but we don't. How can this be explained?"

"The commanders may not suffer probably because they were served with clean soup," the company commander hazarded.

"That's not true. The commanders and the men ate the soup from the same pot, and there's no law that the poison doesn't foul up the portion for the officers."

Meanwhile, a platoon leader who was patrolling the village brought a boy as tall as a rifle to me, saying that the boy was a "Minsaengdan" member and that he had poisoned the well. The boy was Park Chang Gil now under suspicion. The platoon leader said that the boy had frankly admitted his crime before the villagers. Hearing the news that the culprit had been arrested, the village was astir. Some people cursed him as a good-for-nothing, and some hurled abuse at his mother, that she deserved to be flogged to death.

Chang Gil had grown up in hardship, herding pigs for a Chinese landowner. One of his brothers was serving as a company supply officer of the guerrilla army, and another was working in a branch Party organization. I could hardly believe that the boy with such a family background could do such a harmful thing that might destroy a company of the guerrilla army.

I talked with the boy for hours. At first he admitted his " " to me. But in the end he denied it, crying. His admission of the "crime" in front of the villagers had been motivated by his repulsion towards the village women who had shifted the blame for the accident upon him even though he had denied it. I immediately brought the company down from the hill and declared the boy innocent at a mass meeting:

"This boy did not poison the well. Then, who has poisoned it? None of you, villagers, has poisoned it. No one has been poisoned. There are, of course, the people who suffered from a stomach complaint for a day or two. But that was because they had eaten too much beef for the first time in many months. So there is no question of the 'Minsaengdan' here, and there cannot be such a question. I declare here and now that the boy, whom you accused of being a 'Minsaengdan' member, is enlisted in the guerrilla army."

The village women listening to me began to sob, even those who had accused the boy. The Leftists took issue with me about the Park Chang Gil incident, saying that I had settled it from a Rightist point of view. After his enlistment in the guerrilla army, Park Chang Gil fought courageously in the battle to defend Xiaowangqing.

Thus, I ran a few big risks against the Leftists around me. The rescue of Hunter Jang and Yang Song Ryong from the "Minsaengdan" jail was one risk, and the declaration of Park Chang Gil's innocence and his enlistment in the guerrilla army was another.

To be candid, it was very dangerous to implement the politics of trust and benevolence, which means seeing people as they are, treating comrades as comrades, and serving the people as such, at a time when shallow-minded, bigoted people, mad for power, were judging everyone from their prejudiced opinion and behaving like prosecutors, judges or executioners. But it was imperative for me to combat them at the risk of my own life.

The best self-protection under the surveillance of distrust, which suspected everything as the work of the "Minsaengdan", was to refrain from meddling and shutting one's eyes to everything. But I raised the banner of revolt against everything that I considered unjust with courage and my belief that if a man lacked the resoluteness to condemn injustice as he saw it, he was as good as dead and had no need to live. If one cared for only one's own comfort, how could one be a revolutionary? I was convinced that, no matter how violent the whirlwind of "purge" was, it was a passing phenomenon, that if we dedicated ourselves to the struggle against it we could ward it off.

The Left chauvinists and factionalist sycophants who had become addicted to an abuse of power through the purge of what they called the "Minsaengdan", had even cooked up and published a "Minsaengdan" structure of the east Manchuria Party organization and a "Minsaengdan" 7 structure of the people's revolutionary army - exact copies of the organizational systems of the Party and the guerrilla army in the east Manchurian guerrilla zones. The Leftists schemed to give us the impression that the "Minsaengdan" had sent many of its agents into the guerrilla army and to drive a wedge between my men and me to prevent me from stopping their campaign against the "Minsaengdan".

One day a cadre came to my unit with a letter from the head of the organizational department of the east Manchuria Party committee. I was amazed after reading it. It did not mention the source of information, but it said that one of my men, named Han Pong Son, was plotting a "Minsaengdan" action in a big way and was going to kill me, and that in view of the seriousness of his crime he must be arrested without delay.

Han Pong Son's "crime" was awful, but somehow it was difficult for me to believe the letter. In the first place, the attempt for a big "Minsaengdan" action seemed unfounded. Han Pong Son had been fighting courageously, at the risk of his life, and what devil could have caught him and made him a "Minsaengdan" member?

Judging from his character, he was not violent or wicked, and was incapable of harming or killing his commander. He was so good-natured, handsome and well-mannered that he was jealously envied by others. He was very close to me in everyday life. It was hardly probable that such a man would harm his commander who heartily loved him. But it was impossible to brush off the letter. Was the head of the organizational department able to tell such a lie? I was very displeased. I told the messenger to return without worry, saying that I myself would test the man and then deal with him.

"An undesirable situation may break out any minute... You're really a strange man," the messenger said and left reluctantly.

Thoughts crowded in on me: Has Han Pong Son really attempted to take my life? Why is he trying to kill me? I can't see any reason for him to do so. It's good that I haven't turned him over to the special district committee. But what if he sows seeds of trouble? A few days after, I called Han Pong Son to headquarters.

Beaming, as usual, he asked me, "Comrade Commander, what do you want me for? Are you going to send me to the enemy area on a mission?"

"You've guessed it. Go to Sanchakou and capture a secret agent and bring him to me today. You have a good sense of smell."

"Is that so? Last night in my dream I went sight-seeing to Tumen, and my comrades in the company read that as an omen of a mission to the enemy area. They interpreted the dream excellently."

"I'll give you a pistol to protect yourself. Take it with you."

"No, I won't; it's cumbersome. I'll lure him by words. Don't worry, please."

"All right, hide the pistol in the ground and retrieve it on your way back."

Han Pong Son buried the Mauser on the way as he was told, and walked on to the town of Sanchakou. He found the named secret agent, and said, "Wouldn't you like to go and see the communist zone? I'll guarantee your safety." That is how he coaxed the agent and brought him to the guerrilla zone. I questioned the secret agent myself.

"I know that you're a dog of the Japanese. But I won't kill you. In return you must do something for us. Since you've taken an oath of allegiance at the gendarmerie, you may continue to do as you're told by the Japanese. Only inform us in advance of coming 'punitive' attacks on us. I won't give you any other mission. If you acquit yourself well, you'll be recognized as a revolutionary. Can you do that?"

The spy said that he would do whatever I told him to, and begged for assurance that the members of the revolutionary organizations would not kill him. I saw to it that Han Pong Son escorted the spy back to Sanchakou. Needless to say, he performed the mission with credit. After this assignment was fulfilled, I said to the cadres of the East Manchuria Special District Committee:

"I gave Han Pong Son a pistol to test him, but he didn't run away. I told him to capture a dog of the Japanese and he did. As I gave him both a pistol and cartridges, he could have harmed me easily if he had wanted to. But he didn't. Can such a man join the 'Minsaengdan'?"

They retorted:

"A 'Minsaengdan' member can imitate this sort of an act. He didn't run away or harm you to win the confidence of the cadres, to worm his way deeper into our ranks, and launch a big 'Minsaengdan' venture. So we cannot trust him."

I gave Han Pong Son a second assignment. It was to bury an explosive in the Tumen-Jiamusi railway line. He again smiled and left for his destination without delay. When I had mentioned that he was too adventurous and warned him to be careful lest he should be captured, he answered, "I'm not afraid of being captured. Trust me. I wouldn't turn coat even if I were. The worst thing that might happen to me would be being shot."

A third assignment I gave him was to lead a storm troop. A fierce battle was being fought during our raid on a concentration village near Wangqing. While leading the storm troop in the attack of a fort, he lost a hand unfortunately. But, in return for the sacrifice, this peerless courageous optimist was completely rid of any charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan".

I proved his innocence through these three test missions. If I had sent him to the head of the organizational department without testing him, he would no doubt have been executed as a reactionary. My suspension of the execution of the Leftists' orders to save Han Pong Son through testing was, in effect, a hair-raising adventure on which I had to stake my own life. If he had killed a cadre with the pistol or had run away to the enemy area, there would have been no escape from my being held responsible for trusting him.

That was my third adventure, so to speak. This type of adventure was repeated in subsequent days.

In the whirlpool of a monstrous "class struggle" in which the fates of tens and hundreds of people were decided by the shout of an order or a single gesture of individuals, I had to meet the challenges of blockheads every minute who lacked every human feeling, and still less sober revolutionary reasoning and discretion. But I was able to fight openly and squarely with my conviction, without yielding to any pressure, on the strength of my unsullied reputation, my successes in battle as a man in command of the guerrilla army, and my theoretical support.

Besides, many of the Chinese cadres in the leadership of Jiandao had been greatly influenced by me during my days in Jirin, and they did not dare attempt to connect me with the "Minsaengdan" and dispose of me.

When the raging wind of the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign was sweeping the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria, I rose from my sickbed and prepared for my trip to Dahuangwai. I was not strong enough to attend the meeting after weeks of illness, but I had to participate in it in spite of everything as I had proposed holding it. Nevertheless, the 4th Company commander, its political instructor and many other comrades in the army objected to my departure for Dahuangwai.

"Comrade Commander, it's said that representatives from both the Manchurian Provincial Party

Committee and the Manchurian Provincial Committee of the Young Communist League have arrived. That isn't a good sign. No matter how well justice is behind you, Comrade Commander, you're alone and they have the majority," the political instructor of the 4th Company tried to convince me.

Even my orderly O Tae Song was apprehensive about my trip to Dahuangwai. There was not a single optimist to encourage me with smiling prospects and blessings that one would like to expect from the meeting at Dahuangwai. It was not without reason that they were worried about my trip.

It was February 1935. By that time the Party headquarters at all levels and Party members in east Manchuria had been secretly alerted by the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee to step up the purge operations and the campaign on two fronts against the Left and Right trends to remove all the counterrevolutionaries lurking in the Party and wipe out factional strife, nationalism and social reformism, in order to make the entire Party Bolshevik.

After receipt of these instructions, all the Party organizations in east Manchuria were mercilessly conducting the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign in a more ultra-Leftist manner.

Before that my arguments with the Leftists about the "Minsaengdan" had been made spontaneously at informal places. By contrast, at Dahuangwai where all the important people from the Party, the army and the Young Communist League were to meet, a formal, heated polemic was expected. While I was alone in opposition to the Leftist tendency, ten or twenty or more people might rise against me, as it had become a practice for most people to keep as silent as dumb animals when it came to the issue of "Minsaengdan" although they had something to say about it. That meant I had to fight against heavy odds, surrounded by people of the Leftist trend. Their arguments might condemn me as a "criminal" or the meeting hall might become a tribunal that would ostracize me. If the worse came to the worst, they might attempt to label me a "Minsaengdan" and bury me politically and physically.

This was precisely the reason for the great apprehension of my comrades-in-arms. They were well aware how cold-hearted the manipulators of the "purge" were. That was why they were worried, begging me not to go to Dahuangwai. And yet, I did go, saying:

"Comrades, I must tread this path, whatever the future may hold for me, life or death. If I do not go to Dahuangwai, I shall only invite self-destruction. A critical moment has arrived for us to save the destiny of the Korean communists, and the Korean revolution from crisis. A confrontation cannot be avoided, and black and white has to be cleared." With the help of O Tae Song and another orderly, I walked to Dahuangwai and arrived there when the meeting was in its second day of session.

In the office of the peasant committee of district No. 8, which was guarded strictly by men of the people's revolutionary army, I was received by Wei Zheng-min, the representative from the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, Wang Run-cheng, Zhou Shu-dong, Cao Yafan, Wang De-tai, Wang Zhongshan and other cadres of the East Manchuria Party and League Special District Committees. In this spacious office building the meeting, which the Chinese termed the joint meeting of the East Manchuria

Party and League Special District Committees, was in session. In Korea the meeting is called the Dahuangwai meeting. At one time some historians called it the meeting of military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. This cannot be considered accurate.

The meeting went on for about ten days. Attendance was irregular as some people kept coming in and leaving. Most of those present were Chinese, and I remember, there were only several Korean cadres including Song Il, Lim Su San, JO Tong Uk and me. JO Tong Uk was a translator throughout the meeting for the Korean cadres who did not know Chinese well. I attended the meeting in the capacity of a member of the East Manchuria Special District Party Committee.

The Dahuangwai meeting was convened because Zhong Zi-yun (alias Little Zhong), in the capacity of an inspector from the Manchurian Provincial Committee of the Young Communist League, while visiting Jiandao to become acquainted with the work there, had made the absurd report to the provincial Party committee that 70 per cent of the Koreans in east Manchuria were "Minsaengdan" members. If his report had been true, what would have happened to the revolution in east Manchuria? It was natural that the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee dispatched its representative to east Manchuria to take measures in dealing with the situation. Arguments continued day and night.

The argument began to grow heated when Zhong Zi-yun repeated his view expressed in that report that 70 per cent of the Koreans in east Manchuria and 80 to 90 per cent of the Korean revolutionaries were "Minsaengdan" members or suspects, and that the guerrilla zones were "Minsaengdan" training centers.

The atmosphere of the meeting was swayed towards supporting his report. Some people said that the purge committee should be strengthened, others uttered high-sounding phrases, insisting that the purge of the "Minsaengdan" was a special revolutionary measure to surround and destroy the counterrevolutionaries lurking in the ranks, and still others clamored for the seeds sown by the "Minsaengdan" to be rooted up mercilessly and more thoroughly.

I put a few questions to them:

"If most of the Korean revolutionaries active in east Manchuria are 'Minsaengdan' members, it means that I and other Korean comrades present here are members of it. If so, are you holding this meeting with the 'Minsaengdan'? If we belong to the 'Minsaengdan', why have you called us here to discuss politics with us, instead of locking us up in a jail or killing us?"

"Do the statistics you have compiled include the revolutionaries who laid down their lives on the battlefield? If the statistics include them, how can their death in the war against the Japanese be explained? It follows that the Japanese have killed a large number of their own people. Was it necessary for the Japanese to kill these 'Minsaengdan' members whom they had tried so hard to train?"

"Do you consider 80 to 90 per cent of the 1st Company, now guarding the conference hall, as 'Minsaengdan' members?"



As I posed these questions, an icy silence fell suddenly over the conference hall which had been in a state of excitement. The silence seemed strange even to me. The audience simply stared at Wei Zheng-min's face on the platform who made no reply. I continued:

"As you know, if heterogeneous elements occupy 80 to 90 per cent of something, that thing changes into something else. That is science.

“The allegation that 70 per cent of the Koreans in east Manchuria belong to the 'Minsaengdan' implies that all the Koreans except aged people, children and women are 'Minsaengdan' members. If so, is the 'Minsaengdan' fighting for the revolution in east Manchuria, in a bloody war against their masters?

"Some people openly say that most of the Korean communists active in east Manchuria are 'Minsaengdan' members. This is also illogical. If they were, what have they been fighting a hard battle for in the guerrilla zones which have been in a state of constant blockade over the past three years, without housing, clothing and being fed properly even in the severe winter cold?

"If 8 to 9 per cent of the Korean revolutionaries, let alone 80 to 90 per cent, were 'Minsaengdan' members, it would be impossible for us to safely hold this meeting, because this conference hall is guarded by the 1st Company of fully armed Koreans. All the renowned revolutionaries and cadres from east Manchuria, whom the enemy has been trying to destroy for years, are present here. If your statements were true, most of the 1st Company must belong to the 'Minsaengdan'. So, isn't it strange that they don't attack us with their efficient weapons and make a clean sweep of us?"

The people who had declared that we were all "Minsaengdan" members were likewise unable to answer this question.

“The 1st Company was miserable when you declared it to be a 'Minsaengdan' company. According to the investigation which I myself conducted in the company for about 20 days, there was no evidence that proved any of the company belonging to the 'Minsaengdan'. On the contrary, it has become a model company during my guidance and inspection, and has given birth to another company, the 7th Company. The results of testing people in the practical struggle have also eloquently proved your statement to be unfounded, the statement that most of the Koreans and Korean revolutionaries in the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria were 'Minsaengdan' members.

"The report says that the guerrilla zone is a 'Minsaengdan' training center, that the Party and the League are also 'Minsaengdan' organizations, and that Lee Yong Guk is the head of the Wangqing county Party 'Minsaengdan', that Kim Myong Gyun is in charge of organizational and military affairs of the 'Minsaengdan' in Wangqing County, that Lee Sang Muk is in charge of organizational affairs of the east Manchuria Party 'Minsaengdan', that Ju Jin is in charge of the 'Minsaengdan' in the 1st Division of the people's revolutionary army, and that Park Chun is the chief of staff of the 'Minsaengdan' in the people's revolutionary army.

If so, can the east Manchuria Party organization, the Wangqing county Party organization and the 1st Division of the people's revolutionary army be considered to belong to the 'Minsaengdan'? Am I to regard the cadres of the east Manchuria Party organization as the controllers and leaders of the 'Minsaengdan'?"

The audience still kept silent.

Only Wei Zheng-min, the representative from the provincial Party committee, who was on a mission to analyze, sum up and evaluate the developments of the struggle correctly and objectively, eased the tension slightly by expressing his view that it was a mistake to identify the Party and League organizations themselves as the "Minsaengdan", and that the whole and a part should be distinguished. I emphatically declared that the labeling of most of the east Manchurian people as "Minsaengdan" members was an insult to the Korean people, and that such a view must be rectified immediately at this meeting.

My assertion met with an instant rebuff from Cao Ya-fan. He said:

"You're flatly denying the existence of the 'Minsaengdan'; however, that is your subjective view. There are now hundreds of 'Minsaengdan' suspects in jails. They have confessed with their own mouths that they have joined the 'Minsaengdan' and have written confessions with their own hands. What do their oral and written confessions mean? Does it mean that you don't recognize material proof?"

"I don't recognize what you call oral and written confessions because most of your material evidence has been squeezed out through torture. I have been to your jails and interviewed dozens of your suspects, and none of them admitted to his confession. I trust their loyalty more than has been displayed in their life and work than your material evidence. Tell me frankly, how did you wrest those confessions... Most of your 'Minsaengdan' suspects have made false confessions, unable to endure the painful tortures by the 'purgers'.

"You are now manufacturing a 'Minsaengdan' which is not a 'Minsaengdan'."

At that moment, Cao Ya-fan shouted, "Budui!" (No!)

The word "budui" grated on me to the point of anger. Cao Ya-fan, of all people, dared to say "No!"?

My fist banged on the floor as I retorted, "What do you mean by 'no'? The Koreans in Jiandao are now watching you, because you have hunted people at random by abusing your authority.

"Who killed Kim Jong Ryong, political commissar of the Antu guerrilla unit? Who killed Kim Il Hwan, secretary of the Helong County Party Committee? Answer me frankly here and now! Cao Ya-fan in the days of Jirin was neither brutal nor covetous of position. I cried in indignance at the news of Kim Il Hwan's death. He was your senior in the revolution. How could you murder him, you who should have

saved him?"

As Kim Il Hwan's comrade-in-arms, I had bitterly moaned over his death. I criticized them scathingly.

Kim Il Hwan was one of those whom we had won over to the revolution when we were initially raising the revolution in east Manchuria. He and Oh Jung Hwa were the two prominent figures of those days. I don't remember clearly now whether it was at Cao Ya-fan's or at Lee Chong San's that I first met Kim Il Hwan. But I still have a vivid memory of the heart-to-heart talk I had with him through the night at the time of the Mingyuegou meeting.

It was a very impressive talk. He was my senior by many years, but he treated me modestly, on an equal footing, without putting on airs or behaving haughtily. Kim Jun and Chae Su Hang, who moved about together like twins in the streets of Jirin and Longjing, introduced Kim Il Hwan to me just as they had O Jung Hwa.

"The man who has won an ox at a football game," was always an introductory remark Chae Su Hang used to explain Kim Il Hwan to me. This epithet was also used when he introduced him to those attending the Mingyuegou meeting. Chae Su Hang, a noted sportsman, was in the habit of judging a man by his skill in a football game. In a way it was an interesting criterion.

Thanks to Chae Su Hang's introductory epithet, Kim Il Hwan was widely known as an able sportsman to many of the revolutionaries in east Manchuria. Kim Il Hwan was a seasoned, experienced political worker. Like O Jung Hwa, he was one of those who set the first example for the rest of the communists in the Jiandao area to follow in revolutionizing his family. His whole family were remarkable revolutionaries and ardent patriots, who laid down their lives for the revolution.

His mother, O Ok Kyong, was a veteran Communist, who dedicated her life to the care of revolutionaries. His wife, Lee Kye Sun, was a laudable daughter of the Korean nation who fought bravely and preserved her honour as a revolutionary until the last moment of her life. His younger brother, Kim Tong San, was an underground operative and was killed by the enemy in a "punitive" action. Kim Jong Sik, of the Helong guerrilla unit, was a cousin of Kim Il Hwan's. His relations on his wife's side, too, dedicated their lives to the revolution. His wife's brother, Lee Ji Chun, was one of those who paid a visit to us in Jirin and received directions for struggle from us.

In short, Kim Il Hwan was a ripe seed. He was well-informed. Kim Il and Park Yong Sun, who had done underground work with Kim Il Hwan in Helong for many years, often recollected that his method and style of work was seasoned and that he was popular among the masses. Kim Il and Park Yong Sun developed as Party workers under his influence. I think it was because of these merits that Kim Il Hwan was sent now and then on missions to work among the men of the national salvation army. In those days, the soldiers of this army in Helong all respected him and treated him cordially.

Once Lee To Son's unit from Antu suddenly crowded into Chechangzi in order to "mop up" the national

salvation army. The soldiers of the Jingan army searched the village for the national salvation army. They thus discovered a bundle of leaflets at Kim Il Hwan's house, a bundle of important leaflets which his mother was to deliver to another local organization.

Saying that he had discovered the Communist Party, Lee To Son began questioning the whole of Kim Il Hwan's family. Kim's mother said that a stranger had left the bundle, but the interrogator did not believe her. Lee To Son's eyes glared maliciously. While Kim's family was being threatened, their neighbor, a landowner, begged the interrogator to be merciful, saying that they were not Communist Party members, but innocent peasants, and that he was standing surety for them on his honor. Thus the crisis was warded off. This was because Kim Il Hwan had had such a good influence on the landowner in everyday life.

What was most characteristic of Kim Il Hwan was his uncompromising attitude towards injustice and unshakable revolutionary principle. Because of these qualities Kim Il Hwan was stigmatized as a "Minsaengdan" member later and persecuted and finally murdered by the Leftists. The Left chauvinists and factionalist sycophants hated those most who lived to their own convictions, guided by principles, without kowtowing to power or dancing to the tune of others, because injustice could not hold sway and there was no room for the devil to set foot or act freely where there were principles.

There was a man in Kim Il Hwan's village named Lee Ok Man, who was in charge of the local Party organization. The man had accidentally found a place in the revolutionary ranks. He was an opium addict and was leading a dissipated life. He flirted with many women by abusing his official authority. Kim Il Hwan advised him comradely to refrain from such behavior and to give up opium smoking. If Lee Ok Man had been a reasonable man, he would have accepted the criticism with thanks. But, by way of retaliation, he instigated his Leftist superiors to stigmatize Kim Il Hwan as a "Minsaengdan" member and to oust him from the office of county Party secretary.

Even after his dismissal, Kim Il Hwan worked loyally. In order to test him the Leftists sent him to a coal-mine owned by a capitalist with an assignment to work among the miners. Kim Il Hwan and his family could have fled to the enemy area during his test period in order not to be persecuted by the Leftists. But he did not want to be disgraced as a defector from the revolutionary ranks, even if he were to be killed in the presence of the people in the guerrilla zone on the false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". "I shall be arrested and killed."

"It cannot be that I am a member of the 'Minsaengdan', an organization of Japanese stooges, nor have I ever thought of being one. However, it would be appropriate for me to uphold the honor of a revolutionary even if it means being killed here on a false charge of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan', for if I surrendered to the enemy and turned coat to save my life, it would mean a greater loss to the revolution.

"Then the crime of betraying the revolution would not be atoned for ever."

"My last wish is that my whole family should fight staunchly until our country is liberated and becomes

independent."

That was what he had said to his mother and wife when he had had a premonition that his days were numbered.

One day in November 1934 the Leftists brought him to trial. Lee Ok Man's malicious charge against him was absolutely false:

"This man is the worst of reactionaries. He has not confessed a single word in spite of long questionings. There is no knowing whether a serpent or a viper is coiling inside him. If this fellow were kept alive, our revolution could be shattered to shreds in less than ten years. Should he be allowed to live or should he be killed?"

None of the audience answered the question. Some people whispered: how could a communist revolution be carried out if such people were all killed? But nobody spoke out openly against the charge. The people of Chechangzi knew that the charge was unfounded, but could not speak against those in power, for if they had they, too, would have been accused of being "Minsaengdan" members.

The Leftists sentenced him, one of the founders of the Helong guerrilla unit, to death. "Wait and see who is a real 'Minsaengdan' member and who is a true communist... History will make black and white clear," Kim Il Hwan shouted, glaring at them, on his being sentenced to death. Hearing this, the men of the national salvation army unit under the command of Sun Zhang-xiang shouted angrily, wielding their rifles:

"Why are you killing Kim Il Hwan? He is our teacher and benefactor. If such a revolutionary is a 'Minsaengdan' member, is there anyone who is not a 'Minsaengdan' member? We stand surety for him. If you do not repeal the death sentence, we'll attack you."

Under the pressure of the men of the national salvation army, the Leftists withdrew the sentence and released him; however, they murdered him that night.

"I ask you," I shouted hoarsely, glaring at Cao Ya-fan, "did you really believe that Kim Il Hwan was a 'Minsaengdan' member? Didn't you shoot him with an ulterior purpose because you knew that he was not a 'Minsaengdan' member? If he was a 'Minsaengdan' member, who on earth is not a 'Minsaengdan' member in this land of Jiandao?"

I continued in a calmer voice:

"Comrades, stop gambling on people's destinies. Treat human beings as humans, treat comrades as comrades, and treat the people as people. Aren't we fighting to change and transform the world with the weapon of human love, love for our comrades, love for the people? If we lack this love, how do we differ from the bourgeoisie or the bandits? If we mock at people in the name of 'purge' any further, the people

will turn against us for ever, and our posterity will not forgive us. The only way to redress the murder of thousands of martyrs on a false charge of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan' is to stop this pointless murder and concentrate all our efforts on the struggle against the Japanese on the strength of the politics of love and trust and unity. Spit out the bait of the 'Minsaengdan' thrown by the enemy and don't yield to factionalism, chauvinism and adventurism having any room in our ranks."

"This alone will pave the way to healing the wounds caused by the 'Minsaengdan' for years, will save the people, save the revolution and strengthen the internationalist ties between the Korean and Chinese communists on a new higher level. The real harmony of the revolutionaries of our two countries must be based on mutual respect, mutual understanding, class confidence and fraternity. We must guard against the pursuit of hegemony more vigilantly than anything else in our joint struggle. If one side pursues a selfish purpose or sacrifices the other for this purpose, such cooperation will not be a durable one. In short, our harmony will last only if it is motivated by trust and love."

At the Dahuangwai meeting, there was a heated argument on the matter of personnel. The argument started when some of those at the helm of the special district committee made the assertion that only the people of the majority nation, not the minority nation, could be cadres, that it was inappropriate and irrational that the minority nation should guide the majority nation. They pointed out that the Koreans of the minority nation were not in a position to lead the majority nation, and that, worse still, the Korean revolutionaries could not become cadres for they were given to factional strife, were vacillating and liable to turn reactionary.

It was a known fact that the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee had issued a secret directive that the policy of selecting and appointing mainly Koreans as cadres of the east Manchuria Party leadership should be switched over to the policy of centering on the Chinese. The import of this directive was that in the light of the Koreans' failure in both the nationalist and communist movements in the past, their being liable to vacillate or to turn reactionary, the difference in language and customs, the "revolutionary basis of the minority nation" was not durable, "success in independence and the communist movements under the leadership of the minority nation was impossible" and that, therefore, the "Korean basis in east Manchuria should be replaced by the Chinese basis".

The directive demanded that the secretary of the East Manchuria Special District Committee and other major cadres should be appointed by the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, and that Koreans should not be promoted, except in special cases, to company commanders and higher ranks.

I did not believe at that time and still do not believe that the directive was motivated by the will of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. When the directive was issued, the leadership of the Chinese Party was on a long march of 25,000 li, breaking out of the Chiang Kaisek's army encirclement. In the vortex of civil war, the Central Committee of the Chinese Party, treading a thorny path and shouldering the heavy burdens of revolutionary war, was in no state to give attention to developments in the northeastern frontier of the country.

Many of the measures taken by the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee were copies of the directives issued by the Comintern oriental department which was under the direction of Wang Ming and Kang Sheng or were adopted in line with its directives. The distance from Harbin, where the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee was situated, to Irkutsk, Vladivostok or to Khabarovsk, where the offices of Comintern oriental department were, was much shorter than to Jinggang Mountains or Yanan.

The contention that a minority nation was not in a position to lead a majority nation seriously affected our dignity. It was a fallacy that contradicted the communist principle of selection and appointment of cadres and ignored the composition of the cadres in east Manchuria. I again started on new arguments:

"The Korean and Chinese communists have the noble task of fighting the Japanese imperialists, their common enemy, until the day of victory. The matter of personnel must, therefore, be settled in a way to strengthen the militant solidarity of the Korean and Chinese peoples and their common struggle against the Japanese, and the principle of selecting and appointing cadres loyal to the revolution and competent from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism must be maintained.

"As you know the Koreans pioneered the communist movement in east Manchuria. The Korean people make up the overwhelming majority of the cadres and Party members in east Manchuria. Why do you shut your eyes to this fact and claim the guidance of the minority nation by the majority nation or the replacement of cadres from the minority nation by those from the majority nation now after several years of joint struggle?"

"We're not advocating the theory of the Korean nation's superiority or of the inferiority of any other nation from a nationalist point of view. But the tendency must be rectified of promoting incompetent and unqualified people indiscriminately simply because they come from the majority nation.

"The nationality or political affiliation or the magnitude of the population should not be the criterion for a selection of cadres. Whether a person belongs to a minority or to a majority nation, he can be a cadre if he is qualified, and cannot be one if he is not." Then somebody spoke up, saying that most of the Korean revolutionaries had been involved in the nationalist movement or in factions and, therefore, they were not qualified to be cadres.

I refuted him then and there:

"The overwhelming majority of the Korean revolutionaries working in east Manchuria are from the unsullied new generation who have never been involved in any factions. You well know that the young communists from the main class, whom we have trained stinting no efforts, make up the main force of the people's revolutionary army. These young people are also working as cadres of the Party, government and mass organizations. There are also people who had participated in the nationalist movement or who were involved in factions in the past, but they have all been transformed on revolutionary lines."

Scarcely had I finished when another man counterattacked me on another subject. He said that the

"Minsaengdan was the son of factionalism, that factionalism was the son of nationalism and that nationalism was the son of Japanese imperialism. This absurd allegation stunned everyone. To put it in a reverse order, he meant that Japanese imperialism had supported the people who participated in the nationalist movement and those who were involved in factions in the past. It was an absurd allegation which had no theoretical justification; it was a display of distrust in the ranks of the Korean communist movement which embraced the former nationalists and factionalists who had been re-educated.

I felt the need to attack the sophistry.

"People's ideologies are not immutable. Those who had a nationalist ideology in the past can become communists through their firm efforts to make themselves over. It would be preposterous to regard people who participated in the nationalist movement in the past as the fathers of factionalism or as the sons of Japanese imperialism.

"Fundamentally speaking, nationalism has its ideological basis in the love for one's country and nation. To regard it as reactionary, therefore, is tantamount to regarding patriotism as reactionary. Don't indiscriminately consider nationalism to be heretical. So long as nationalism is not used as an ideological instrument of the bourgeoisie, there is no need to casually reject it. Nationalism can only be reactionary to history when it represents the interests of the bourgeoisie alone, and not the interests of the whole nation.

"If anybody said that Sun Yat-sen, who authored the Three Principles of the People, namely, nationalism, rights of the people, and people's livelihood, was the son of imperialism, how would you accept such nonsense? Opposition to nationalism itself is an expression of extreme nationalist prejudice.

"Some of the Korean factionalists and nationalists did go over to the enemy camp, but you must remember that they were few in number.

"Some people believe that factional strife is an innate quality of the Korean nation, and perceive the Korean communists with prejudice as though they had connections with a faction. That is absolutely ridiculous.

"To be candid, factions existed not only in the ranks of the Korean communist movement, they also existed in Germany and in the Soviet Union, they also exist in China and Japan and were also in the International. Why, then, should the Korean people alone be considered to have an ingrained factional habit, and why should the name of a Korean communist be synonymous for factionalist?

"Some people argue that Koreans are not entitled to be cadres, saying that they, as a minority nation who were unsuccessful in the past independence and communist movements, will not be successful in these movements, or that they are very unsteady in the revolutionary struggle and are liable to turn reactionary. All this is but an excuse aimed at ejecting the Korean cadres.



"You have disposed of dozens and even hundreds of Korean communists in east Manchuria by this chauvinistic point of view or murdered them on the false charge of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan', of military and political cadres who had loyally fought side by side with you in the same trench for several years.

"So many hard-core elements of the leadership have been removed from their office simply because they came from the minority nation. And are you still hankering for removing more Koreans?

"If you persist in your chauvinistic attitude towards the Koreans further and maltreat them, we will not share the same room with you any longer."

As I made this bombshell declaration, the entire audience raised their heads, staring at me.

The conference hall was tensed to such an extent that the gurgling of throats was audible. If somebody had refuted me or had uttered a single word to wound my dignity to the slightest degree, the argument would have leapt out of control. Fortunately, the discussion on the personnel stirred no further vehemence.

As the meeting proceeded, the battle of words between the Leftists and me grew fiercer. Several other Korean cadres were present, but they kept silent the whole time.

Nevertheless, I sensed their mental support. Even Song Il, who had been an agent of the Leftists and who had left many scars in my heart, came to see me and encouraged me, saying that I had single-handedly done what nobody else could have done. Wei Zheng-min and Wang Run-cheng, too, showed understanding of my idea, although they did not express their opinions officially. Wei Zheng-min's sober judgment and fair attitude in particular were of considerable help to me.

I continued the battle of words day and night, eating three meals of bean gruel a day. Only skin and bone remained of me. I had to argue against them all day until late at night, and was sick when I got into bed, and when morning came I had to go back again to the argument. As I had to fight alone against many of them, it was inconceivable for me to stay away from the meeting or to abstain from the exercise of my rights. I had to involve myself in the polemic, whether I liked it or not, for the destiny of the thousands and even tens of thousands of Korean communists and Korean people in Jiandao.

Another point of argument at the meeting was how to appreciate the slogan of national liberation which had been raised by the Korean communists. In other words, the argument was whether the struggle of the Korean communists in China under the slogan of national liberation agreed with the Comintern principle of one Party for one country or not, and whether the slogan was essentially identical with the reactionary slogan of "Koreans' autonomy in Jiandao" professed by the "Minsaengdan" or not. Certain individuals said that the Korean communists' slogan of national liberation was identical with the slogan of "Koreans' autonomy in Jiandao" rigged up by the "Minsaengdan", that it contradicted the Comintern principle of one Party for one country.

This view was shared by a considerable number of cadres. This was a dangerous point of view diametrically opposed to ours. According to their opinion, we would have to serve them for the revolution in a foreign country or play the role of a small unit of the international force, instead of fighting for the Korean revolution. I could not agree with their opinion in considering the Korean revolution to be an appendage of the revolution in a large country.

"The Japanese imperialists have granted the slogan of 'Koreans' autonomy in Jiandao' to the 'Minsaengdan' for driving a wedge between the Korean and Chinese peoples and for disrupting the communist ranks from within in order to create favorable conditions for their colonial rule. There's no need for an argument to prove that it has nothing in common with the slogan of national liberation raised by the Korean communists in Jiandao.

"Our national liberation slogan is aimed at liberating our country by overthrowing Japanese imperialist rule and at providing our people with an opportunity to enjoy genuine freedom and to exercise their rights in an independent new society without any exploitation and oppression.

"Should the Korean communists relinquish their sacred right to liberate their country and to provide their people with freedom and happiness just because they are sharing the same room with you in a foreign country? If we were to carry out only the revolution of a foreign country, and not the Korean revolution, why have we organized and trained the Korean people, without feeding and clothing ourselves properly in this land of Manchuria for several years? Some people say that if the Chinese revolution emerges victorious, the Korean revolution will triumph automatically.

That's nonsense. A revolution in a country has its own path and its own timetable. If the forces of one's own country are not prepared, one's revolution will not win of its own accord, no matter how the revolution in a neighboring country may triumph. The communists of all countries must, therefore, struggle to effect revolutions in their own countries through their own efforts, instead of waiting for somebody else to help them. This is precisely the attitude one should maintain towards revolution, an attitude worthy of masters.

"Certain persons allege that the Korean communists should not raise the national liberation slogan, using the Comintern principle of one Party for one country as an excuse. This is, in effect, an attempt to make the Korean communists take their hands off the revolution in their own country. I cannot say otherwise.

"If the French communists had asked the Chinese communists, who were working in France, not to raise the slogan for the Chinese revolution, would the Chinese communists have agreed to the demand?

"No matter where they're working, the communists must fight under the slogan for the revolution in their own country, and through the struggle, they must help the revolution in the country where they are working and also contribute to the world revolution. It is a right to independence as well as a sacred duty for Korean communists to fight for the liberation of their country, a right which nobody can ever prevent

from being fulfilled or perform in place of the masters."

The polemic that started at the Dahuangwai meeting was resumed at the Yaoyinggou meeting, held in March the same year. Many of those attending supported our contention and admitted their mistakes. But the difference was not resolved completely at that meeting, either. We decided to present a number of key points of the argument to the Comintern. We sent Wei Zheng-min and Yun Pyong Do, a cadre of the East Manchuria Special District Committee of the Young Communist League, to Moscow to receive the Comintern answer to them.

The disorder in the Jiandao area was a nightmare, coming as a side effect of the "Minsaengdan" issue.

The Leftists' blind "purge" campaign had demolished nearly all the foundations for the revolution which the Korean communists had built up through their arduous struggle. Were all those who had been "purged" "Minsaengdan" members? No. There is a record in an enemy document stating there were only seven or eight "Minsaengdan" members. In order to ferret out those seven or eight, the "purge" campaign had massacred more than two thousand friends on the false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". This was a tragedy unprecedented in the history of the world communist movement. It was an abyss of stupidity, ignorance and tomfoolery.

All the strong, solid people, who had come to Jiandao with a noble aim from Korea and from many other parts of the world, fell victim to the "purge" in two to three years. There were a variety of talents among the unfortunate victims, to whom nothing seemed impossible. The icy wind of "purge" swept away laudable Sons and daughters of Korea, produced by our revolution against the Japanese.

If I say that the number of the people killed in the aftermath of the "Minsaengdan" hullabaloo exceeded the number of the people who fell on the battlefield, our posterity will not believe me. But it is the truth. The history of the war against the Japanese keeps records of innumerable battles, but it does not give data of 20 to 30 deaths in a single battle. By contrast, it was frequent in the guerrilla zones of east Manchuria that 20 to 30 revolutionaries were massacred in a single day on a false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". We could not even erect tombstones at their graves. What would be the use of moaning over and praying for the souls of the departed? They will curse the murderers even in their graves.

Was the "Minsaengdan" really in Jiandao where it had been dissolved? I do not even feel the need to answer this question.

There were no "Minsaengdan" members even among the people who, afraid of the "purge", had fled from the guerrilla zones.

Was Ju Jin a "Minsaengdan" member? No.

Was Park Kil a "Minsaengdan" member? No. He had worked in the Independence Army movement and then plunged into the sacred anti-Japanese war of national salvation. He had been to the Maritime

Province, where he had imbibed the communist ideology, and then arrived in Jiandao where the sacred war of national liberation was raging most fiercely, and engaged in underground political work and took part in the armed struggle. By the time we were organizing a small guerrilla unit, which went by the name of a secret guerrilla army, he had already won a high reputation as a political instructor; after the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was formally founded, he worked as the political commissar of the Yanji Battalion.

Park Kil had pioneered the revolution in the Yanji area. He was an able political worker and agitator, who knew how to move the hearts of the masses, as well as a prominent military commander.

His was a patriotic family that had produced five or six anti-Japanese revolutionary martyrs. His father, Park Jung Won (alias Tiger), was a loyal peasant who set a remarkable example of support to the revolutionary army. Originally, as a sharecropper, he had dedicated himself to the independence movement. He had raised a calf received for his hired labor, and when the calf grew up into a cow, he contributed it to the guerrilla army. He was a very enthusiastic supporter of the revolutionary army.

It was literally unreasonable to charge him with involvement in the "Minsaengdan" with such a family background. Nevertheless, the Leftists took issue with him about his service in the Independence Army in former days and about his sister, who had been forced to become a policeman's concubine and had run away from him. In the end, they murdered him.

Was Kim Myong Gyun a "Minsaengdan" member? No. He was one of the founders of the Wangqing guerrilla unit. He was the head of the military department of the county Party committee. Why would a man like him join the "Minsaengdan"? The Japanese record of his public trial stated that by the time he was imprisoned in the "Minsaengdan" prison he had shot Japanese on more than 20 occasions, had raided Japanese and Manchurian authorities over 20 times, and had captured weapons from the enemy on eight occasions.

If he were a "Minsaengdan" member, how could he have performed such exploits? How could he, after his escape from the guerrilla zone, teach children to inspire them with a national spirit? How could he have been shot to death by the enemy?

What about Lee Ung Gol? He was not a "Minsaengdan" member, either. I knew him well. He was the head of the organizational department of the district No. 1 Party committee. He was the first to come to Xiaobeigou with two war-horses to meet me in October 1932 when we first marched into Wangqing. He narrowly escaped from being executed on a charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". That day I gained an unforgettable impression from the hearty, courteous welcome accorded me, a young guerrilla commander, by this large man who had brought me two war-horses.

Lee Ung Gol was a revolutionary with an alert political responsiveness and a rich experience of struggle. He was the secretary of a Young Communist League organization in Helong County and served his terms of imprisonment at Longjing and Seoul; he also worked as political commissar of the special detachment

under the command of Lee Kwang. I used to give guidance to district Party work through Lee Ung Gol, and by generalizing this example I delved deep into Party work in the Wangqing area.

In the summer of 1933 Lee Ung Gol was arrested by the Leftists on a charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan"; then he fled from the guerrilla zone to the homeland, leaving a letter behind him which said, "The charge of my involvement in the 'Minsaengdan' is unfounded." He established the base of his activity in the Puryong area, formed a communist union by rallying young and middle-aged patriots in North and South Hamgyong Provinces, and organized the struggle against the Japanese, against their construction of military roads, against forced rice delivery, and forced labor drafting. In the course of this struggle, he was arrested by the Japanese police and was imprisoned at Seoul. He was sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment. The Japanese court knew who he was.

Should such a man have been executed as a "Minsaengdan" member?

The polemic at the Dahuangwai meeting was significant in that it removed the stigma of the "Minsaengdan" from people like Lee Ung Gol. The polemic at the meeting and the subsequent conclusion given by the Comintern absolved the executed people from disgrace. Their physical lives could not be revived, but their political integrity was rehabilitated.

Another significant point of the meeting was that it exposed the wicked and brutal Japanese imperialists' scheme and the political absurdness of those who had been deceived by their scheme, and also that, by so doing, it arrested the political coup by the Leftists, binding them hand and foot. Indeed, the Leftist deviation of the "purge" was a political violence and a coup against the lower echelons, a coup that was staged overtly by those in power in order to physically destroy their subordinates.

Our activities were widely known to the Koreans living in east Manchuria after the Dahuangwai meeting. In this written effort, I have given a tedious account of the "Minsaengdan" incident as I recollect it. However, this is not aimed at particularly accusing the authors of the tragic event to the whole world or at settling my account with the criminals.

These reminiscences are intended to give the younger generation a clear picture of the enemy's scheme and stratagem to divide and disrupt the revolutionary ranks from within, to show that they were made not only yesterday, but are still being made today, and will continue tomorrow, and that chauvinism and the political clumsiness of Leftist elements is still hovering like a spectre around us, and to give the younger generation a lesson about the establishment of Juche of the Korean revolution and about the national spirit of independence.

I keenly sensed in my heart, through the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle and the Dahuangwai meeting, the summary of the struggle, that independence is the lifeblood of the nation, and that in order to uphold and maintain this independence every member of the nation, pioneer elements in particular, must fight with self-sacrifice.

Just as independence is the primary quality of the man, so it is the primary source of vitality that guarantees the nation's survival. It can be said that independence is the basic factor that affects the lives of individuals as well as a nation, a large community. We describe the anti-Japanese revolution as a sacred war for winning back national sovereignty, because the first and foremost desire of the Korean people for decades had been to win back their sovereignty, which had held the highest place in the programme of the Korean communists. In short, it was the final aim of the national liberation struggle.

All the activities of the Korean communists, therefore, had to be subordinated to this goal. We had to regard the defense of independence as vital in our way of thinking and in practice. We became ferocious tigers and thunderbolts in all battles for independence.

No one will present us with independence, nor will it come about of its own accord with the lapse of time. We must win it by our own struggle. Only those who fight in an indefatigable, self-sacrificing spirit can win independence and maintain it for ever, because there are too many thieves on this earth who trample upon the sovereignty of other nations. There are also many people who regard their independence to be natural for them, but other people's efforts to live in independence get on their nerves, and they interfere with these efforts. Considering independence to be one's own monopoly is an expression of anachronistic, imperialistic and domination arrogance.

The fact that in the ranks of the struggle for a common goal there was a force trampling on independence was a historical whim going beyond common sense. The Korean revolution suffered severe pain and frustration because of this whim. In order to assume the offensive from the setback, we fought self-sacrificing like ferocious tigers against those who were trampling upon the Korean nation's and communists' right to independence. The Dahuangwai meeting was a great ideological battle which the Korean communists fought, under the banner of independence, in order to maintain the Juche line of the Korean revolution and to defend their right to independence.

If we had been frightened by the ruthless iron fists of the brutal Leftists or had even been slightly afraid of sacrifice, we would have been unable to save the revolution from being crushed under the caterpillars of the madly-rushing Leftist vehicle. It was the staunch, self-sacrificing spirit of the Korean communists who jump into fire and water in defense of justice, their communist principles and their immutable faith in the validity of their cause that saved the revolution from crisis.

Today when the imperialists are clamoring about the collapse of socialism and are enhancing the political war of nerves in an attempt to sidetrack our Republic from the Juche orbit, it is vital to our nation and our Republic that we continue to champion and uphold independence. The Korean communists will emerge victorious also in their confrontation with the imperialists, in defense of our own style of people-centered socialism and independence.

I felt to the marrow of my bones during the struggle against the "Minsaengdan" the destructive intrigues and underhand dealings both in everyday life and in the revolutionary struggle. I learned the serious lesson of how impossible it was to work together with factionalists for the revolution. Suffice it to say

that one should read the 500-year history of the Lee dynasty to fully understand the harm and reactionary nature of intrigues, underhand dealings and factional strife. A rattling of sabers between parents and children, between brothers to satisfy their greed for power, is the nature of reactionary people, and the bad habit of factionalists.

After liberation, our enemy used the Japanese imperialists' method of the "Minsaengdan" in an attempt to disrupt our ranks. They once sent forged letters to Paek Nam Un, Kang Yong Chang and Choe Ung Sok, cadres from south Korea who were loyal to the Party, to harm them surreptitiously. We were not fooled by the enemy because we had had the experience of combating the "Minsaengdan" in the guerrilla zones. Had it not been for this experience, we might have committed a Leftist error in dealing with the people who were involved in the "peace maintenance corps" and their associates. We dealt with their political destiny leniently in a way to promote the interests of the revolution.

Whenever I appoint a new Minister of Public Security, I warn him not to commit a Leftist error, to say nothing of a Rightist mistake, and not to forget the lesson of the "Minsaengdan" incident.

The Leftist tendency is a hotbed where political impostors and schemers can brew a new type of "Minsaengdan" hullabaloo. The owners of this hotbed talk about the Party, the revolution and loyalty in a voice that is ten times and even twenty times louder than that of other people. What difference is there between such ultra-revolutionary utterances and the behavior of the Leftists who played with the people's political integrity with such impunity in the guerrilla zones?

The Leftist deviation is a covert counterrevolution, whereas the Rightist deviation is an overt counterrevolution; the Leftist deviation is a poisonous mushroom as harmful as the Rightist deviation which is a malignant tumor. The Rightists and Leftists seem to be dreaming different dreams while living on the same giant tree of revolution, but, in effect, they are linked with the same vein. Bear in mind that an individual's Leftist mistake would harm a collective, but a government party's Leftist error would lose the people and bring the revolution to ruin. If we forget that, we shall be unable to preserve socialism.

This is the lesson we learned from the history of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle; it is an appeal to the communists of the whole world from the countries which have gone through the painful experience of enormous bloodshed caused by a Leftist error. To oppose and guard against the Leftist tendency, which poses under the mask of super-party words and acts, and to protect the people's political destiny from Leftist encroachment - this is the eternal principle which the communists of government parties must adhere to, without neglecting it even for a moment.

## 10.3. Revolutionaries Born of the Young Communist League

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Youth work is an important activity to which I have been devoting painstaking efforts throughout my life. My days in Jirin are an illustration of the fact that my revolutionary activities began with the youth and student movement. Before my imprisonment in the Jirin prison I worked among young people and students, and after my release, too, I continued to do so, but now in the form of underground work. In the summer of 1930 when I contacted workers of the Comintern liaison office for the first time, I was appointed chief secretary of the Young Communist League in the eastern region of Jirin Province and from then on I worked in the YCL.

Needless to say, youth work was part and parcel of my military and political activities while in Wangqing. To direct the work of the YCL in the guerrilla army was a natural part of my duty as the commander responsible for political affairs in the army. In addition, at the request of the leadership of the east Manchuria Party organization and the workers of the Wangqing County Party Committee, I devoted much time to YCL work outside the army. In those days the Party, the Young Communist League and the Children's Corps were called the Alliance of Three Generations. In this alliance the YCL occupied an important place next to the Party. People called the YCL the relief of the Party, the reserve of the Party or the reservoir of the Party; and in order to emphasize the importance of its mission and role, they named it the second Party.

The Party meetings discussing strategic and tactical questions that were important in the development of the revolution and the measures to implement them were always attended by the- YCL secretaries together with the Party members. The east Manchuria Party organization called a meeting like this a joint Party-League meeting. At the joint meetings the YCL secretaries and the Party members had equal rights to speak and to vote. In places where there were no Party members or the Party" was weak, the YCL activists had the major role of guiding the mass movement.

On my arrival in Jiandao from my expeditions in north and south Manchuria, I became fully acquainted with the real state of YCL work in east Manchuria through JO Tong Uk, YCL secretary of the special detachment under the command of Lee Kwang, Han Jae Chun, Wangqing county YCL secretary, Kim Jung Gwon, head of the organizational department of the YCL in Wangqing County, and others.

In those days serious Leftist and Rightist deviations were being exposed in YCL work in east Manchuria, deviations which hindered the building of the YCL organizations and the revolutionary development.

The greatest difficulty in YCL work in the Wangqing area was the shortage of capable leaders. YCL cadres were badly needed for skillfully organizing and dealing with work to meet the requirements of the situation in those days when the Korean revolution as a whole was rapidly advancing in an upward spiral,



centering on the armed struggle. Most of the Young Communist Leaguers were illiterate or could scarcely read and write the Korean alphabet, and only a few attained the intellectual level of middle-school leavers.

The factionalists confined the youth movement to the narrow guerrilla zones and conducted youth work mostly among the young workers and peasants, claiming that only a few special well-informed people of good family background could do the YCL work. This tendency resulted in neglecting to recruit new members for the YCL. Under the pretext of ensuring the purity of the composition and secret of the YCL organizations, the factionalists closed the doors of these organizations and indiscriminately rejected the applicants for various reasons. They refused to admit students on the pretext that they were too young and that their family backgrounds were undesirable; they also rejected simple young workers and peasants on the grounds that they were ignorant.

The applicants were required to master at least The Fundamentals of Socialism and read and interpret The Communist Manifesto, Wage Labor and Capital and some other classics. If some applicants were found not to have read The Communist Manifesto during the deliberation of their admission, the examiners used to find fault with them saying, "How could you lead YCL life without a knowledge of The Communist Manifesto.

A young applicant in Dawangqing was rejected because his cow had been confiscated by the Soviet government. He was told that if his draught animal was confiscated, then his family must belong to the propertied class, and therefore, he, whose property had been confiscated by the Soviets, was not qualified for YCL membership.

The Leftists who shut the YCL's door to applicants were reluctant to admit even the young people who had loyally worked in the Peasants' Association, the Anti-Imperialist Union, the Revolutionary Mutual Aid Society and the Children's Vanguard. In the district where the Leftists barred the way for recruiting new members, a mass organization with a hundred members contained only three to four YCL members. There were many similar instances. The recruiting of new YCL members in the Wangqing area was strictly restricted, probably because the headquarters of the east Manchuria Party organization was located in that area.

No matter how loyal they had been in the organizational life in other counties, the young people who came to Wangqing from other areas were not permitted to join the YCL unless they had certificates of transfer or references from the organizations they had belonged to.

Jon Mun Jin was engaged in underground revolutionary activities in the Dongning county town and arrived in Wangqing, having escaped from wholesale arrest by the warlord authorities. However, she was not registered as a YCL member because she did not have a certificate of transfer, although she was a loyal worker in the sewing unit of the guerrilla army.

One day I went to the sewing unit to express my thanks to them for my uniform, and found her

despondent for some reason. I went there on several occasions in subsequent months, but she was just as depressed as before. I talked to her. She was a timid woman, but she spoke frankly about her troubles. Although she had joined the guerrilla army as she had wished to do in the new place, she had not been admitted to the Young Communist League. That was why she was in as low spirits as a solitary wild goose. Having learned why she was troubled, I discussed it with the workers concerned and saw to it that she resumed her life in the YCL.

Some YCL organizations allowed heterogeneous, faithless, chance and unsteady elements to find their way into their ranks with the help of their fellow townsmen, schoolmates, relations, friends, acquaintances and through other unprincipled channels. Other YCL workers, who regarded family backgrounds as absolute, accepted even spies, who had wormed their way into the guerrilla zone, fooled by their statements of having been servants for landowners. Some YCL members, who lacked revolutionary training, defected to the enemy area in these circumstances, unable to endure the hardships.

The deviations disclosed in the work of the Young Communist League gave rise to distrust in communism among a considerable number of young people and resulted in their not taking any part in the revolutionary movement led by the communists. As a consequence, these deviations badly affected the work of the YCL in the guerrilla army and the united front movement that rallied young people, students and patriotic people from all walks of life under the banner of the anti-Japanese struggle.

These Leftist and Rightist deviations in YCL work in the guerrilla zones were due to the fact that the leaders of the YCL did not have a proper organizational line suited to the real state and interests of the Korean revolution, and either dogmatically applied the propositions of the classics or copied foreign experience.

In March 1933 when the leaders of the guerrilla zones were intent on finding ways and means to correct the mistakes in YCL work and to renovate youth work, a meeting of YCL workers was held at Macun, Xiaowangqing. The meeting was attended by approximately 30 people involved in youth work, including YCL committee members and heads of children's departments in the Wangqing area, delegates of young people from Yanji, and student delegates (underground workers) from Longjing. Comrades there whose names I still remember were Kim Jung Gwon, Park Hyon Suk, Jo Tong Uk, Park Kil Song, Lee Song Ii, Kim Porn Su, and Choe Pong Song.

Whenever I look back on the meeting I, for some reason, vividly remember Park Kil Song's unusually sparkling eyes which were fixed on me all through the meeting. I probably recollect his eyes especially because he lost one eye later in an encounter with a Kwangtung Army unit. He laid down his life as a remarkable guerrilla commander in north Manchuria at the young age of 26. But in 1933 he attended the meeting merely as an exemplary YCL member, with no special office in the YCL.

On the closing day of the meeting, the county YCL workers and the delegates requested me to speak. They seemed to have discussed the fact that Kim Il Sung had done a great deal of YCL work in Jirin, and in the capacity of chief secretary of the Young Communist League in the eastern region of Jirin Province

had worked among many young people in Jiandao, he, therefore, must have valuable experience to offer, so that they wanted to hear my opinion. In compliance with their request I made a long speech about the tasks facing the YCL organizations. The major part of my speech was recollected in detail by Jo Tong Uk a few decades ago.

Historically, philosophers, statesmen, and educationists in the East and the West had expressed valuable opinions about the place and mission of the younger generation in the struggle for social changes and transformation. Classic Marxists unanimously regarded young people as a bridge way to the revolution or as the reserve force of the revolution. Even Aristotle, that ancient philosopher, said that the future of a country depended on how its younger generation was brought up and educated. Both materialist and idealist philosophers and both Eastern and Western scholars had expressed much the same views about the importance of the younger generation, who would shoulder the destiny of the future.

My opinion did not differ from theirs in appreciating the younger generation as the pillar of the future. But I did not rest content with limiting the young people's position to a bridge way to the revolution or to a reserve force of the revolution. I did not agree with the authors of the classics and theoreticians in the previous age defining the younger generation as an auxiliary stratum in the revolution, relying upon the older generation and receiving the latter's guidance and education. Considering the process and events of the Korean revolution, I did not think the view of the young people being no more than an auxiliary force a correct one.

I have always regarded the young people as the vanguard of the revolution. They were the vanguard, the main force, the backbone force which took the brunt of the revolutionary struggle and the social movement and shouldered the destiny of the future. This was fully verified in reality. Even today, in my eighties, I do not change this view about the position and role of young people as the vanguard of the revolution. Had we not pioneered the revolutionary movement independently, relying on the older generation and spending time doing just what they told us to do and following them passively, it would have been impossible for us to break with the trend of outmoded way of thinking in the darkest period of Japanese imperialist colonial rule, to blaze the trail for the Korean revolution, in the van of the nation united under the banner of the Juche idea, to found the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, and develop the anti-Japanese revolution on all fronts, centering on the armed struggle, in order to meet the requirements of the new age.

The history of the national liberation struggle in our country clearly shows that young people were always in the forefront of the struggle. They fought courageously, fearing neither prisons, death nor the gallows. The young people of Korea were in the van of the March First Popular Uprising (1919?Tr.) risking their lives, and shouted patriotic slogans as the main force of the June Tenth Independence Movement (1926?Tr.) that swept the streets of Seoul. The young people and students were also the motive force of the student incident in Kwangju in November 1929:

though not directed by anybody, they rose in revolt, closed ranks and swept through the streets to the open square of struggle like angry waves at the point of a bayonet. The young communists of the new

generation had emerged as the motive force of the national liberation struggle from the middle of the 1920s and marked a new chapter in the history of the anti-Japanese revolution.

The fact that my youth had begun with Young Communist League activities was written in detail in the previous volumes. The whole period of the revolutionary struggle against the Japanese coincided with my youth. At that age I commanded regiments, divisions and corps. At one time some of our people had imagined me to be a gray-haired general.

But I was scarcely 34 years of age when I made a speech at the Pyongyang Public Stadium on my triumphal return home.

Guerrilla warfare was not like wars of old where generals of the opposing forces had single combats on horseback, wielding spears, while their men beat drums in encampments fortified with palisades, or in which soldiers shot arrows from high walls, nor was it like a modern war in which sophisticated weapons are employed and commands are given by telephone or radio. Generals in their fifties and even in their seventies can give commands in such battles. In guerrilla war, by contrast, both men and their commanders must fight in the biting cold and icy snow.

Commanders, too, had to shoot machine-guns at times and charge into a bayonet attack when the situation demanded it. A man without the physical health and strength, possessing a sound mental power could not withstand a burden like that.

Most of the fighters were in their twenties who fought in the anti-Japanese revolution. Yang Jing-yu became the commander of the 1st Route Corps of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army at the age of 32, and Chen Han-zhang commanded the 3rd Directional Corps from the age of 27. Oh Jung Hup died at the flowery age of 29 while discharging his strenuous duty of a regimental commander.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the anti-Japanese armed struggle was conducted by the young people on their full responsibility. How can we regard the younger generation in this context as a mere bridge way to the revolution or as a reserve force of the revolution?

This standpoint of mine was reflected in my speech and talks that day:

“Young people are the backbone of the main force that propels our revolution. The history of any country in the world shows that young people were always in the forefront of the struggle for social transformation. They have the strength to level mountains and to wall off the sea. It is precisely work with the youth that will awaken them to political consciousness, organize and encourage them to stand in the front line of the revolution.

“How deplorable it is, however, that the Young Communist League is shutting out the masses of the young people! Some YCL organizations are not recruiting fine young people on the pretext that they are too young. That's a typical example of closed-doorism, so to speak.

Is Ryu Kwan Sun remembered as a heroine, a product of the March First Movement, in the history of our nation because she was old at the time?

“General Nam I said, ‘Should a man at twenty fail to subdue the land, who will in later years call him a man of caliber?’

“If we reject or ignore young enthusiasts in their teens, on the excuse of their being too young, the Young Communist League will become a middle-aged people's organization, not that of young people. If the YCL admits sages and wise men, who have had ten or twenty years of training, how can it then be an organization of young people?”

The next subject that interested the delegates was on the method and style of work. I spoke lengthily on this subject, also:

“The YCL workers must acquire a proper method and style of work in order to organize broad sections of young people. Supposing a YCL member failed to kill an enemy soldier though shooting five rounds of ammunition. The guerrilla army has a motto that a single shot must kill an enemy. Therefore, if all five shots missed the target, something was obviously wrong.

“If the YCL member who made that mistake was criticized and disciplinary measures were taken against him by his organization, are such dealings to be considered appropriate? You, comrades, must not deal with such a matter in any old way. You must first study the nature of the mistake from various angles, from the sides and from behind, whether the weapon worked properly or not, whether the front and rear sights were at a good level, whether the rifleman had the butt against his shoulder securely and pulled the trigger softly, whether he breathed properly while pulling the trigger or not. You must closely examine everything. And you must also find out whether he has any physiological weakness or not, whether he is short-sighted or far-sighted, or astigmatic, and whether he is a coward or not.

“Such a case should be discussed after studying it from various angles, instead of being attributed to an unsound ideology and subjected to an ideological struggle without discrimination.

“Criticism must always be made to save comrades. Shortcomings must not be connived at, but be criticized in a scientific manner, so that the criticism would be acceptable to the man concerned. Criticism must not be made in a way to expose his mistakes, to abuse or insult him.”

I talked about all the aspects of YCL work at the meeting that day, ranging from the matter of strengthening the YCL's organizational and ideological basis, improving propaganda, agitation, and education, about criticizing oneself and each other honestly, training the Children's Corps into the reserve of the YCL, and up to the work of assimilating the good points of the young patriots' struggle in the previous age.

In the subsequent days, too, I took every opportunity to emphasize that YCL workers must become the standard-bearers in work, mixing with the masses at all times, and that they must behave like their own mothers in dealing with them.

After the meeting, an innovation occurred in the work attitude of the YCL officials. The YCL organizations broke the outmoded pattern of bureaucracy, closed-doorism and formalism, became vivacious, living organizations mixing closely with the young masses.

One day I went to the county YCL committee to see Kim Jung Gwon. But the county committee was empty except for a messenger. I asked him where everyone else was, and he answered that they had all gone to visit district and branch organizations. I was unable to hide my satisfaction on learning this.

Previously, the officials of the county YCL committee had worked in a leisurely manner, cooped up in the office, summoning district and branch secretaries to them, giving assignments or receiving reports of the fulfillment of their assignments from them, instead of going to visit the YCL members. The county YCL committee had been so ignorant of situations at its subordinate organizations that it would have believed it if anybody had told them that a stallion had given birth to a foal. And yet, it had been in the habit of holding meetings for an ideological struggle and shouting hurrah as if everything had been settled. The YCL organizations had considered meetings and criticisms to be solutions to all problems.

But this conventional method of work began to disappear from the attitude of the YCL officials. YCL workers now started to visit branch organizations in the guerrilla army and local areas and to help them in their work in a responsible manner. The people who had been spending time on empty talk and paper work in the office of the county YCL committee were now going out to their subordinate organizations, were mixing in with YCL members, attending meetings of groups and branch organizations and helping their secretaries in drafting work plans. Cadres of the YCL gathered in the office of the county YCL committee only on the day designated for a meeting.

Many able workers emerged from the ranks of YCL activists capable of skillfully dealing with every situation and condition as well as many seasoned leaders who gained a good method and style of work.

Kim Pom Su, head of the YCL's organizational department of district No. 8 of Yanji County, was a man who had participated in the meeting at Mingyuegou; his parents, however, did not even know that their son was an able YCL worker who was loved by the young people.

When Kim Pom Su was a primary schoolboy, his mother was so proud of her only son that she used to carry him to school on her back. He grew up, thus basking in his parents' love, and when he reached adolescence he was already married, much earlier than usual.

Even after his marriage, his parents controlled his outings strictly in order to keep their son from participating in the social movement.

Nevertheless, Kim Pom Su made the back-room of his house a meeting hall and secretly made a dog hole in his fence, a hole large enough for a man to pass through, and then would summon young people to the meeting hall. His parents were glad that their son, staying away from outings, was making a “good” husband of himself. Their son, however, was inviting young people to the back-room to do YCL work every night, with no time to even glance at his wife. He trained dozens of YCL activists in this back-room.

The secretary of the county YCL committee worked mainly with the young people of the YCL organizations in the guerrilla army, and the heads of organizational and propaganda departments directed the youth movement through contact with the YCL organizations in the guerrilla zones and in the enemy area. When necessary, the secretary of the county YCL committee joined the guerrillas in battle, guiding the masses.

One day during Operation Macun, a company branch of the YCL, which was manned on a hill in front of Macun, held an extraordinary meeting, attended by the secretary of the county YCL committee. Anticipating a decisive battle, each of the YCL members made an oath, speaking vehemently:

“Let the hearts of the Young Communist Leaguers defend the land which has been won at the cost of our blood!”

The YCL members opened a barrage of fire and destroyed the attacking enemy and revenged him. The enemy suffered hundreds of casualties in that battle alone.

When attacking the Dongning county town and Luozigou, in cooperation with the national salvation army, the secretary was in the forefront of the guerrilla formation.

In the months subsequent to the YCL workers’ meeting, I frequently met YCL officials, discussing matters relating to YCL activity. In connection with YCL work in those days I stressed above all the need to strengthen education in patriotism, revolutionary and class education, anti-imperialist and communist education and also education in optimism among the young men and women, to intensify military training, to establish a correct outlook on the masses among the YCL officials and members and for them to attain a communist method and style of work.

We directed the YCL organizations to pay preferential attention to political, military and economic questions on hand and to exert all their efforts to finding solutions to those problems. The Young Communist League was not an academic or enlightenment organization, nor was it a club. It was an organization to educate and to unite the masses of young people for the victory of the revolution. Therefore, all its activities were always subordinated to the political, military and economic practice at the time. That was the way to make each of the YCL organizations a living, working organization and a source of strong motive power.

In those days the people, including the youth, in the guerrilla zones were neglecting economic problems,

namely, the problems of food, clothing and housing. The food needed by the people in the guerrilla zones was met mostly with provisions captured from the enemy. The arid land in the guerrilla zones could not yield enough food for the people for the year. Whenever they ran out of food, the people turned to the army. In this way the tendency to depend on the guerrilla army developed among many officials and inhabitants of the guerrilla zones. Some people even neglected preparations for farming in the hope that, when their food ran out, the army would naturally attack the enemy and capture provisions for them.

In the spring of 1934 I celebrated May Day with comrades of the 3rd Company at Dahuangwai. In addition to giving guidance to the company, I asked about the farming preparations and found them deplorable. Even though it was the ploughing season, the people in that place were idling the time away leisurely, without making any preparations for spring sowing.

What were they going to do then? I was not alone in my surprise. The secretary of the county YCL committee, who was there, did not hide his dissatisfaction either, saying, "How is it these people are so lazy?"

A few days later, we held an enlarged meeting of the county YCL committee at a secret meeting place in Yaoyinggou and discussed the young people's task in spring sowing. Just as harvesting teams were formed to ensure the reaping of crops in the no-man's land in the autumn of 1932, young people's production shock brigades were organized throughout Jiandao.

They launched a campaign for spring sowing in the guerrilla zones. These shock brigades comprised YCL activists and all other hard-core young men and women in the guerrilla zones.

They took upon themselves not only the ploughing, but also obtaining the seeds and putting the farm implements into order. Broken-down tools were repaired at smithies through the joint efforts of the young people. In places where there was a shortage of work cattle, the fields were ploughed with picks and shovels and sowing was done properly. In the spring of 1934 the sowing was finished successfully.

Thanks to the efforts of the shock brigades, the Young Communist League in the guerrilla zones was held in high prestige, and the social position of the young people rose immensely. The Party organizations supported whatever the YCL wanted to do and planned, and encouraged its officials to boldly push ahead with youth work. The people's revolutionary government, the peasants' association, the women's association and other mass organizations also backed YCL work in every possible way.

The anniversary functions of the September Youth Day in 1934 could well illustrate the importance the people in the guerrilla zones attached to YCL work. The September Youth Day is the International Young Proletarians' Day.

The world's young proletarians had marked their day for the first time in 1915. Since then they have observed the day every year. The anniversary functions were held in China also and in our country.



The Wangqing people prepared for the celebration of the September Youth Day of 1934 on a large scale. Anticipating the function, we sent operatives to the enemy area and invited groups of visitors from different villages on the one hand, and, on the other, we obtained rice, flour, meat and other supplies needed to treat the visitors on the anniversary day. Some supply officers even brought tea with them. The guerrilla army attacked the enemy, capturing the essential products needed for the festival.

An arch decorated with pine needles was set up in the square of Yaoyinggou, and an array of pictures describing the battle results of the guerrilla army were on display around the square. Propaganda slogans were also put up in the spaces between the pictures. There was an excellent painter in the 5th Company in those days. He had come from the Soviet Union and was also surprisingly good at calligraphy. He even drew a sketch-map showing the achievements of the people's revolutionary army and exhibited it on the outskirts of the square. The pictures he had drawn were so vivid that they seemed to be alive and moving.

We emptied the government building to arrange lodgings for the guests and also set up posters to show to the visitors.

Prior to the September Youth Day, Jiguanlazi, Yingbilazi, Tianqiaoling, Zhuanjiaolou and other villages in the guerrilla zones and in their vicinities had selected delegates and sent them to Yaoyinggou. Because the enemy had set up concentration villages and strictly controlled people passing through the wall gates, the delegates from the enemy area were unable to arrive in groups; they came singly, in work clothes with sickles in their hands or baskets on top of their heads, as if they had been coming to do field work.

On the day of the function the young men and women and other people in the guerrilla zone, dressed up in new silk and serge suits made from trophies captured at Beisanchakou, gathered in the square. The county YCL officials, too, came to the square in new suits and supervised the start of the celebrations. The sturdy appearances of the guerrillas marching into the square in new uniforms won the admiration of the delegates from the enemy area.

The opening of the gathering was marked by the sound of a Yongil bomb. The visitors became wide-eyed at the sight of the fluttering of dozens of red flags in the square, shouting of slogans, hand clapping and beating of drums, sounds which reverberated up into the sky over the square.

A report was made about September Youth Day, which was followed by militant speeches by delegates of different sections praising the achievements of the Young Communist League and calling on the people to fight against the Japanese. In those days speeches of this type were termed expressions of feelings. At the end of the function, a grand welcoming party was given in honor of the visitors from the enemy area. At the request of the officials of the county Party committee and the county YCL committee, I made a speech during the welcoming gathering, appealing to them to give active support to political and military activities of the people's revolutionary army. A delegate from the enemy area asked that he be allowed to speak in reply to my speech; however, his strong emotions prevented him from uttering a single word; he only bowed to all sides of the audience.

Hearing my speech, the delegates to the anniversary function from the enemy area volunteered to join the guerrilla army. We had to dissuade many as they all volunteered. Taking into consideration their family and work, we accepted only some to the revolutionary army.

The programme staged by the 5th Company was the most spectacular of the welcome performance of that day. A Russian dance, performed by a guerrilla who had been an underground worker in Laoheishan before joining the army and had learnt it when he had been in the Maritime Province, was really splendid.

When the visitors were leaving the guerrilla zone, we gave them the share of the trophies which we had kept for the people from the enemy area.

I have gone into great details here about the September Youth Day function of 1934 because it was the largest and most impressive of the young people's festivals in the guerrilla zones.

In those days we considered international anniversaries very important and attached great significance to the Comintern, the Communist Youth International, the International Labor Union, the International Peasant Union and other international organizations. Just as the Comintern was the international center of the Communist Parties throughout the world, the KIM was the international center of the Young Communist Leagues of all countries. KIM is the Russian abbreviation of the Communist Youth International. The organization which we were in touch with while working in Harbin was an organization under the KIM, and the organization which recommended us to study in Moscow was a KIM organization which was functioning as the youth department of the Comintern.

The practical struggle to implement the programme of the Young Communist League produced a large number of excellent young revolutionaries who adorned a record of the history of the national liberation struggle. The young man nicknamed “13 bullets”, “Steel Spade” (Kim Pong Uk), Park Kil Song, Hwang Jong Hae, Kim Thaek Man, Kim Chung Jin, Ju Chun Il, Lee Sin Sun, Kim Pom Su, Lee Tong Hwa, Lee Sun Hui, Park Ho Jun and other innumerable anti-Japanese heroes and heroines were trained and educated through life in YCL organizations. Among these renowned heroes and heroines were guerrilla commanders, underground workers and educationists.

The meeting of the Young Communist League held in the secret hall at Yaoyinggou also discussed the matter of extending and intensifying activities in the enemy area, along with other items on the agenda.

There were few hard-core politically and practically qualified YCL leaders in the enemy area. Because of the erroneous policy of the Leftist elements, holding leading positions in Party and YCL organizations at different levels, the YCL's activities in the enemy-ruled area were neglected. Taking the state of affairs into full consideration, the YCL meeting raised the militant slogan, “Let Us Build a Battery in the Enemy's Heart!” This was similar to the slogan, “Let Us Build a Revolutionary Battery among the Enemy Soldiers!” The slogan, “Let Us Build a Battery in the Enemy's Heart!” meant strengthening our organizations in the very heart of the enemy.

According to the decision of the meeting, a large number of YCL cadres undertook the difficult task of working in the enemy area and began to infiltrate into a vast area, including east Manchuria and Korea. Park Kil Song, who was at the head of the children's department of the East Manchuria Special District Committee, was sent to Luozigou. Along with competent YCL activists, he enlarged organizations and trained young people through practical struggle. The line of his operatives stretched deep into the Luozigou Distillery, one of the largest of its kind in Jiandao, employing a great number of seasonal child laborers.



*Photo: Choe Gwang - became the Defense Minister after Kim Il Sung's death.*

Choe Kwang, the head of the Luozigou children's department, also went to work in the distillery by instruction of the YCL organization.

The distillery owned by a Yu annually employed only child labor between February and May, and between September and October, because child labor was cheap and children worked longer hours. The owner paid a child 30 fen a day, less than half the pay for an adult laborer. Worse still, he paid them not in cash, but in liquor. Thirty fen could only buy a bottle of liquor. And to earn a bottle of this liquor the children had to toil from early morning till late at night. After work they had to peddle the streets all night to sell the liquor they had received as their wages.

Under the guidance of the YCL organization, Choe Kwang stirred up the child laborers to the struggle for higher wages. Mustering a dozen colleagues whom he had admitted into the Children's Corps organization after being employed in the distillery, he agitated them to go on strike. Posting guards at each entrance of the barrack-type dining-hall, he himself made speeches. He found it hard to rouse the children, who were not accustomed to organized life, to strike. He patiently persuaded them, repeating, "A bottle of liquor isn't adequate to provide you with enough to live. Let's unite and get paid as much as we have worked. If we join our efforts we can bring the owner of the distillery to his knees!"

In response to his call, the children refused to go to work for three days. Even the children who were going to work, afraid of losing their jobs, were persuaded to resolutely join the ranks of the strikers. Through two strikes, they defeated their employer and raised their daily wages from 30 fen to 40 fen.

Park Ho Jun, a member of the Luozigou YCL committee, was very successful in his work in the enemy area, thanks to his great organizational ability and skilful work among the masses. He was the man behind the scenes who guided the work of rallying the child laborers of the distillery behind the anti-Japanese organization and led the strike to victory. But he was arrested in the course of his work.

The enemy rejoiced immensely over his arrest, just as if they had found all the secret organizations in the Luozigou area. But they were mistaken. They did not succeed in bringing Park Ho Jun to his knees.

In an attempt to placate him although half dead, the enemy said, “You’re still young and have the world before you. You're too young to die. Have you no pity for your mother living alone with all her hopes pinned on you? If you tell us about the YCL organization and the names of its cadres, you'll receive a big premium and live in luxury. How about abandoning your fantastic dream about an impossible revolution, and finding the way to survival?” With a bitter grin, Park Ho Jun replied:

“I’ll tell you about the YCL organization and the names of its cadres. Write them down. The name of the cadre who directs me is ‘Communist’ and his surname is ‘Party’.”

Seeing the surprise on the enemy's face writing down the name “Communist Party”, Park Ho Jun rose, leaning his hand against the wall, and mocked at the enemy, “What’s the use of jotting down the name of the great cadre who has trained me into your notebook? Now the Communist Party will take revenge on the enemy for me.”

That is how Park Ho Jun chose death. Just imagine the indomitable image of this Young Communist Leaguer who was striding, with the skirts of his coat flying open, towards the execution site. He looked so imposing that even the enemy soldiers were struck with terror, whispering, “Communists are really great men.”

One man, a heavy smoker, slipped some cigarettes into his hand as he was striding to his execution. Girls threw bunches of flowers in his path.

Thus the first generation of the Young Communist League, who had been trained through the anti-Japanese revolution, fought loyally, and knew how to die honorably.

The YCL members who had been trained in its ranks subordinated all their interests to the interests of their organization and the revolution.

YCL member Lim Chun Ik was this type of fighter, too.

He was the secretary of the Nanxian special branch of the YCL, district No. 8, Yanji County. He was an able political worker who had already formed an underground YCL organization. While guiding the organization he was arrested.

He was also brutally tortured often, but he kept the secret of the organization intact to the end.

Lim Chun Ik stated that the secret operations conducted by other comrades were all his doing. Thanks to his statement, the other comrades who had been arrested were all released. He died heroically at the fine age of eighteen.

It is said that even the enemy bowed their heads before the noble character of the eighteen-year-old YCL member who stood alone on the execution site, after having saved his organization and his comrades by

displaying such a beautiful, noble spirit of self-sacrifice.

YCL member Lee Sun Hui was also an indomitable fighter born of the anti-Japanese revolution. I think I met her for the first time in the winter of early 1934. I met her while visiting the Children's Corps school to see the children who had lost their parents in the enemy's "punitive" atrocities. This was shortly after she had come to Wangqing County as the head of the county children's department, having been transferred there from the office of the head of the Yanji county children's department.

As I stood in the playground of the Children's Corps school surrounded by the children, Lee Sun Hui hurried over to me, greeting me. Her large, bright eyes sparkled, she was full of youthful vigor and reminded you of a forget-me-not growing by a riverside.

A dreary, cold wind was blowing there. Among the children clinging joyfully to me were many who were dressed in thin unlined clothes or wearing short tattered skirts and straw sandals on their bare feet. Some had burns on their faces, they probably had escaped from the fire at the time of the enemy's "punitive" action. Most of the Children's Corps members, who had been orphaned in the enemy area before they came to the guerrilla zone, were in rags.

Caressing the hand of a child who had a burn on it, I scrutinized each of the Children's Corps members.

The sparkling, dark eyes of the children seemed to eagerly expect something from me. The feeling of pain I felt at that time shocked me. I vowed in my mind to destroy all the Japanese who had made them orphans.

I calmed down and, from the bottom of my heart, said, "You are the flower-buds of our country and the pillars of its future. When you're cheerful, we're also cheerful. When you grow up well, we feel strong... Grow up quickly and sturdily and become fine pillars of the country."

"Yes, we will," the children chorused vigorously and murmured something joyfully. But tears were trickling down like raindrops from the eyes of the head of the children's department, Sun Hui.

"Forgive me, General," she said, "the YCL organization appointed me the head of the children's department, but the children are in such rags..."

She was embarrassed to see me, just as if she herself were guilty of that. Her face, wet with tears, revealed the remorse she felt.

How could she be held responsible for the ragged children? She had had to work through nights, mending their worn-out clothes and shoes and making notebooks for them.

Her revolutionary, self-critical attitude towards all the shortcomings and mishaps that occurred in the range of her work made a strong impression on me from our first encounter. A few days after, I attacked

the enemy for the sake of the Children's Corps members. All the goods we captured were sent to the Children's Corps school to provide the children with cotton quilts, new clothes and shoes and notebooks.

I still remember Lee Sun Hui shedding grateful tears and burying her face in the children's new clothes that had cost the blood of guerrillas.

Out of gratitude for the gifts, she arranged a performance of the children's art group she had set up and came to see us.

“General, the children have brought an art group to express their humble thanks to you for the cotton quilts and the new clothes you've sent them.”

Her words touched me to the heart.

That day I assembled all the soldiers and the people of the guerrilla base to enjoy the children's performance and had a very pleasant time with them.

A narrative was one of the numbers on the programme; it moved our hearts deeply. A little girl in a new dress, with a red scarf around her neck, appeared on the stage and began her narrative:

“My father and mother were killed by the Japanese, but I am growing up sturdily, wearing new clothes and a red scarf. The new clothes I am wearing have cost the blood of our sisters and brothers in the guerrilla army.” And then, she opened her little hand which had a bum on it.

She went on: “Caressing this hand wounded in the Japanese ‘punitive’ atrocities, the General said that when we were cheerful he was also cheerful, and that when we grew up well he, too, felt strong.

“Brothers and sisters of the guerrilla army, we are growing well cheerfully. Please be happy with us and be strong. True to the General's words, I will grow up quickly and sturdily and take up arms to fight the Japanese just as you, brothers and sisters of the Young Communist League, do.

The entire audience were in tears, listening to her.

We found implications of Lee Sun Hui's unremitting efforts on the stage devoted to the children just as one could see large drops of a diligent farmer's sweat in the well-ripe ears of his crops.

One day Lee Sun Hui came to see me and unexpectedly asked me to send her to work in the enemy area.

I was surprised at her request, for she had been working with such warmth for the Children's Corps, sensing life's greatest worth in this task.

Afterwards, she suggested it again to her YCL organization. Finally she was sent to Luozigou with Park Ku Song.

The numerous ranges of blue mountains surrounding the Luozigou area on three sides and the fertile land were marked with traces of bloody battles against the Japanese invaders and with the revolutionary spirit of the courageous YCL members who had worked behind enemy lines.

I do not wish to go into details here about her work in the enemy-ruled area. The point of emphasis here is the source of the moral power that enabled her unhesitatingly to risk her life at such a young age.

At that time she was working from her base at a grass hut not far from Luozigou. She spent the spring, and then the summer and now greeted the autumn in that grass hut which could hardly keep off the cold wind and rain. In the meantime, the YCL organization was extended, and the Children's Corps organization grew up in Luozigou. A strong revolutionary battery was built in the enemy's citadel.

In order to build this battery she had walked day and night in disguise along dangerous lanes in the enemy-held area, braving the bayonets of the army and the police and the surveillance of the secret agents, who incessantly spied on her.

But she was finally arrested, tracked down by a wicked enemy agent named Lee Pong Mun. In order to ferret out the underground organization in Luozigou, the enemy locked her up in a dismal jail and tortured her brutally. The fate of the underground organization depended on her. If she had disclosed the secret, the organizational network in the Luozigou area would have been discovered and the revolutionary battery which had cost her so much effort would have crumbled overnight.

The enemy tried to coax Lee Sun Hui with false promises and sugary words. But they could not squeeze any secret out of her except the fact that she was a member of the Young Communist League. Probably she felt the meaning of belonging to the YCL more strongly while in prison.

The Luozigou provost-marshal directing her torture grew angry and ordered her to be shot. But an incident occurred on the eve of her execution.

After giving his order to shoot her, the provost-marshal went to see her in the company of his men in an attempt to coax her for the last time.

Sun Hui was mending her clothes just then. Although her clothes were stained with sweat and streaked with blood and torn to shreds, she probably wanted to appear neat at her execution.

Lee Pong Mun, the running dog of the provost-marshal, came close up to her and said that this was her last opportunity to save herself, that, out of pity for her flowery youth, he advised her to tell at least the name of one member of the underground organization in Luozigou in order to save herself. The girl remained silent. She simply combed her blood-clotted hair with her fingers, and then slipped her hand

inside the breast of her torn jacket and produced a gray pouch.

Lee Pong Mun turned pale at this and leapt out of the jail. The other butchers followed him, screaming. Lee Pong Mun took the pouch for some explosive, like a grenade. It was not an explosive, however. It was a pouch that contained some soil. The pretty pouch had been bequeathed to her by her father when he fell in battle in the guerrilla base.

“Don’t be frightened,” she told them. “This is a pouch that contains the soil of my country. Are your dirty lives so precious that you run away to save them?”

Some people compared the personalities of the YCL member Lee Sun Hui who, cherishing the soil of the country in her bosom, was picturing the day of national liberation, and the turncoat Lee Pong Mun to the Ponghwang (a beautiful legendary bird.) and to a crow. I think the comparison was not an unreasonable one. Could the traitor Lee Pong Mun ever appreciate the value of that pouch of soil?

The next day when she was shot, Lee Sun Hui shouted, “Long live the revolution!” Here is the Song of the Young Communist League she sang during the last moments of her life:

March on towards dawn and morning, Our Comrades-in-arms! We'll use bayonets and bullets To clear the way! Brace up and be courageous Under the banner of youth! We are the young guards Of workers and peasants.

Lee Sun Hui and I had once sung this song, playing the organ at the Children's Corps school. The song was sung widely not only by Young Communist League members but also by members of the Communist Party, the Children's Corps and Women’s Association, because it expressed the unanimous desire of the working masses for a new society, their ardent love for the future, and the young people's unshakable will to hasten the advent of the new world. Many YCL members sang it on the gallows just as Lee Sun Hui had done.

That song did not originate with us. It had been sung by Russian young men and women. The thoughts and feelings that run through the words and melody gripped the hearts of the young people of the whole world who loved freedom and justice. Just as Eugene Pottier’s Internationale became the Party song in many countries, so the Song of the Young Communist League became the international song of young people.

The emergence of a loyal woman like Lee Sun Hui can no doubt be said to be attributable to the efforts of the YCL organization which lent her political integrity light and wings. But for the organization and the process of her development through organizational training, could it have been conceivable for such a young girl as Lee Sun Hui to be so courageous in the face of her executioners and to meet the last moment of her life with such staunch pride and honor?

That is why I still say that the organization is a house and a university which gives birth to heroes and



heroines. One member of the Young Communist League or of the League of Socialist Working Youth, who has been trained through organizational life, has the strength to defeat a hundred and even a thousand of the enemy. Each one of our people is a match for a hundred foes because every one of them has been hardened through organizational life;

each soldier of our People's Army is a match for a hundred and even a thousand foes because every one of the army has been fully tempered politically and ideologically, militarily and technically in the furnace that is called an organizational life.

Nowadays, young people grow up into fighters, heroes and heroines and revolutionaries through the organization of the League of Socialist Working Youth. It can be said that the Young Communist League in the years of the anti-Japanese war was a school that trained professional revolutionaries, whereas the League of Socialist Working Youth today is the base which trains the vanguard of socialist construction. The young people are still fighting in the main direction of attack on all the fronts of building socialism just as they did in the revolution against the Japanese.

The LSWY is a reliable main force which our Party holds very dear and takes loving care of. Wherever this main force advances, great exploits are performed and miracles achieved. The West Sea Barrage, the north-em railway, Kwangbok Street, the May Day Stadium, the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace, the Taekwon-Do Palace and other monumental structures, the lasting wealth of our country, are full of the precious efforts and sweat of young men and women of the age of the Workers' Party. That is why our people love the Young Speed Campaign Shock Brigades.

The members of the LSWY and other young people in our age display innumerable communist, commendable deeds winning everyone's admiration. No man can be born twice, but young people in our country lay down their lives without hesitation to save their fellow countrymen.

There are innumerable girls who have determined to become the hands and feet for the rest of their lives of honorably disabled soldiers by marrying them. A single woman member of the LSWY in our country has brought up orphans as their own mother would do. At a time when young people in some other countries are exerting themselves to obtain the citizenship of their capital cities, the young people in our country willingly leave their beloved capital and volunteer for work at farms, coal-mines, and reclaimed land. To be candid, I would like to seat these young people on cushions of gold.

Whenever I hear news of the communistic, laudable deeds of the young people of our age, I recollect the efforts of the Korean communists devoted to the youth movement, and think of the LSWY which is excellently continuing the traditions of that movement. The ceaseless, commendable deeds of these young people, which are winning world admiration, can be attributed to the work of the LSWY. A large army of young people trained through organizational life is, in effect, mightier than atomic bombs.

No work in the world is more worthwhile and honorable than work among young men and women. If I were fortunate enough to begin my life anew and if I were given the right to choose a job, I would devote

myself to youth work as I readily did when in Jirin.

When the guerrilla zones were dissolved, we sent many political workers to the enemy-ruled area. At that time we decided to send people to Antu, Dunhua, Fusong, Changbai, Linjiang and other places to form a central county YCL committee around Liaoning, Jirin and Jiandao and step up underground youth work in the enemy area. We also made a far-reaching plan to form underground youth organizations in Musan, Kapsan, Phungsan, Hoeryong and other parts of the northern border area of Korea first, and then in Pyongyang, Seoul, Pusan and other parts of central and southern Korea.

In order to put this plan into practice, Jo Tong Uk, secretary of the Wangqing County YCL Committee, was reappointed secretary of the Central County YCL Committee and left for the enemy area.

Jo Tong Uk was an experienced YCL worker. Because of his participation in the May 30 Uprising (1930?Tr.), he had served more than a one-year term in the Harbin prison which was called the third prison in Jirin Province. While in prison, he had studied Chinese and joined the Young Communist League. He was well-informed for a middle-school leaver and was eager for knowledge. He had been sent to a unit of the national salvation army with an assignment from the Ningnan County YCL Committee. In that unit he had done YCL work and came to Wangqing in September 1932, in command of more than 40 armed men.

I think I met him for the first time in the autumn of that year. We appointed him the secretary of the YCL committee in Lee Kwang's special detachment and attached the armed men from Ningnan to the special detachment. We sent some of our men to north Manchuria to bring over his family. His stepfather, Chang Ki Sop, was a loyal Party member who was nicknamed "Communist Uncle".

Jo Tong Uk witnessed my negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng on the spot, and, along with Wang Run-cheng, assisted me in every way in the negotiations. After they had ended, I sent him and Wang Run-cheng to work in the Joint Anti-Japanese Army Coordination Commission in Luoizigou. They swore to be very close friends with the liaison officers who came from various anti-Japanese nationalist army units and formed Communist Party branches and Young Communist League branches among the field- and company-grade officers and men.

Through his work in the Joint Anti-Japanese Army Coordination Commission, Jo Tong Uk's political activities became still further seasoned. The place in the enemy area he went to for the first time was Liangjiangkou, Antu County. He opened a small shop and, through his skilful dealings with soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army, swore to be very close friends with 15 field- and company-grade officers and men and won over a company completely.

According to Jo Tong Uk's plan, the company rose in mutiny and then escaped into a mountain.

Jo Tong Uk went to Chechangzi to establish contact between the mutineers assembled in the mountain and the guerrilla army. But the Leftists suspected him as a "Minsaengdan" member and tried to arrest

him.

Later he said, recalling the event:

"At that time, the Leftists on the East Manchuria Special District Committee questioned me as follows: Song Il was a 'Minsaengdan' member and was executed. When he was the secretary of the Wangqing County Party Committee, you worked under him as the county YCL secretary. Since Song Il was a 'Minsaengdan' member, you, too, must be a 'Minsaengdan' member. You had better speak the truth before we produce evidence. That is how they tried to intimidate me. "I made up my mind to run away. Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who was serving me meals, supported my decision. She even gave me my traveling expenses. With that money I returned to Liangjiangkou, and then crossed to Korea with my mother."

He continued to do youth work in subsequent years in many parts of Korea.

Just as Kim Jin's soul was inherited by Lee Su Bok, Lee Su Bok's soul by Kim Kwang Chol and Han Yong Chol, the lifeblood of the Young Communist League was carried forward by the Democratic Youth League, and the latter's lifeblood has been inherited by the League of Socialist Working Youth. At a time when young people and students in some countries have become the cause of social trouble and minions of counterrevolutionaries and are pulling down the towers which their grandfathers' generation had built, our young men and women are reliably carrying on the revolutionary cause as a bulwark and shield pioneered by their revolutionary forerunners.

Millions of young men and women, who are unfailingly loyal to the leadership of Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il, are now affiliated with the League of Socialist Working Youth. Our country in the twenty-first century will become a paradise through their efforts and a still better to live in.

## 10.4. An Answer to the Atrocities at Sidaogou

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While we spent busy days guiding the evacuation of the guerrilla zones, the underground organization in Luozigou had sent a messenger to me in Yaoyinggou with details of the atrocities at Sidaogou. He brought the shattering news that Wen's battalion had incited a Jingan army unit in the Laoheishan area to burn down the village of Sidaogou and to kill all its people.

The news was authentic, but I was confused. I could hardly believe that battalion commander Wen had broken his promise to us, that he had incited the Jingan army unit to a massacre. An alliance, similar to the offensive and defensive alliance of today, had been formed between Wen's battalion and my unit. It was immediately after the battle at Luozigou that we had joined up with Wen.

We had received a letter from an organization in the enemy-ruled area one day, saying that a cart convoy of the puppet Manchukuo army had left Baicaogou for Luozigou. We attacked the convoy from ambush near Jiguanlazi. The escorts did not offer any serious resistance and were captured. Among the prisoners was a man whose surname was Tie, a company commander of Wen's battalion. He did not seem to feel uneasy on being taken prisoner by the revolutionary army; he was just as carefree and grinning as if this was nothing unusual. "You're an officer," I said to that strange man, "but why did you surrender instead of resisting?"

"This is an area controlled by the 'Koryo red army'. So what's the use of resisting? The best thing to do is to surrender when there's no chance of winning." He called the Korean People's Revolutionary Army the "Koryo red army", just as the Ningan people had. He went on, "And then, the whole of Manchuria knows that the 'Koryo red army' does not kill prisoners."

Company commander Tie, the son of a poor peasant, had joined the Manchukuo army in order to earn some money for his wedding; he had heard that the army paid considerable salaries. Some of our comrades remarked that "he was too ignorant for the world", but I thought that, although he was an officer of the puppet Manchukuo army, he could live conscientiously if we taught him befittingly. When we were about to free the POWs after talking to them, Tie said:

"Please, sir, take anything you want from these carts, but be kind enough to return the money and rifles to us. If we go back empty-handed, the soldiers won't get their salaries. And probably, the battalion commander Wen will shoot us."

I permitted them to return to Luozigou with their full cart-loads. Our comrades saw them off, commenting jokingly, "Hey, we've only lost time for sleep and wasted ammunition." Tie asked, handing a whole cartridge box to our company commander, Lee Hyo Sok, "Friend, fire a few shots at the sacks of dried slices of radish, please." He seemed to be moved by our generous treatment. But since Lee put the

ammunition box back onto the cart, the escorts themselves fired a few shots at the sacks, unloaded their rifles, wrapping the cartridges up in a handkerchief and throwing it away into the grass, and only then they left.

This event won Tie battalion commander Wen's special confidence. Whenever he had a supply convoy to send, Wen ordered Tie's company to escort it, for Tie would return safely each time without being waylaid, whereas the other companies would lose all their supplies.

We would attack other convoys, but no Tie's. Whenever he was on a convoying mission, Tie would send his men to let us know the date, hour and route of his convoy as well as ways of identifying it. Thus, the battalion commander came to realize that Tie was under the protection and concern of the people's revolutionary army.

One day Tie, on meeting the battalion commander, said casually, "My company in Luozigou is under the protection of the people's revolutionary army. How about forming an offensive and defensive alliance between our battalion and Commander Kim's unit and living in safety?" Wen pretended to be startled at first as if something serious had taken place, but true to his original intention, he readily agreed, saying that it was a wonderful way of self-protection. Tie conveyed this message to us. Our answer to Wen was that we agreed to his idea of the alliance on the condition that the puppet Manchukuo army unit would not harm the people's lives and property. It was an unusual "gentlemen's agreement" reached without any negotiations or signatures.

The terms of our alliance implied maintaining friendly relations, each side refraining from attacking the other, rather than the original meaning of the offensive and defensive alliance - that the two sides cooperate in both offensive and defensive actions. This alliance had worked well in respecting each other's interests and developing mutual cooperation. As we were faithful to the principle of non-aggression, Wen had sent large amounts of ammunition, food grains and clothing to the revolutionary army on several occasions. He had even delivered important military information to us on the movements of the Japanese army.

Considering the above-mentioned peaceful relations of the alliance, I could not believe that Wen had incited the Jingan army to a "punitive" action at Sidaogou. I sent a messenger to company commander Tie to find out. The messenger confirmed that the atrocities at Sidaogou and Wen's betrayal were true. Tie sent me word that Wen, under pressure of his Japanese masters, was breaking the alliance.

We had to give an appropriate answer to Wen's betrayal and the atrocities at Sidaogou in which he had played the role of guide. The headquarters daily resounded with my men's demands for revenge. The commanders also stirred the men on to make the enemy pay for the blood shed by the people of Sidaogou. A mad dog should be controlled by the stick - this was a motto of the revolutionary army.

I considered their demands to be just. If we left the Jingan army unit in Laoheishan and the puppet Manchukuo army unit in Luozigou as they were, we would be unable to guarantee the safety of the

people living in these areas or to support the work of the underground organizations in every village through military means, nor could we then ensure the smooth advance of the people's revolutionary army to north Manchuria. Worse still, we could expect confusion in the work of dissolving the guerrilla zones. We had also planned to evacuate the inhabitants of Wangqing and Hunchun to Luozigou as the guerrilla zones were being dissolved.

We decided to attack the Jingan army unit and Wen's battalion simultaneously. We summoned the Yanji 1st Regiment and the Independent Regiment in Chechangzi to Wangqing to reinforce our unit. After about five days of forced march, eating only one bun at every meal, the Independent Regiment reached the sprawling village of Tangshuihezi where we were billeted. Most of the regimental officers, including its commander Yun Chang Bom, had been executed on the false charge of being members of the "Minsaengdan". Its chief of staff led the companies; the men who had lost their commanders were in the lowest of spirits.

That is when we organized a battle at Zhuanjiaolou, involving detachments from the Independent Regiment, Yanji 1st Regiment and Wangqing 3rd Regiment. It was necessary to clear our way to Luozigou by destroying the puppet Manchukuo army unit and self-defense corps entrenched behind the earthen walls, who were committing horrible atrocities.

After the battle at Zhuanjiaolou the revolutionary army forces drew up a plan of operation for attacking Luozigou and made a daylight march towards Sidaogou, Sandaogou and Taipinggou, intended as attacking positions. The soldiers marched 50 miles, eating only gruel, but their morale was very high.

Sidaogou had been originally developed as an "ideal village" by veterans of the Independence Army, including Lee Thae Gyong, and pioneers from the Righteous Volunteers' Army. This village, which was also known as Sidaohezi or Shangfangzi, had been later transformed into a revolutionary village by Lee Kwang and myself. We had helped old man Lee Thae Gyong to organize the Anti-Japanese Association, the Peasants Association and the Revolutionary Mutual Aid Society in this village. In those days we frequented the village, and the people in Luozigou and its vicinity used to call it the "headquarters of the Communist Party". The hospitality and affection the villagers had shown to the people's revolutionary army were admirable. I was often moved by the enthusiasm of the village people who, on hearing of the arrival of the revolutionary army, would come running to greet us, without even stopping to put on their shoes.

Sandahezi, situated near Sidaogou, was also a well-known revolutionary village under our influence. There was a distillery run by Chinese people at the foot of the hill in the west of the village. I, accompanied by Zhou Bao-zhong, used to meet cadres of the underground revolutionary organizations and others in this distillery.

Our old friendly feelings for the people of Sidaogou remained as unchanged as the River Suifen flowing along this village, but it had been beyond a hill had also been burnt and only the foundation stones were left standing. We had held a meeting with Zhou Bao-zhong and other commanders of the NSA units in

that house the previous year to discuss operations for attacking Luozigou.

The old man built a school near the site of the house and became absorbed in educating children. He had initiated education with a stout heart even when the shootings and shrieks of the outrages were still ringing in his ears. He had hidden a son of his friend in his house in the days of the Independence Army. The young man fortunately survived the atrocities; he said that he had witnessed the Jingan army soldiers committing the atrocities that day from a hill where he had had a bird's-eye view of Sidaogou on his way back from a visit.

The brutalities were the result of the unjust interrogation of a Young Communist League member, So Il Nam, who was working as an operative in the town of Luozigou. He had been suspected of being a member of the "Minsaengdan" on a charge of stealing some article in a shop, had been arrested and interrogated by the head of the revolutionary organization in Sidaogou. As no evidence of guilt was found in spite of continuous investigations, he had been released and put under strict surveillance.

On his return home, he had complained that they had arrested the wrong man and yet had tortured him on the false charge of being a member of the "Minsaengdan". His superiors, on learning this, attempted to arrest him again and to execute him as a "Minsaengdan" member. So Il Nam, realizing this, ran away and surrendered to the enemy. Worse still, wanting to revenge those who had maltreated and tortured him, he exposed the secrets of the underground revolutionary organization in Sidaogou.

These secrets excited the bloodthirsty soldiers of the Jingan army unit who were preparing for the New Year celebrations in Luozigou at the moment. A "punitive" force of 100 stealthily encircled the village of Sidaogou at dawn of 15 January of the lunar calendar, 1935, and mowed down the villagers indiscriminately by a fusillade of heavy and light machine-guns. They went wild, setting fire to every house and bayoneting those running out of the flames, whether man or woman, young or old, and throwing them back into the flames. They reduced the village to ashes in less than an hour.

When the head of the one hundred households of Sandaohezi arrived at the scene of the tragedy, he found eight Korean children who had survived by a miracle, crying in the heaps of corpses. The head discussed the question of raising the children with some of his fellow villagers. They decided that each would rear one child, with the headman also taking a child to his home.

Three young men who had escaped death at Sidaogou joined our unit.

After hearing the details of the outrages, we gnashed our teeth in wrathful indignation. The motive had obviously been the imprudent Leftist conduct of those who had falsely charged So Il Nam as a member of the "Minsaengdan" and molested him, but for all that, first and foremost, we cursed the butchers of the Jingan army who had dipped Sidaogou in a bloodbath.

The massacre at Sidaogou was the pinnacle of savagery, heinousness and brutality that could only be committed under the manipulation and at the instigation of the Japanese imperialists. These offspring of

savage marauders were capable of committing any crime, who had intruded into the royal palace of a foreign country, had unhesitatingly murdered the Queen of that country, and burnt her dead body to remove all traces of their crime.

I heard about this Ulmi incident (1895) from my father when I was young, and could not repress my anger. The murdered Queen, whose corpse could not be retrieved, was none other than Queen Min (alias Empress Myongsong) who gave birth to Sunjong, the last King of our country. Queen Min who had seized Korea's state power in her hands and become the chief of the pro-Russian faction, stood firm against Japan. The Japanese rulers were thrown into consternation; they made Miura, their minister resident in Korea, form a group of murderers by enlisting the Japanese garrison and police forces, and even those of gangsters and hooligans, to storm the Kyongbok Palace. Miura's henchmen stabbed the Queen wildly with Japanese swords, burnt her dead body and threw her remains into a pond in order to remove all traces of their crime.

The Korean people had not had much respect for Queen Min. They had believed her to be a mastermind who had ruined the country through an open-door policy. Some people did not have a good opinion of her because she, as a daughter-in-law of the royal family, had removed Taewongun, her father-in-law, from Regency in collaboration with foreign forces. Some innocent people even had the idea that our country would not have been reduced to a colony, if Taewongun's policy of national isolation had been maintained for another 20 or 30 years.

This being the case, it would not be difficult to understand the grievous feelings the people had entertained for Queen Min. However, no matter how discredited she had been by the people, politics was one thing and her Queenhood another. She had been a member of our nation, the mistress of the royal family and representative of state power who had ruled the country on behalf of King Kojong. The barbarous act of the Japanese rulers who had provoked the Ulmi incident was, therefore, a piratical encroachment on the sovereignty of our people and on the traditional dignity of the royal family. The Korean people did not tolerate it, having a strong feeling for nationality; they respected their monarch and cherished an exceptionally strong sense of national dignity.

Worse still, the ordinance of keeping one's hair bobbed was enforced.

National anger burst out into volcanic eruption. Our people's reply to the Ulmi incident and the bobbed hair ordinance emerged in the resistance of the righteous volunteers. In the year of Kyongsin (1920?Tr.), which is known as the year of large-scale "mop-up" atrocities in Jiandao, the Japanese army massacred Korean people in Manchuria. It was an explosion of an unprecedented murder-mania of the Japanese who tried to retrieve the great defeat they had suffered at Fengwudong and Qingshanli through massacring the unarmed Korean nationals living in Manchuria.

A Japanese army force returning southward after giving up the plan for an expedition to Siberia, and another advancing northward to Manchuria from Ranam, turned all the villages en route where Koreans were living to ashes, and shot the young and middle-aged people en masse. By applying the same method



used when murdering Queen Min, they sprinkled petroleum on the corpses and burnt them to remove all traces of their crimes.

The great Kanto earthquake in 1923 recorded, along with the natural disaster caused by the crustal movement, the man-made calamity imposed on the Korean nation by the Japanese ultra-nationalists. The gangsters saw the earthquake as a good opportunity for suppressing the Korean nationals and killed them mercilessly throughout Japan with swords and bamboo spears. In order to distinguish the Korean nationals from many other people, they made every man and woman who looked like them in outer appearance pronounce "lu-go-en go-ji-sen", which means "fifteen yen fifty sen" in Japanese.

The people who did not pronounce it fluently were regarded as Korean nationals without exception and murdered. During the first 18 days of the earthquake our nation lost 6,000 of its compatriots. This is only a tip of the iceberg of the crimes the Japanese militarists committed against the Korean people and a bit of Japan's modern history discolored with massacre and plunder. The atrocities in the village of Sidaogou were only a repetition of that history.

"There was an underground organization in the village - why was vigilance lacking to such an extent?"

That was what I asked old man Lee Thae Gyong out of my wrathful indignation and bitter resentment. And yet, it was a foolish question. Even if they had been watchful, what could they have done? They could not have kept a sentry at the village as there was no standing army. Even if they had kept guard, they could not have done anything against the great number of armed soldiers pouncing stealthily on them at dawn under cover of darkness.

"General, we were too easygoing. We, the old ones, are to blame. Living in comfort under the protection of the revolutionary army, we seemed to have forgotten that we are a ruined nation and a people at war for independence. There was an old man who worshipped Gandhi among the inhabitants of Sidaogou," the old man said with an awkward smile as if he had said something wrong.

I was surprised to hear that there had been a worshipper of Gandhi in this mountain village. "How come that old man worshipped Gandhi?" I asked.

"I think a gentleman from Korea had told him about Gandhi. He had even shown him Gandhi's letter published in a newspaper of our country. Since then, that old man had preached the theory of bloodless independence, mentioning something about violence and nonviolence, whenever he came to visit with his neighbors."

In my days in Jirin I had criticized the doctrine of nonviolence with Park So Sim after reading the letter from Gandhi carried in Joson Ilbo. The letter read:

Sabarmati - 26 November, 1926

Dear friend: I have your letter. The message I can send is to hope that Korea will come to her own through ways absolutely truthful and nonviolent.

Yours sincerely, M. K. Gandhi

As can be seen from the letter, Gandhi preached that the Korean people achieve independence through nonviolent resistance. Apparently an advocate of nonviolence who had been charmed by Gandhi's way of thinking had sent a letter to Gandhi.

No young Koreans in Jirin accepted Gandhi's theory. No one was foolish enough to imagine that the outrageous and rapacious Japanese imperialists would hand independence to people on a silver plate, to those who advocated nonviolent disobedience. But Gandhi's way of thinking won some degree of sympathy and support from a few of the nationalist fighters who had abandoned armed resistance or had withdrawn from the independence movement.

Gandhi's idea that, although he cursed British rule he had no intention of harming any of the British and that organized nonviolence alone was capable of prevailing over organized violence of the British government, won the sympathy of broad sections of India's people, the humanitarian spirit running through his idea influencing them. I cannot imagine how far that idea conformed with the realities of India.

Even if it was a reasonable idea, the methods of achieving independence could not be alike for Korea and India, the two colonies whose suzerains were different, one an Asian power and the other a European power. India was India and Korea was Korea.

I could not understand why the theory of bloodless independence had had such a lingering effect on a man in Luozigou where the military and political activities of the people's revolutionary army were most intensive.

"That man must have realized at the moment of his death that the theory of bloodless independence was illusory. How pathetic it would be if he had died without realizing it! The Japanese are running wild to allay their thirst for blood, and yet he absurdly preached bloodlessness..." Lee Thae Gyong, unable to say anything more, shook his fist.

"You're right, old man. Blood will flow in the fight with brigands. A mad dog must be controlled with the stick!"

"General, the lives of Koreans are much too cheap. How long must the Korean nation live like this? Please let the enemy pay for the blood shed in Sidaogou. If you revenge the enemy, then I can die in peace."

When seeing me off, he repeatedly requested that I revenge the enemy. "I will bear your words in mind,"

I replied. "If we return without avenging the people of Sidaogou, then don't permit us to enter the yard of your house."

We left for Luozigou with the firm determination to take revenge on the cutthroats. I have fought all my life for the dignity of the nation. I am able to say that I have been fighting all my life to defend the dignity and independence of the nation. I have never shown mercy towards those who harmed our nation and infringed upon the sovereignty of our country, nor have I compromised with those who looked down upon our people or mocked at them. I have maintained friendly relations with those who have been friendly towards us, and broken with those who have been unfriendly or discriminated us. If they struck us, we gave them tit for tat: if they smiled at us, we smiled at them. A cake for a cake, and a stone for a stone - this is the principle of reciprocity I have adhered to all through my life.

In the past the powerless feudal government of Korea applied extraterritoriality to the Japanese residing in Korea. Just as the south Korean rulers today are conniving at the illegal acts of the US army soldiers, without having the law on them, the feudal government did not punish offenders with the law of Korea even though the Japanese outrageously harmed the lives and property of our people. The Japanese people were to be punished only by Japanese law. However, such an extraterritoriality had no place in the areas of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army activities. We had our own law which did not tolerate any form of offence against the Korean nation and the territory of Korea. The murderers who had committed the outrages in Sidaogou could not pass with impunity under that law.

We planned to occupy the fortress on the west hill and storm into Luozigou on the day of the Tano festival. The Hunchun Regiment had arrived to reinforce us.

As the columns of the revolutionary army were advancing towards Luozigou, men of the Wangqing Regiment who had been to the town on a reconnoitering mission, approached me with company commander Tie. He had suddenly come to tell me about Wen.

Tie said, "The battalion commander is trembling with fear on hearing that the people's revolutionary army is surrounding Luozigou to attack it. He said that he had only let his man tell the Jingan army unit where Sidaogou was as they had asked, and had had no inkling that such atrocities would take place. He's sorry that he had made the mistake of guiding the Jingan army unit to Sidaogou under Japanese pressure and letting his soldiers rob the people of their properties. He said further that he had not intentionally broken the promise he had made with Commander Kim and begs for your mercy.

I thought deeply over Tie's words. It was obvious that Wen had broken his promise by failing to prevent his men from robbing the people of their property and by letting his man show the Jingan army unit the way to Sidaogou. But this treachery could be dealt with leniently because an officer of the puppet army had to be at the beck and call of his Japanese superiors.

If we destroyed Wen's battalion, what would be the consequence? The offensive and defensive alliance between us would be ruptured and another unit much more wicked than Wen's battalion would be sent to

Luozigou. The enemy was sure to do that whether we wanted it or not. This would invite further outrages like those perpetrated at Sidaogou. Our planned effort to evacuate the people from the guerrilla zones in Wangqing and Hunchun to the Luozigou area would have difficulties and our intention to maintain this area as a strategic stronghold for the KPRA would meet with a great challenge.

Then, what was I to do?

I made up my mind to draw the battalion commander closer to our side instead of punishing him, and to strike at the Jingan army unit based in Laoheishan to demonstrate how those who had harmed the people would be sent to their doom. According to reports of those who had been to the area of Dongning County on reconnoitering missions, a reinforced company of the Jingan army was stationed in Wangbaowan, Laoheishan, and it consisted of the cutthroats who had made havoc of Sidaogou. The scouts even learned that it was a task force detached from the notorious Yoshizaki unit.

I conveyed my decision to Tie:

"The people's revolutionary army will suspend its plan of attacking Luozigou. It is true that Wen broke faith with us, but we still place our hopes on him. How can Wen guarantee his re-expressed faithfulness to the offensive and defensive alliance? If his promise holds true, he must guarantee the safety of both army and people during the people's revolutionary army's joint athletic meet in the town of Luozigou during the Tano festival. Convey our opinion to the battalion commander. We will wait here for his reply."

Tie notified us on returning that the battalion commander, Wen, had accepted all our demands.

Our regiments quickly changed their combat formation into a festival one. The officers, who had planned the attack on Luozigou, were now busy drawing up lists of sports events that would be enjoyed by both soldiers and people, and forming teams that would demonstrate the might of the unity between the army and the people. Thus, we organized a grandiose joint athletic meet of the army and the people in the heart of the walled-in town of Luozigou occupied by the enemy, under the protection of his forces, whose mission it was to "clean up" the revolutionary army, an athletic meet unprecedented in the history of war.

Even our underground operatives came out on that day to enjoy the meet. The soldiers of Wen's battalion were delighted by the unique festival. The people who had been so depressed by the atrocities in Sidaogou were again in high spirits, thanks to the Tano festival. The joint athletic meet clearly demonstrated our consistent stand and will, at home and abroad, that we were always ready to establish friendly relations with an army that did not harm the people, irrespective of the army's name and affiliation.

In Taipinggou we held a meeting of military and political cadres who were higher than the company political instructor and mapped out a detailed plan of the battle at Laoheishan. Then we held a ceremonial memorial service for those killed in Sidaogou. The service became an excellent forum for inciting the

officers and men of the revolutionary army to revenge the enemy.

I think it was mid-June 1935 when we finished off the Hongxiutour at Laoheishan. Hongxiutour is a nickname that the people in Manchuria had given to the Jingan army soldiers, apparently because of their rakishly wearing red arm-bands on their sleeves.

Our soldiers had lured the enemy out of Wangbaowan then in a very clever way. The Jingan army unit, stationed in Wangbaowan, Laoheishan, was the same unit that had dogged our steps, during our first expedition to north Manchuria and the group of savages who had committed the atrocities at Sidaogou.

At first we provoked a fight with them by dispatching a small unit, but they were keen enough to notice that our unit had come. They could not be provoked readily. The villagers told me that the Jingan army soldiers would be going out to "mop up" the guerrilla army only in winter and would avoid engagements with the revolutionary army in summer if possible, striking out only at mountain rebels and bandits.

We had to draw them out of their den in order to attack them. Therefore, we decided to use the alluring tactic. We withdrew our forces to Luozigou in broad daylight so that the enemy could see the movement and believe that we had withdrawn somewhere else. That night we moved the unit back secretly and lay in ambush in the forest near Wangbaowan where the Jingan army unit was stationed. Then we disguised 10 soldiers who spoke Chinese as mountain rebels and sent them to Wangbaowan. They made a great fuss, grabbing donkeys from the villagers, trampling on their furniture and ripping off the fences of their vegetable gardens, before returning to the unit.

But the Jingan army soldiers did not fall into the trap on the first day for some unknown reason. Though uncomfortable, we had a simple dinner of some dry rations at our position and spent a tedious night, irritated by the mosquitoes. I had heard Lee Kwan Rin saying that when she had tilled the land at the foot of Mt. Paektu with Jang Chol Ho, she had weeded the potato fields with a bunch of moxa on her head because of the irritating mosquitoes, but the gnats in Laoheishan were just as bad. The soldiers slapped at their cheeks and napes, complaining that the gnats in Laoheishan took after the Hongxiutour and were stinging them poisonously.

On the next day the decoying group went down to the village in Wangbaowan and behaved like mountain rebels. They caught a few chickens in a somewhat well-to-do house and pretended to take flight. Only then did the Jingan army soldiers begin to chase them en masse.

Apparently the villagers had raised a big fuss that day that the mountain rebels had again been in the village.

The Jingan army soldiers were quite well-versed in the tactics of the guerrilla army; they even knew how guerrillas waylaid convoys and attacked walled towns. To deceive them was as difficult as belling the cat. Surely, our decoy had acted out the hooliganism of the mountain rebels to a tee.

What I still cannot forget among the episodes related with this battle is that Kim Thaek Kun's wife shook me awake as I was dozing from fatigue while in ambush on the second day.

She and her husband had taken great care to nurse me in the Shiliping valley during some painful days of fever. She had played the role of my aide-de-camp, so to speak. At that time she had picked a broad-leaved grass and asked me what it was called, saying that it looked tasty. It was aster. I had told her to call it "bear aster" since it grew in a place where there were many bears. After liberation, on my visit to Taehongdan, I ate that same bear aster.

The enemy, who had come within the area where the revolutionary army was lying in ambush, gazed anxiously from side to side, saying, "It'd be terrible to be surrounded in this place." When the enemy were all in the mountain valley, I fired a shot signaling the start of battle. I aimed at a Japanese instructor, and he fell at the first shot. They did not put up any resistance worth mentioning before being subdued. The agitators of the guerrilla army shouted to the enemy in Chinese to surrender before they offered any resistance, relying on the natural conditions. "Down with Japanese Imperialism!" and "Lay down Your Guns, and You'll Be Saved!" The enemy soldiers gave up and laid down their arms.

The battle at Laoheishan was the first typical allurement and ambush battle we had fought. Since that time the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo armies had begun to call this tactic of ours "netting-the-fish".

We killed about 100 soldiers of the Jingan army in this battle, an arrogant army who had boasted of its "invincibility". We captured a large amount of the booty that included heavy and light machine-guns, rifles, hand grenades and even mortars and war-horses. The enemy merrily carried the mortars on horses, but lost them before firing a single shell. The white horse I gave to old man Jo Thaek Ju was one of the ten thoroughbreds we had captured in this battle.

We also captured several war dogs. The officers advised me to keep some of the dogs for protection. But I saw to it that all the shepherd dogs were sent to the people in Taipinggou and Shitouhezi. I thought the captured dogs would be of no use to us.

At the time of the Dahuangwai meeting my comrades had brought me a dog captured from the Japanese army to keep as my guard. They probably thought it would be of help to me as it was a shrewd, clever dog. I was grateful for their concern but I did not take it, saying that the dog was tamed by the Japanese and would not feel attached to the commander of the guerrilla army. It ran away, as I had said, to the enemy's position at the smell of the Japanese when we were fighting the enemy "punitive" forces in later days. I had benefited a great deal from the white war-horse but not from any captured war dog.

The whole course of the battle at Laoheishan, to which we had attached importance as a model of allurement and ambush in the history of the anti-Japanese war, proved that this type of battle was one of the most efficient forms and conformed with the characteristics of guerrilla warfare.

We defeated the Jingan army in succession in subsequent battles by destroying Kuto's unit in Mengjiang,

annihilating the crack unit led by Yoshizaki himself in the Changbai and Linjiang areas, and in the days of the final offensive, by disintegrating and crushing the 1st Division, the successor of the Jingan army.

For the Laoheishan battle the KPRA, which had been directing its main efforts to the defense of the guerrilla zones in fixed areas, advanced to wider areas from the narrow liberated ones and for the first time demonstrated the might of large-unit operations. The gunshots that rumbled in the valley of Laoheishan lauded the correctness of the policy set out at the Yaoyinggou meeting, the policy of relinquishing the guerrilla zones and launching into wider large-scale operation areas, and it was a harbinger of victory in our second expedition to north Manchuria. Thanks to the victory we had won at Laoheishan the KPRA was able to make more satisfactory preparations for a successful second expedition to north Manchuria.

The news of the KPRA's victory spread quickly like lightning in Manchuria, inspiring confidence in the masses of workers and peasants of Korea and China, who had been groaning under the tyranny of the Jingan army, and arousing them to struggle. As we were returning to Taipinggou with the trophies on the saddles of the captured horses, the people there formed long lines on both sides of the road and greeted us enthusiastically. Lee Thae Gyong, too, arrived all the way from Sandaogou to Xintunzi where we were resting. People came from Jinchang and Huoshaopu to visit the people's revolutionary army bringing small contributions to us.

On the eve of the second expedition to north Manchuria I planned an operation to win over a company of the puppet Manchukuo army stationed in Dahuanggou, by drawing on some information I had received from the Hunchun guerrilla unit. The man who had brought me the information was Hwang Jong Hae, serving as an orderly of the Hunchun guerrilla unit. His father, Hwang Pyong Gil, was a renowned patriotic martyr who had taken an active part in planning the shooting of Ito Hirobumi by An Jung Gun.

Hwang told me that there was a sergeant in the company who sympathized with communism, who had a good influence on his fellow soldiers, but that he did not dare to persuade the whole company, only thinking about coming over to the guerrilla army with some of his fellows. He further asked for my advice as he thought it probable that the whole company could be won over if things went well.

My attention had already been drawn to this company in Dahuanggou. It hindered the activities of the guerrilla army in one way or another as it was located along our route. We knew that the company commander was a Chinese man and that the Korean serving in the company as an interpreter was a very wicked fellow.

The sergeant played the main part in the operation for the mutiny. He was masterminded by Hwang Jong Hae and our other operatives. The sergeant was neither an operative we had planted nor a member of the Communist Party. He was just an ordinary young man who had been recruited while working in Dalian. His "punitive" force had originally been in Jehol. As his unit moved to Jiandao, he automatically came to Hunchun. The sergeant had heard in Jehol that there were many communists in Jiandao, and paid serious attention to the activities of the communists around him in Hunchun. He even had had the bold idea of

joining up with them in order to reshape his destiny.

One day while talking to his fellow soldiers in a restaurant, he complained, "Damn it! What's the use of fighting the communists? I'd do better to shoot someone on our side and desert." Hwang had witnessed this and reported it to his superiors. The sergeant soon became a man we had to win over to our side.

At about this time an incident took place, in which one of our comrades, who had gone to Hunchun for a small-unit operation, was arrested by the police. He was a Korean, but he spoke fluent Chinese. When the police had tied him up, then kicked, hit and abused him, the sergeant, who was passing by, saw what was happening and interfered, saying, "Hey! He's in the same state of being oppressed as you are, though he's a communist. How on earth can you beat him so cruelly?" He hit the policeman and sent him away. He then took our operative to his barracks. On the way the sergeant said to him, "I can set you free here now. But you've got to go with me to our barracks. If you're courageous, then please tell about the communist army to my company commander and to others, spending the night in our unit. We're eager to know. There are a Japanese instructor and a Korean interpreter in our company, both wicked men. I'll make an excuse to send them to the town, so you may rest easy."

Our operative did not know why the sergeant was making such a suggestion, but he followed him to the barracks, thinking to die an honorable death if need be.

At the barracks, he took our man to the company commander who was his friend. As the three were talking at a tea table behind closed doors, the Japanese instructor entered the company headquarters and looked curiously at our man. In order not to incur the instructor's suspicion, the sergeant said to the company commander, "This is a friend of mine. He came to collect the money for the wine I drank, but I haven't any. Would you kindly lend me some, sir?" The company commander was also a wily man. He replied, "I'll pay for the wine, so don't worry about it. Your friend is my friend so we must treat him well. You may talk here at ease over tea, before parting."

After the Japanese instructor had left for the town, the three men continued their talk. At the sergeant's request, our man conducted some communist propaganda, saying, "The guerrilla army is an allied army of Koreans and Chinese. I'm a Korean. The Korean people, too, are against the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. There are patriots in the Manchukuo army and we're ready to join hands with them." He further explained our policy on the puppet Manchukuo army and sang some songs in Chinese for them about that army.

Moved by his talk, the company commander told our man to inform his superiors on his return the next day that he had no intention of fighting the guerrilla army and, even though his company had to go on a "punitive" mission, they would fire a few shots in the direction of the forest as a signal so that the guerrillas could escape.

Seeing our man off, the sergeant said that he wanted to keep in touch with our man in the future, and that it would be good for our man to be in contact with him. He requested that he report to his political



commissar what they had discussed that day.

In this way we could keep in touch with the company; we increased our activities still further to encourage them to revolt. I gave Hwang Jong Hae a detailed assignment and sent him back to Dahuanggou. Hwang got in touch with the sergeant again and worked to help the whole company to revolt. The sergeant made the following earnest request to Hwang, "We do what we are doing against our will. There's nothing more shameful for a man than playing the role of a puppet of others. We envy you. The whole company's ready to revolt, so please raid my company."

We dispatched a force of two or three companies to the vicinity of their barracks. The companies surrounded the barracks and, at the time the soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army were doing their morning exercise, they fired warning shots and shouted at them. The puppet Manchukuo army company sent a representative for negotiations; he was none other than the sergeant from Dalian whom we had influenced.

The sergeant demanded ceasefire and told our man about their intention to revolt. True to their determination, about 150 officers and men of the puppet Manchukuo army killed the Japanese instructor and Korean interpreter, loaded all the enemy's belongings in the town onto horse carts and arrived in our guerrilla zone, blowing their trumpets.

The commanding officers of the Hunchun Regiment had a long discussion on how this company should be admitted into the people's revolutionary army. Some suggested dissolving the company and appointing them to the new companies of the people's revolutionary army while others proposed enrolling the company whole, instead of dissolving it. The former was predominant among the two proposals.

Regimental headquarters repeated the talks on this issue with the officers of the company that had revolted. However, the officers would not agree to the dissolution of their company. Choe Pong Ho, political commissar of the Hunchun Regiment, brought the matter to me for my decision.

In order to acquire a clear understanding of the wishes of the soldiers of the company, I went over to converse with them. They were strongly against dissolving their company and were disturbed by the rumor about it. Frankly speaking, it was against all morals to dissolve it and to scatter its men over different companies against their will, men who had come over of their own accord, not having been taken prisoner. The most reasonable solution was to respect their wishes as far as possible.

I made a compromise proposal that the company would not be dissolved but enrolled as three new companies to suit the organizational structure of the people's revolutionary army, and that the commanding officers of the companies would be elected by a democratic method at the meeting of the soldiers who had come over. I advanced the idea for discussion. The company accepted the compromise proposal with satisfaction. Regimental commander Hou Guo-zhong and political commissar Choe Pong Ho also supported the idea.

The sergeant who had played the major role in the mutiny was elected company commander. It was decided to send the former company commander to the Soviet Union for studies. Some of the men who wanted to go to China proper were sent there via the Soviet Union, and others who wanted to remain and fight on our side joined the Hunchun guerrilla unit. Later, when we were in north Manchuria, they were transferred to the unit of Li Yan-lu.

The enemy mobilized enormous forces of the Kwangtung Army, the puppet Manchukuo army, police, home guards and railway guards in order to encircle and annihilate the large forces of the people's revolutionary army who were fighting and doing political work in and around Luozigou and Taipinggou. The main force of the "punitive" troops pressed on Taipinggou from the direction of Luozigou and some were deployed between Yaoyinggou and Baicaogou with the plan of encircling and annihilating the people's revolutionary army in this narrow area if it retreated to the southwest.

On June 20, 1935, the enemy began its attack at last on Taipinggou. We deployed our units on the mountain behind Taipinggou and set up the command post near the mortar battery. There was a natural cave below the C.P. The enemy began crossing the River Dahuoshaopu on boats. Our mortar battery opened fire. One of the mortars blew up an enemy boat in the middle of the river. The enemy gave up the crossing and fled in terror to their positions. The marksmanship of the mortar gunners was really amazing. The mortar battery, which had been formed with part of the defectors from the puppet Manchukuo army, proved its worth. Those who had been skeptical and unhappy with the defectors' participation in the battle only now realized how they had erred.

I embraced the commander of the battery and congratulated him on the victory. Some of the commanding officers of the revolutionary army, who had been skeptical of those who had come over to our side, were so pleased that they came running to the mortar emplacement. The rumbling of the mortars on the River Dahuoshaopu was a historical cry, heralding the birth of our artillery. The enemy trembled with fear at the boom and the people danced with joy. We now celebrate that day as the day of the artillery.

Battalion commander Wen, who had fled to Luozigou in terror at our mortar fire after attempting to cross the River Dahuoshaopu said, "The people's revolutionary army is really something mysterious. It captured mortars only yesterday and today has the skill of hitting a target with only the second shell. Who can rival such an army? It's a fool's job to do that. I will never fight Kim Il Sung's army even if it means a Japanese sword on my neck." Needless to say, this information was delivered to us by company commander Tie.

As the people's revolutionary army displayed its might by defeating the enemy in succession at Laoheishan and Taipinggou, our revolutionary organizations worked energetically in many places. The head of the Anti-Japanese Association in Luozigou said proudly that after the people's revolutionary army had crushed the Jingan army unit at Laoheishan, the people living in the town had come to him, not to the village government, to register marriages and to report childbirths.

We do not forgive anybody who harms the people! We demonstrated this will of the Korean communists once again powerfully in practice at Laoheishan and Taipinggou. But those who harmed the people were extremely wicked. "We will exist only when we stamp out communism!" - this was the belief of the people's enemy. We still had to fight many a battle against those with this belief.

The blood shed by the enemy in the battle at Taipinggou stained the River Dahuoshaopu for over a week. It was said that an unprecedented number of daces swam up this river in shoals that year, probably because of the blood.

## 10.5. The Seeds of the Revolution Sown over a Wide Area

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When the whole of east Manchuria was groping for a way out, shedding tears of grief over the catastrophic consequences of the whirlwind of the "purge", we advanced a new line of dissolving the narrow guerrilla bases in the form of liberated areas and launching into wider areas for active large-scale operations; we brought this line up for discussion at the Yaoyinggou meeting in March 1935. The overwhelming majority of the military and political cadres attending the meeting supported it fully.

Nevertheless, not all expressed an understanding of and sympathy with it; some of the cadres of the Party and Young Communist League were against dissolving the guerrilla zones. They attacked us, arguing:

"What's all this silly talk about dissolving the guerrilla bases? Why did we build them in the first place if we're to abandon them? Why did we shed our blood for three to four years defending them and starving in rags? This is a Rightist deviation, capitulationism and defeatism." The academic circles now call their idea the theory of defending the guerrilla zones to the last man.

The strongest proponent of this theory at the Yaoyinggou meeting was Lee Kwang Lim, one of the founders of the Ningan guerrilla unit. Lee had conducted work mostly among the youth at the Ningan County YCL Committee and at the eastern area bureau of Jirin Province of the YCL. He was later sent to the Wangqing area to make preparations for the formation of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army with Chai Shi-rong, Fu Xian ming and other commanders of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed units. I think he attended the Yaoyinggou meeting as an acting secretary of the East Manchuria Special District Committee of the YCL.

He attacked those who insisted on evacuating the guerrilla zones, arguing: "If we quit the guerrilla zones and move over vast areas, what will become of the people? You say that the people will be evacuated to the enemy area from the guerrilla zones, but doesn't this mean throwing the people right into the jaws of death, the people who had shared life in the shadow of death, forming an integral whole with the army? Can the revolutionary army conduct guerrilla warfare without relying on the military and political stronghold called the guerrilla zones? If the revolutionary people tempered in the guerrilla zones go to enemy-held areas, doesn't it mean that we'd be losing tens of thousands of revolutionary masses whom we have trained with so much effort? Won't the dissolving of the guerrilla zones result, finally, in the revolution retreating to the point where it started in 1932?"

The discussion which seemed to come to a conclusion without a hitch gradually assumed complicated aspects with Lee Kwang Lim's long harangue. Even some of the supporters of the line began to nod their heads at his argument. The participants of the meeting were divided into two groups, one for dissolving the guerrilla zones and the other against it, and bickered with each other. When the argument reached a

climax, some badly-trained people tried to forcibly overpower their opponents, resorting to personalities. One man disproved Lee's insistence while finding faults with his private life.

He said that Lee had carried a torch for a girl when he had been working as the head of a district YCL committee in Ningnan County. He had been earnest in his love, but the girl did not accept it. What he had received though, were the love-letters he had sent to her but which had come back without replies, and the girl's heartless, cold response, turn-ing away each time she had seen him. Love could not be won by the subjective desire and zeal of one side alone. Lee had expelled the girl who had broken his heart to Muling County and had had a love affair with another woman before coming to Wangqing. That was the inside story of Lee's life the people narrated to refute his argument, so that it was impossible to draw a hasty conclusion about its authenticity.

They attacked Lee by resorting to such a low-down method of referring to his personal life just to prove that he would do anything to beat his opponents in argument, as he was a man with such a retaliatory spirit as expelling the woman he had loved to a strange land.

Another man reminded the meeting of the fact that Lee was a "remnant of the Tuesday group" who had zealously followed certain officials of the Manchurian general bureau of the Communist Party of Korea. He even disparaged Lee by saying that it would not be unreasonable to view his opposition to closing the guerrilla zones as a relapse of the disease of factionalism.

It was mean in all respects to pick holes in one's opponent's argument by telling a love story that had ended in failure or by labelling him as a remnant of factionalism. But Lee Kwang Lim was also to blame, for while describing himself as the most faithful defender of the people and the most thoroughgoing spokesman of the people's opinions and interests, he did not hesitate to label others preposterously as Right opportunists, betrayers of people and as those inviting unpardonable suicides.

We could understand why Lee Kwang Lim was dead set against the evacuation of the guerrilla zones. Dissolving them was painful also for us. Where on earth could such people be found who would be coldhearted enough to abandon without regret and affection the home bases which they had built with their own hands, tended with their hearts and defended like an impregnable fortress, regarding them as "heaven"? We Needless to say, Lee Kwang Lim must have felt no less attachment to the guerrilla zones than we. Nevertheless, in view of the prevailing situation at the time the long frontal confrontation with a powerful enemy having enormous military potentials while confining ourselves in fixed guerrilla zones - the liberated areas - could be called pure adventurism by the measure of all fair yardsticks. It would lead to self-destruction.

In 1933 or in 1934, when the vitality of the guerrilla zones was at its height, we did not dare mention it. At that time we had regarded them as an oasis or an earthly paradise. Why, then, did we decide to relinquish them now, in 1935? Was it a whim? No, it was not. It was neither a whim, nor a vacillation nor a retreat. It was a bold, strategic measure which could be called "one step forward".

We were determined in 1935 to close down the guerrilla zones because it was a requirement of the objective and subjective circumstances prevailing in those days.

We could say that the guerrilla zones set up along the Tuman River had fulfilled their mission and tasks. The greatest task of the guerrilla zones had been to protect and train the revolutionary forces and, at the same time, to lay firm political, military, material and technical foundations for further expansion and development of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. But, at that time we had not defined the period of the fulfillment of the task as three or four years. We had only thought that the shorter the period, the better it would be.

In the heat of the armed struggle the army and people had become unconquerable fighters. The guerrilla army which had had several dozens of soldiers at the outset had now developed into a people's revolutionary army with enormous strength that was capable of large-scale battles to defend the guerrilla bases and of attacking cities. The people's revolutionary army accumulated a wealth of political and military experience, the experience of fresh, original guerrilla warfare.

The guerrilla war was a blast furnace and a political and military academy that produced fighters. And this blast furnace produced only pure steel. Those who had tilled stony fields or raised cattle and horses in the landlords' stables had become competent fighters after having been tempered in this blast furnace. The anti-Japanese political and military academy made fighters of even those rustic dunces and casual laborers who had thought that wealth and poverty depended on the lines of their palms, or on what the fortune tellers and sorceresses had to say.

I once had been convulsed with laughter by Kim Ja Rin's story about the days when he was a manservant, for that story had been tinted with such comedy that no one could listen to it without laughing.

One day Kim Ja Rin had driven an ox of the landlord, his master, to the field at dawn as usual. While he was cutting the grass edible for the ox with a sickle, a train had suddenly appeared at a mountain bend, running at full speed. He had stopped working and had sat down on the ridge of the field to gaze for a while at the train. By chance his eyes had caught a glimpse of a smart gentleman smoking at the entrance of one carriage. For no reason he had thought the man's smart appearance detestable, so he had shaken his fist at the gentleman, which had been a sort of provocation at those who ate their fill and were well-clad. The gentleman, too, had shouted back and shaken his fist, glaring fiercely at him. His straw hat had blown away during his tirade. He had waved his hands a few times in the air in dismay trying to catch it, but after a short while he had disappeared with the speeding train. And his hat had fallen to a swamp along the railway.

Kim had run to the marsh to pick up the hat. He put it on his head and climbed up the railway dike, thinking that now he had become a rich man. As luck would have it, he had found a five-fen silver coin wrapped in a handkerchief on the dike. The handkerchief had flown along with the straw hat from the head of the gentleman.

Kim in his teens had pondered for a whole day on what to buy with that five fen; he had gone to a casino that night with the hat of that gentleman on his head, a casino where the young folk of well-to-do families gathered at night to enjoy themselves. With that five fen as capital, he had fortunately won a great sum of money from them in one night.

Kim had cleared off his debts to the landlord with the money and given some of it to a poor old neighbor who had lived his whole life in poverty and tears. Though the remainder was small, this young servant had reckoned that the money was still enough for him to live fairly well for some years.

However, in less than a year he had again begun to suffer from debts. He had worked like a horse to earn as much money as possible. He had had the idea that if he worked hard he could become well-off, improve his lot and even rise in the world. But labour had not given him wealth nor improved his standard of living. The harder he had worked, the more wretched he had become and the more ill-treated. He was a clever man with great strength, however, he had not been treated as a human being, but as a beast, because he was poor.

Kim Ja Rin resisted point-blank those who ill-treated and molested him. If he was in a bad temper, he would grab those who had annoyed him by their throats and give them a good punch. But he was unable to eke out a livelihood. Later he had come to the guerrilla zone in Wangyugou and had joined the guerrilla army; he became one of the five best machine-gunners in Jiandao.

Lee Tu Su, the hero of the battle at Hongtoushan, widely known among our people as an undying man, was once a beggar.

The guerrilla zone was a cradle that nurtured tens of thousands of anti-Japanese heroes, heroines and martyrs. Even toothless old women became agitators who cried for an anti-Japanese struggle once they came to a guerrilla zone. Every person was a hard worker there, a guard, a combatant, an efficient organizer, propagandist or man of action. Jo Tong Uk, Jon Mun Jin, O Jin U, Park Kil Song and Kim ThaeK Kun were all prominent revolutionaries who were trained in the Wangqing guerrilla zone. The anti-Japanese heroes and heroines shed sweat and blood to forge an unprecedented history of resistance that won the world's admiration.

The revolutionary ranks became united into a great family that no force could ever break through arduous struggle against factionalism and Left and Right opportunism. A firm mass basis for the armed struggle and Party building was laid and the anti-Japanese allied front with the Chinese people became unbreakable - all these successes were won in the three to four years after the guerrilla zones were established. Would it have been possible for the Korean and Chinese communists to register all of them without a strategic base, without the guerrilla zones? Would it have been possible for them to carry out in such a thoroughgoing, wonderful way the strategic tasks facing the first stage of the anti-Japanese revolution without the launching base, supply base and rear base of the guerrilla zone?

Kim Myong Hwa had been a woman in the lowest rung of society who had eked out her living by making

hats out of horsehair. She now lived a life worthy of a human being in the guerrilla zone and grew to be a soldier of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in the heat of the anti-Japanese war. She could not have trodden this amazing path of development if she had not been in the guerrilla zone. She would not have been able to exist, not to speak of developing.

Among the revolutionary fighters born of the anti-Japanese war were former hunters, butchers, schoolteachers, raftsmen, smiths, a drugstore keeper like Lim Chun Chu, and a physician like So Chol. There were young men and women who came from the General Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria, the General Federation of Korean Youth in South Manchuria and the General Federation of Korean Youth in China or fresh from schooling in urban communities as well as simple young men from the countryside. The guerrilla zones reared people with different family backgrounds and from all walks of life into faithful soldiers who acted strictly to command, into beloved men and women of the time who fought for their fatherland and nation at the risk of their lives in the forefront of the anti-Japanese, national salvation struggle.

Our decision to set up guerrilla zones in the form of liberated areas in the mountainous sites in Jiandao was proved right and timely through practice. But, at the time when the vitality of the guerrilla zones was still being demonstrated, we emphasized in Yaoyinggou the urgency of the dissolution of the guerrilla zones. Why? Because there was no need to defend the guerrilla zones any longer as they had fulfilled their mission and tasks.

The revolutionary situation in the Jiandao area in the mid-1930s required the Korean and Chinese communists to change their line to cope with the developments in the new age.

To defend the guerrilla zones in the same way as we had done while shouting for a do-or-die battle while entrenched in them, was, strictly speaking, tantamount to maintaining the status quo without any will to develop the revolution any further. If the revolution could be likened to flooding water, their contention was nothing but arguing for it to stay in a lake or in a reservoir, instead of flowing out to the sea.

Revolution can be likened to a large, long river, which, breaking against steep rocks and roaring, whirling and eddying through gorges, meanders towards the sea, taking billions of tiny drops of spray with it. Have you ever seen a long river flowing back towards mountains, instead of flowing into the sea? A backward flow or standing still is not for rivers. The river flows forward all the time. It runs ceaselessly to the distant sea, its destination, while overcoming obstacles and embracing its tributaries. The river does not become stale because it moves without stopping or rest. If it stops its flow even for a moment, decay will set in some corner and all sorts of plankton will reproduce in it to build their kingdoms.

If the revolution excludes innovation and regards existing policies as absolute, it will be like a river that has stopped flowing. The revolution must renovate its tactics steadily as required by new circumstances and conditions to attain the strategic goals it has set.

Without such renovation, the revolution cannot escape stagnation and standstill. If there is a man who



thinks that a method will be valid 50 years later and will keep its value absolute even after 100 years, then where on earth could an illusory man more foolish than he be found? We cannot call it otherwise than a stand that neglects the independence, creativity and consciousness of the human being.

Tactics are always of relative significance. They can represent a moment, a day, a month, a quarter or a period. In the process of leading a strategy to success, there can be ten or a hundred tactics. Emphasizing one prescription of tactics for a strategy is not a creative attitude towards the revolution; this is a dogma. A dogma means a foolish suicide of binding oneself hand and foot. Where dogmatism prevails, one can expect neither fresh, vital politics nor a vigorous revolution.

Creativity and innovation are the sources of power that make revolution as dynamic as a long river because they really represent the essential demands of the popular masses who desire indefinite progress and prosperity in order to live a life of independence. In this sense, creativity and innovation can be called an engine propelling the revolution. It will not be exaggerating to say that the speed of the development of a nation depends on the horsepower of this engine.

The Korean revolution has reached the threshold of the 21st century, driven by this engine. What is the most important political subject our Party is discussing today when we are within a stone's throw of the 21st century? This is the methods by which we should defend and develop the socialism of our own style centered on the masses still further, confronted with the strong blockade imposed by allied imperialism.

Even a century ago the Korean peninsula was surrounded by the Great Powers. Their warships were always on the sea off Inchon. Whenever the feudal government took a stand of rejecting Westerners and the Japanese, sticking to the policy of national isolation, they would fire several shells and demand open-door policy. The Japanese imperialists fabricated a pro-Japanese cabinet and manipulated it to enforce the reform of the nation's politics. The Japanese advisers, ministers and emissaries they had sent hovered around the King and Queen. This was also a form of encirclement.

Encirclement and blockade have been trials imposed upon the Korean nation historically by foreign aggressors and imperialists. I, along with my nation, have lived my whole life in this encirclement and blockade. Is this a fate brought about by the country's geopolitical characteristics? Needless to say, these could be the reason. If the Korean peninsula was situated at a corner of a glacier in Alaska or in the Arctic, the predilection of the Great Powers for our country might possibly be changed, isn't that so?

But such an "if" does not exist. It does not matter where a country is situated. The nations following an independent road without kowtowing to the Great Powers must always be prepared to become targets of the Green Berets or victims of many Torricelli Bills wherever they are situated on Earth. Therefore, those who are determined to live independently must always be ready throughout their lives to break the siege imposed by the imperialists.

The anti-Japanese guerrilla bases in Jiandao were in a tight siege in 1935, too. That year the enemy's siege reached its apex. While we had decided to come to a finale in the revolution by changing our lines, the

enemy attempted to achieve a decisive victory in their purge of "communist bandits" by tightening the siege to the maximum. The Japanese imperialists mobilized hundreds of thousands of their crack troops, encircled the guerrilla zones in double and triple rings and launched a "punitive" attack every day to stamp all the living creatures there off the face of the earth.

The enemy's main scheme to break the relations between the revolutionary army and the people lay in its policy of the concentration village. In accordance with this policy the people living in all the administrative districts outside the jurisdiction of the people's revolutionary government were driven into the concentration villages surrounded by earthen walls and forts whether they liked it or not to lead a mole's life under such immoral laws as the five-household joint surveillance system and the ten-household joint responsibility system, subject to the medieval order.

The enemy set fire to tens of thousands of houses and villages that were scattered all over Manchuria, issued ultimatum-like orders for people to evacuate; they mercilessly moved them to earthen-walled villages in the flat areas in order to easily rule them by relying on the "peaceful villages" guarded by their army, police and armed self-defense corps. But the main purpose was to break the blood-sealed ties of unity between the army and the people once and for all, that great obstacle in their "purge of communist bandits", by means of such man-made barriers as earthen walls, forts, moats, fences, searchlights and wire entanglements. The enemy knew that the guerrilla army was the protector of the people and that the latter was a rear base and an important information source of the former.

Once they had confined the people within the earthen walls, they could mobilize them en masse for various kinds of compulsory labour such as the construction of road and other military facilities, keep such projects in strict secret, and easily requisition manpower, funds and materials whenever necessary.

The enemy intensified anti-communist propaganda with the building of the concentration villages. They said that it was because of the Communist Party and the revolutionary army that the people were forced to leave their beloved homes and go to live in concentration villages and that because the Communist Party and the revolutionary army, in collusion with the people, were disturbing the peace, the authorities had been compelled to do away with all the scattered villages and build "peaceful villages" in which the people could live free from the troubles the "communist bandits" and mounted rebels caused.

The enemy built square earthen walls and drove 100 or 200 households into each of the walled villages. Houses were built in rows like the residential quarters in a modern industrial center in order to facilitate police surveillance. The people from one village, once they were in the concentration villages, were separated in a way that they could not become neighbors; even the people who were relatives or intimate friends could not be neighbors as they had been dispersed in different directions. This measure was for preventing like-minded people from conspiring for a disturbance of the peace and from an attempt to form secret societies.

How they schemed to sow the seeds of dissension and estrangement between the residents of the concentration villages can be seen from the five-household joint surveillance system alone. They formed a group of five households and, if one of them was found to be communicating with the guerrilla army,

they punished all the households in that group; in the worst cases, they killed all the people of the five households. This was the notorious five-household joint surveillance system.

The administrative officials, armed police and army strictly controlled food grains to prevent even a pound of rice from getting out to the people's revolutionary army. When the people went to work beyond the earthen walls, the police searched their lunchboxes to see if they had extra rice for the "communist bandits", and indiscriminately deprived them of their lunchboxes if they had more than their share. The peasants living in the concentration villages were not allowed to go beyond the walls before dawn even though they wanted to begin work earlier to deal with the arrears of field work, and they had to be back before dusk. It was almost impossible for the revolutionary army to expect any food supplies from the people in the concentration villages.

The farm products from the guerrilla zones could not satisfy the food demands of the soldiers and the inhabitants. Worse still, the enemy incessantly hampered their farm work. The crops as well as the people became objects of their scorched-earth operations. They trampled sprouting crops, burnt growing crops, harvested and carried away ripe crops by mobilizing armed men. This was a mean hunger operation and strangling siege for starving the army and people to death in the guerrilla zones whom they were unable to annihilate through arms.

The "Minsaengdan" had been dissolved, but the enemy's scheme to divide and disintegrate the revolutionary ranks from within and without was more vicious than ever. The leaflets enticing our men to surrender carried pictures of pretty nude girls and pornographic pictures of intimate relations. Beautiful women, bribed by money, wormed their way into our ranks under the guise of a Rosa Luxemburg or Joan of Arc and became absorbed in corrosive schemes to benumb the military and political cadres and to hand them over to the police or the gendarmerie.

All this was a great murderous farce used to reduce the guerrilla zones in Jiandao into a solitary island totally isolated from the world of humanity, to raze them to the ground and strangle them.

If we had failed to comprehend the developments and become engrossed in defending the exposed guerrilla zones, the revolutionary army would have ended up in a loss of military initiative and in being drawn into an endless war of attrition. Then, the revolutionary forces trained for several years would have broken up. To have become preoccupied with the defense of the narrow guerrilla zones would have resulted in playing into the hands of the enemy frenziedly trying to crush all the soldiers and people in the Red territory through three-dimensional warfare.

It was justifiable that the majority of those attending the meeting criticized the argument of defending the guerrilla zones to the last man as adventurism. What I still think strange is that most of those who insisted on the defense of the guerrilla zones at the Yaoyinggou meeting were self-important men extremely dogmatic and Leftish in their everyday life.

Strangely enough, they gave wide berth to people who had a creative and innovative attitude and belittled

those with dreams and imagination.

Nevertheless, we managed to persuade these radical, self-opinionated people at long last at the Yaoyinggou meeting. The issue on relinquishing the guerrilla zones, unlike the issue on the anti-'Minsaengdan" struggle which had been decided to be submitted to the Comintern, was settled by the meeting's decision. This was yet another success achieved in our fight against Leftist adventurism.

The Yaoyinggou meeting marked a turning-point for the people's revolutionary army to switch over from strategic defense of the guerrilla zones to a new stage of strategic offensive.

Thanks to the decision of the meeting, we were able to leave the narrow guerrilla zones to greet a new age in which we could energetically conduct active guerrilla warfare with large units in the vast area of northeast China and Korea. The arena of the people's revolutionary army activities, which had been confined to the five counties in Jiandao, would expand dozens of times. Needless to say, the wider the scope of our activities became, the deeper the quandary the enemy, blockading the narrow area, would find itself in.

It would be comparatively easy for them to surround the five counties, but it was quite a different matter with the several provinces in northeast China. So far they had had an easy time of it, cooped up in fixed areas after encircling the guerrilla zones, but from that time on they were forced to fight battles which had been unprecedented and had not been dealt with in military manuals, treading on the heels of the people's revolutionary army.

The enemy described our evacuation of the guerrilla zones as "signifying the decline of the communist bandits in Jiandao" as a "result of the thoroughgoing punitive operation of the Imperial Army through dispersed disposition", but they had to recognize it as a voluntary act based on new tactics for switching over to large-scale guerrilla actions and as an offensive measure. This new strategic measure made the enemy uneasy, striking terror into them.

Knowing that we were evacuating the guerrilla zones, the enemy interfered with our efforts in every possible way. They further tightened the military blockade, on the one hand, to prevent the army and people from slipping out of the guerrilla zones and, on the other, conducted an ideological offensive in every way to confuse the minds of the people by misleading public opinion. They said that the abandoning of Red territories meant the end of the armed struggle and that the communists' quitting of guerrilla zones signified abandoning the guerrilla movement. These manoeuvres of the enemy were the major obstacle to our efforts to evacuate the guerrilla zones.

In addition, the people did not welcome the evacuation and this more than anything else troubled us. It was no wonder that they did not accept the new line without mental agony which even a political and military cadre like Lee Kwang Lim had not readily agreed to. Some people entreated us not to do away with the guerrilla zones, asking, "Why are you so eager to suddenly abandon the guerrilla zones today, zones which you publicized as 'heaven' until yesterday? What is it all about?" The old man, O Thae Hui,

submitted a petition to us on behalf of the people in Shiliping entreating us not to relinquish these zones.

Various conjectures and judgements were made by the people in the guerrilla zones. Each day one or two ominous rumours of doubtful origin spread, confusing the people. Rumour had it that the revolutionary army was evacuating the Red territories to lighten its burden of protecting the people or that the guerrilla army was leaving Jiandao to fight in the homeland by basing itself on the Rangrim Mountains in Korea. Some people said that the revolutionary army might be going deep into the Soviet Union or China proper to recover from its state of exhaustion and to expand its forces on a large scale before coming back to Jiandao. On top of these conjectures, misleading rumours set afloat by the enemy's appeasement squads were rife, plunging the public opinion of the guerrilla zones into chaos.

We held a joint meeting of the army and the people in Yaoyinggou and patiently explained the urgency and correctness of dissolving the guerrilla zones. The delegates dispatched to various counties and revolutionary organizational districts in east Manchuria convened meetings of like nature and enlightened the army and people. The people understood very well that not to dissolve the guerrilla zones meant death, and accepted the policy as a justifiable strategic measure.

However, the majority of the people backed out at the practical stage of dissolution, refusing to go to the enemy-controlled area. They pleaded, saying, "It's alright if we have to live on grass and water boiled with animal hides in the guerrilla zone. We'd rather die of hunger here than go to the enemy-ruled area. How can we live there under the harassment of the Japs? We'll die here if we have to, but don't send us there."

Under the slogan, "Let us persuade the people repeatedly!" we called at their houses every day. We held meetings of districts and organizations to persuade them, but quite a few of the people stuck to their opinion that they would not move to the enemy area.

I am one of those who well know what great strength the propaganda and agitation of the communists produce. Some comrades say that it is an infinite strength. But you can't say that it works in all circumstances. This can be proved by the fact that many people did not move to the enemy area, but went deep into the mountain valleys instead.

Some people volunteered to join the army to escape from having to live under enemy rule. Even the Children's Corps and Children's Vanguard members who were not old enough to join the army irritated us with their requests to follow the revolutionary army. At that time Hwang Sun Hui clung to the sleeves of the guerrillas and insisted that if they would not take her with them, they had to shoot her. So the Yanji guerrilla unit accepted her into the guerrilla army. It probably was due to her persistence that she, as a small and fragile woman, surmounted the difficulties of armed struggle, risking her life thousands of times, and is still adding glory to herself as a revolutionary fighter today. Thae Pyong Ryol and Choe Sun San are also veterans who joined the revolutionary army when the guerrilla zones were being evacuated.

At that time we recruited many young men and women and even children into the guerrilla army.

Officials of the Party, the YCL and the people's revolutionary government, who had braved all sorts of hardships with the people for years in the guerrilla zones, took up arms and joined our ranks. Some people volunteered to work in the sewing units, expanded rapidly in this manner.

The units of the people's revolutionary army, with the people's warm support and encouragement, tried their best to make preparations, obtain supplies and improve the arms needed for guerrilla warfare in extensive areas. In those days the Women's Association members worked with full devotion, emptying the drawers of chests to make uniforms, knapsacks, handkerchiefs, puttees and tobacco pouches for the soldiers of the revolutionary army who were leaving the guerrilla zones.

We, in turn, gave of our best for their evacuation. The main thing was to expedite the preparations for the people's evacuation, to meet their demands and the actual situation.

How detailed and substantial the preparations for moving them were at that time can be seen from the census, taken in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao shortly before the evacuation of the people. The census contained the names of the people who were to leave the guerrilla zones for other places, their ages, occupations, the names and addresses of their relatives and friends, their official duties, their levels of education, technical skills, destinations, the amount of food grain they had, and so on.

In accordance with this list, the officials of the guerrilla zones classified the people to be sent to the enemy area, to the homeland, and to deep mountains where they would be able to farm. They also grouped separately the people who could go to their relatives and those who could not, children without any support and patients, and evacuated them in a trustworthy manner with an armed escort.

Each of the families evacuated to the enemy area, homeland or to mountainous areas was granted about 30 to 50 yuan of aid money, and was also supplied with fabrics, footwear, vessels, and a variety of other necessities and kitchen utensils. We fought several battles to obtain the money and materials to be distributed among the people. Of these battles I still vividly remember the dramatic raid on the concentration village in Dawangqing, an unusual battle in which O Paek Ryong taught his uncle a lesson. It was also a kind of tragi-comedy in the history of the suffering of our nation that O Paek Ryong slapped his uncle's face.

We had captured a large amount of weapons and supplies in the battle of the village?20 Model 38 rifles, 40 cattle and horses, dozens of sacks of rice and wheat flour, tens of thousands of yuan of money and so on and so forth. These trophies were too much for the soldiers to carry themselves. The officers fetched people from the village 500 to 600 meters away from the battle site. An important tactical principle of guerrilla warfare was swiftness in the attack and withdrawal; unless the trophies were disposed of quickly, the withdrawal of our unit would be delayed and it would give the enemy a chance to counterattack.

At this urgent moment a mustached peasant would not carry a load and only grumbled. He even prevented others from carrying loads, saying, "Hey, you'll get into trouble for carrying loads for the

guerrilla army. Don't be rash for the sake of the future!" Unable to bear with him, O Paek Ryong said, "If you don't feel like carrying loads, sir, then go home."

But the man, instead of going home, continued fussing about their meeting with disaster if they carried the loads.

O Paek Ryong lost his self-control and slapped his face. Then, he asked a distant relative, "Isn't that fellow a reactionary?"

"Why? That's O Chun Sam, your uncle."

O Paek Ryong was very surprised. It surprised him that his uncle was behaving like a fool, not as a Korean would do, and what was even more surprising, he had not seen his uncle until he was over 20 years old. When he was still a baby, his uncle had left his family and wandered from place to place. So he did not know his uncle and vice versa. While he had grown up to be a revolutionary, his uncle had turned into a weak man who feared the revolution, and was so feeble-minded and cowardly that he not only shunned the revolutionary struggle himself but also hated to see his children take part in it. O Paek Ryong was sorry that he had slapped his uncle's face, but did not know how to apologize. Instead, he sent him a letter through a distant relative, which read:

Dear Uncle:

I behaved badly to you because I didn't know you, so please forgive me. If you don't want to be treated badly by the young people, join the revolution.

As his nephew had advised, O Chun Sam did revolutionize his family later on. He not only became a revolutionary himself but led his wife and children to participate in the anti-Japanese struggle. His son, O Kyu Nam, sacrificed his youth on the road of struggle.

It was said that whenever he had the opportunity, O Chun Sam would say to his friends, "After all, my nephew's hand reformed me."

O Paek Ryong was, of course, severely criticized for having harmed the relations between the army and people. An uncle is the nearest relation to a man after his parents, but from the point of view of the people's revolutionary army, O Chun Sam was one of the people. Although he had played a part in the tragi-comedy, the trophies he had carried through the enlisting of the people were of great help to the evacuees in their future lives.

The correctness of the measures for dissolving the guerrilla zones was verified in life by the process of the overall development of the history of the anti-Japanese, national liberation struggle, which glorified the anti-Japanese revolution that was on the upswing in the latter half of the 1930s and which was waged dynamically for the finale of the country's liberation.

The units of the people's revolutionary army, after dissolving the guerrilla zones on their initiative, launched into wider areas, frustrating the enemy's attempt to corner our resistance forces into the narrow mountainous area in Jiandao and to stifle them. The large and small units of the people's revolutionary army undauntedly defeated the enemy's numerical and technical superiority in the vast areas of south and north Manchuria and the northern region of Korea. The people's revolutionary army's dissolution of the guerrilla zones in the form of liberated areas and advancing into wider areas was a great event of launching out onto a vast plain from a valley.

With the armed struggle as a powerful background, the people who had left the guerrilla zones struck root in the vast plain and expanded their organizations; they began to sow seeds of the revolution in that vast land. Each of the people, except a few who had signed notes of submission, became a kindling and a match that set the continent on fire. Our political operatives churned up the enemy area.

The dissolution of the guerrilla zones started in May 1935 and ended in early November of that year when the Chechangzi guerrilla zone was evacuated.

The evacuation of the guerrilla zone in Chechangzi was finished about half a year later than in the others, primarily because of the tenacious siege by the enemy who had surrounded it in double and triple rings and waited for the people to starve to death, and also because of the irresponsible attitude and inefficiency of the officials in charge of the people's lives in this district.

When choosing the sites for the guerrilla zones at the Mingyuegou meeting, the people from Helong had strongly insisted that Chechangzi was a suitable place. Kim Jong Ryong, a delegate from Antu County, had also said that Chechangzi was ideal. This area with its fertile land, thick forests and steep mountains was an ideal natural fortress on which both we and the enemy had set eyes. It was a desolate, mountainous area, no different from any other areas in Jiandao, but it was very highly evaluated by the modern geomancers who had acquired a knowledge of military affairs in the course of guerrilla warfare.

This place, in view of its name, had nothing mysterious in the military sense. The natives had said that Chechangzi meant a place where carts were made. In order to prove the military importance of Chechangzi for the guerrilla army the people from Helong had asserted that the unit of Hong Bom Do had allured the Japanese army to the banks of the River Gudong and annihilated it in Qingshanli probably because of the unique features of this place.

We had dispatched the Independent Regiment to the area of Antu in the spring of 1934 to give armed support to the construction of a guerrilla zone in Chechangzi. Kim Il Hwan, Kim Il and other political workers had also gone to Chechangzi. The Independent Regiment chased a company of the puppet Manchukuo army out without great difficulty, which had been stationed in the vicinity of Chechangzi, and became the new master of the place. With the backing of this regiment, the people in the Yulaifgcun guerrilla zone swarmed into Chechangzi and established the Helong county people's revolutionary government across the River Gudong; later the people from Wangyugou and Sandaowan arrived one after another via Shenxiandong to this place and hoisted the flag of the Yanji county people's revolutionary



government at the entrance of the Dongnancha valley. In this way, the people's revolutionary governments from two different counties existed side by side for one year - a strange phenomenon.

The Chechangzi guerrilla zone had advanced in high spirits just like a vehicle with two engines, or like a carriage pulled by a pair of white horses with bluish manes. The food situation had not been so bad in the early stage.

The members of the Party leadership who had been dispatched from Antu, according to the decision of the Yaoyinggou meeting, were to guide the work of evacuating the Chechangzi guerrilla zone. But they did not even inform the army and people of the policy of dissolving the zone; worse still, they attempted to kill the special representative we had sent there, under the charge of being a "Minsaengdan" suspect. When I heard about it later, I was very surprised.

Chechangzi was the last stronghold on which the revolutionary masses in Jiandao, particularly in Yanji, Helong and Antu, relied. Probably it was because this was the last stronghold that the officials in charge of the evacuation of this zone had taken such an irresolute stand.

I must say that it was indeed admirable how the people of Chechangzi, shoulder to shoulder with the army, had defended the guerrilla zone in the suffocating blockade until November 1935. As I briefly mentioned above, the atmosphere in Chechangzi at that time was not a tranquil one. The Leftists caused anarchy in the zone on the pretext of the struggle against the "Minsaengdan"; worse still, a great number of the revolutionary people suffered severely from famine.

When we started large-unit combined operations in the area of Mt. Paektu, Kim Phyong, Ryu Kyong Su, O Paek Ryong and Park Yong Sun often recalled the hunger they had suffered in Chechangzi. Even after liberation, Kim Myong Hwa, Kim Jong Suk, Hwang Sun Hui, Kim Chol Ho, Jon Hui and other women veterans, whenever they sat down to a meal, would cry on remembering the days in Chechangzi. Kim Myong Hwa and Kim Jong Suk had been cooks for the corps headquarters at that time.

The situation of the guerrilla zone was reflected on the headquarters dining-table. The cooks climbed the mountains every morning to bark the pine-trees for Wang De-tai and other commanders at headquarters. They had to prepare two bundles of pine-tree bark as large as the bundles of bean stalks for a day's meal of the headquarters. They boiled the bark in a water of strong ashes of oak for over three hours, scooped it out after it had become soft, rinsed it in the river before pounding it with a paddle and then washed it again in fresh water. They repeated these processes several times until suppertime and then mixed it with rice bran to make gruel or cakes. This was the best food in Chechangzi.

If one ate these cakes, one had clogged anuses. Children had a hard time of it in those days to make their bowels move. Their mothers would dig out the clogs in their anuses with sticks, with tears stinging their eyes. Even grown-ups suffered a great deal from clogged anuses. And yet, they again ate the food made of pine-tree bark the next day.

They had to eat food without salt. They could eat salt-less gruel and cakes, but it was difficult to eat salad or soup made of edible herbs without salt. Sometimes the messengers who would come there gave them a few grains of salt from the small pouches they carried at their waists. Several people would touch a grain of it with their tongues lightly by turns before handing it over to others. It was indeed tantalizing.

When the pine-tree bark ran out, they would go to the rice mill and collect rice bran and make gruel. That gruel was much better for eating than the gruel made from old herbs. Herb gruel was so coarse and hard that they felt pain in their throats each time they ate it. Even such gruel was not sufficient, and many people died of hunger.

All the people waited for spring. They believed that in spring the merciful, plentiful land would deliver their pitiful lives from starvation. But even spring could not prevent death of hunger, either. What spring gave them were weak, negligible new sprouts that had emerged from under the snow. These sprouts were not enough to sustain them.

The people began to catch snakes that had not yet awoken from their winter sleep. And then they caught rats. Rodents were extinguished in Chechangzi. Frogs and their spawn became the people's foodstuff. When Kim Chol Ho was recalling how tasty boiled frog spawn had been as they were glutinous and soft like boiled millet, I, on the contrary, shuddered as if that sticky stuff was in my throat. Even though I had partaken of a variety of food with the guerrillas, I could hardly have any reasonable imagination of the taste of boiled frog spawn.

The fur-lined shoes which they had used while ploughing, were also put into the pots. After drinking a bowl of tasteless water boiled with these shoes, the people of the guerrilla zone sowed seeds, crawling just as the soldiers do. They dug out the seeds after two or three days of sowing to eat them. The people's revolutionary government and mass organizations kept sentries at the fields sown with seeds to prevent the seeds from being dug out. But even the guards, unable to endure the hunger, ate them stealthily.

At night children would creep into the kitchen of corps headquarters, thinking that they would find leftovers in the mess hall where important persons, like the commander of the army corps, had their meals. But that was an absurd dream. They did not know that, as they were starving, Wang De-tai, the commander of the army corps, too, was starving.

Nevertheless, the children would have died of despair if they had not expected to find some scorched rice at the bottom of the pots in the kitchen of headquarters. When the cooks gave them the scorched rice, they would weep and gulp it down, saying for shame that they would not come again. But the cooks found them prowling around the kitchen the next day, too.

In this famine the people crawled along the furrows of the crop fields to weed them. They scraped the field with their fingers before collapsing; they would rise again and scrape it until the tips of their fingernails became worn out. After a second weeding, the ears of barley came out. The people stripped off the grains of barley which were only juicy without seeds and ate them. They were so weak that they were

unable to rise; they reached their hands out with great difficulty for the ears and chewed on a few grains.

The people of Chechangzi were able to remain pure human beings even though they were nearly dying of hunger, thanks to the fact that the communist ideal which had influenced their way of thinking and conduct for years and the communist ethics of sacrificing themselves for the collective had transformed all the revolutionary masses in Jiandao into saintly, virtuous men and women. The inhumane idea of a man eating another man's limb dared not assert itself in Chechangzi.

In the famine that came before the harvesting of barley, the children, before anybody else, began to die one after another, unable to stand the hunger, followed by the men. A greater misfortune fell upon the women who had been born with the obligation to help their husbands and children until the last moment of their lives even though they, too, were starving; they had to suffer a still worst agony - of covering their husbands and children who had died of hunger with fallen leaves without coffins and not being able to shed tears for a lack of energy, even though they wanted to weep, until they became insensible in front of each corpse.

The famine in Chechangzi was the result of none other than the Japanese aggressor army which had blockaded this zone and of its repeated brutal "punitive" attacks on it. The officials in charge of the guerrilla zone did not make every effort to provide food to the people, either. The reactionaries and wicked elements, who had wormed their way into the leadership, fooled the people with such super-revolutionary speeches as "We must endure hunger. Never give in! To die is to surrender!"

The people of Chechangzi defended the guerrilla zone to the last, refusing to go to the enemy-ruled area, even though they were murdered on a false charge of being a "Minsaengdan" suspect or died from hunger. Their fortitude and their unbreakable revolutionary spirit still move our hearts today after half a century has elapsed.

In October 1935 when the evacuation of the guerrilla zone was on the order of the day, 20 people of "Minsaengdan" suspect families, including those of Kim Il, Nam Chang Su, Lee Kye Sun and Kwon Ti Su, formed a solidarity household in the deep valley of Dongnancha and continued their struggle to cast off the stigma of "Minsaengdan" even in this way until the summer of 1936. This was a unique way of living by which several families joined into one household to eke out a living and to fight in unity. They pooled their household goods into a log-cabin, and elected their head; he would give appropriate assignments to every one by the day, week and month, and review the results of their work; in this way they led an organized life. They were the last defenders of Chechangzi.

The enemy sent in thousands of their troops to effect a tight siege; they changed the previous scorched-earth tactics of "punitive" attack by the army and police into a comprehensive, great siege tactic in military, political, economic and other fields, and repeated the "punitive" operations to crush Chechangzi once and for all, only to be defeated every time.

In October 1935 they committed thousands of their troops for a large "punitive" operation. The brave

defenders of Chechangzi repulsed the enemy's attack heroically this time, too. They even brought down an enemy plane with small arms that was bombing the guerrilla zone. In November of that year most of the people of Chechangzi evacuated from the guerrilla zone towards Naitoushan, together with the army. One of the defenders of Chechangzi Paek Hak Lim who also suffered hunger, fell ill and fought for a long time shoulder to shoulder with the people during the siege, still says,

“If you don't know the extreme misery the people in Chechangzi suffered in the days of the anti-Japanese war, don't dare to utter a word about a hard life! If you don't know how the soldiers and people of Chechangzi endured hunger and cold and survived the enemy's punitive' atrocities even during the siege, don't dare to pride yourself on overcoming some difficulty!”

While organizing and conducting the evacuation of the guerrilla zones we appreciated our people's sense of organization and steel-like discipline and their faithfulness to the revolution and indefatigability, and became confident that we would emerge victorious in any difficult circumstance if we mobilized such people and guided them properly.

Once a people rise as a single unity to combat injustice at the risk of their lives, no blockade or scorched-earth operation will succeed against such a people. This is a convincing lesson demonstrated by the history of the international communist movement. The people all over the world still clearly remember how the international blockade the armed interventionists of 14 countries imposed on the new Russia ended. Germany under Hitler's rule did not succeed in blockading Leningrad, either. Even under the rain of bombs, the defenders of Leningrad continued to bake bread, manufacture tanks and promote production.

In 1943 when the world bourgeoisie was noisily claiming that Leningrad would fall, the working people of this city wrought a miracle by attaining a higher productivity than that of 1942.

The blockade and the "punitive" attacks the army of Chiang Kaisek launched on several occasions against the anti-Japanese bases in China ended in repeated failures. The United States has been blockading Cuba for 30 years, but has not succeeded. She is spending enormous energy to blockade this small island country, but her scheme has not worked out.

Recently the draft resolution proposed by Cuba, in opposition to the Torricelli Bill, was passed at the UN General Assembly. The international community cast a cold glance at the United States' anachronistic policy of blockade. Fidel Castro said, "When a man finds himself in a dangerous situation, a great amount of adrenalin is secreted in his body."

Adrenalin is a hormone which strengthens the function of the heart. This adrenalin symbolizes the optimism of the Cuban communists.

The United States, Japan and other modern imperialist states are now blockading our country in the political, economic and military spheres. But the Korean communists have a sufficient amount of

vitamins of the Juche type with which to frustrate that blockade. The attempt to conquer the Workers' Party of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Korean people by military means or to stifle them politically and economically is a wild daydream, like an attempt to break a rock with an egg.

After the evacuation of the guerrilla zones, small units and political workers actively infiltrated into the homeland. The seeds of the revolution were sown in the vast lands of Manchuria and Korea.

I never forgot Wangqing after the evacuation of the guerrilla zones nor slighted Jiandao. Even though they were evacuated, the five counties in Jiandao were a major theatre of war against the Japanese, which we regarded just as important in subsequent years. The large and small units of the people's revolutionary army, including the unit led by Choe Hyon, fought many battles in Wangqing and its vicinity - raids on the concentration village of Shangcun in Beihamatang, on Sidaohezi, on Zhongpingcun in Baicaogou, on Dalishugou, an ambush at Zhangjiadian, raids on Shangbarengou, on Taiyangcun, and on Dahuangwai, an ambush at Jiapigou, raids on Yongqiucun in Xiaobaicaogou, and on the felling station in Shiliping, the battle of Shitouhe in Chunfangcun, a raid on Shanglaomuzhuhe in Luozigou. Thus, they dealt a telling blow to the enemy.

The enemy diligently tried to check the elusive attacks of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. The military and passenger trains running along major trunk lines in Jiandao, were always escorted by a heavily equipped armored car for their safety. Whenever a passenger train passed mountainous areas at nights, the shades at all the windows were drawn down for a total blackout, and the military police, plainclothes men and railway guards supervised and controlled the passengers of every carriage. If a man looked outside, drawing up a shade, he was abused as an associate with the bandits and his face was slapped.

The enemy tightened the guarding of the concentration villages and mobilized the people by force for guard duty. In some settlements they distributed wooden rifles and an explosive with an ignition device to the residents in order to counter the raiding revolutionary army. How frightened they had been at the energetic activities of the people's revolutionary army can be seen from the fact that the Japanese policemen posted only Chinese and Korean guards of the self-defense corps in the concentration villages at night and they themselves moved from one bedroom to another every night.

Among the Japanese policemen and the members of the self-defense corps of Manchukuo, drug addicts appeared one after another who were weary of war and of armed service.

The "Matsumura incident", which took place in the Shixian area, illustrates what inglorious defeats the Japanese imperialists suffered in the mid-1930s. Matsumura was an intellectual who had been a teacher in Japan before taking refuge in Manchuria; he had been suspected of having become involved in a Red teachers' union. He took 2,000 yen as an advance payment and promised to work as a superintendent at the felling station of Mt. Paektu, a station run by a Japanese. A few months after his appointment, we attacked that felling station.

Matsumura carried the trophies for the revolutionary army, and had a talk with me. He enjoyed our concert performance. Then he said that he now clearly understood how strong the revolutionary army was. He submitted his resignation to the head of the felling station on his return and went back to his native village. He was sure that Japan's defeat was just a matter of time.

The lumberjacks who had been under the influence of the guerrilla zones derailed one train after another in Wangqing and in its vicinity. Although the guerrilla zones had been evacuated, the spirit of these zones remained in Jiandao, striking terror into the hearts of the enemy.

# 11.1. Meeting with My Comrades-in-Arms in North Manchuria

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The people's revolutionary army completed preparations for the second expedition to north Manchuria at the battles on Laoheishan and at Taipinggou. The expeditionary force, which was made up of several companies from the Wangqing and Hunchun Regiments and the young volunteers' corps, left Taipinggou in late June 1935, enjoying a cordial send-off from the people.

The expeditionary force reached Barendou via Shitouhezi and Sidahezi, and then tackled the tricky task of scaling the Laoyeling Mountains. Some of the guerrillas from the Independent Regiment from Antu were in the long, marching columns. Of all the veterans still alive, O Tin U, who belonged to the Wangqing 4th Company at the time, might well have been the only one capable of recalling the second expedition to north Manchuria. Han Hung Gwon, Jon Man Song, Park Thae Hwa, Kim Thae Jun, Kim Ryo Jung, Ti Pyong Hak, Hwang Tong Hae, Hyon Chol, Lee Tu Chan, O Jun Ok, Jon Chol San and others were also on that expedition, but they have passed away.

At the time of the first expedition, the Laoyeling Mountains were covered with deep snow, but on our second expedition the mountains were green with summer foliage. Whereas in October 1934 we ploughed through a snowstorm across these mountains, in June 1935 we had to climb them under a scorching sun, fighting off attacking swarms of mosquitoes. Although the biting cold and heavy snow had been sheer torture, the burning sun and sweat were no less unbearable.

The horses, laden with a mortar and heavy machine-guns, struggled along the steep paths, intertwined with vines and trees. Whenever the horses balked, we would forge ahead by cutting away the thorn bush with our bayonets and sawing away fallen trees.

While scaling the Laoyeling Mountains, the Chinese Worker-Peasant Red Army, under the command of Mao Ze-dong and Zhu De, was successfully stepping up the historic 25,000-li Long March in China proper, breaking through the surrounding rings formed by Chiang Kaisek's army. After reaching River Dadu on May 30, 1935, the Red Army occupied an ancient chain bridge, called Luding Bridge, after a fierce battle, and opened the road for tens of thousands of soldiers on the Long March. May 30 marked the day Shi Da-kai, leader of the Taiping Rebellion, attempted to cross the river; it was also the 10th anniversary of the May 30 atrocities in Shanghai. It should be noted that a daring, death-defying corps of the Red Army had crossed the Luding Bridge on this fateful day.

We were greatly encouraged by the news that they had crossed River Dadu, which arrived at Jiandao, following information on their campaign in Guizhou. After the battle at Luding Bridge, the Red Army successfully crossed Mt. Daxue, one of the most difficult obstacles in its march, and Mt. Jiajin and entered the Gansu Plain.

In those days we were more interested in heartening news such as the international fair, held in Brussels, the opening of the underground railway in Moscow, and the Chinese Red Army's progress on its Long March and occupation of a certain place, rather than the tragic news that the Yangtze River had overflowed, leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, and an earthquake in Taiwan had laid waste to thousands of houses.

Our crossing of the Laoyeling Mountains constituted as great an event as the Red Army's crossing of Mt. Daxue on the Long March. Whenever orders were given for a break in the march, most of the exhausted men on the expedition would drop wherever they were and rest. Snoring would break out here and there. It was no easier to endure drowsiness than hunger. But no one complained at the high speed of the march or requested a slower pace. Everyone moved exactly as their commanders ordered. As everything about the campaign had been explained beforehand, the men knew all about the purpose of the march and were ready to surmount whatever difficulties lay ahead.

The people's revolutionary army could have fought anywhere in east Manchuria, south of the Laoyeling Mountains, or in south Manchuria. Why, then did we tackle a rough march across the steep Laoyeling Mountains, for the first campaign in north Manchuria after evacuating our cradle and home base in east Manchuria? What were the political and military factors leading us to decide to go to north Manchuria, where the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo army forces were concentrated?

The principal motive was to strengthen solidarity with Korean communists active in north Manchuria and pave the way for full-scale cooperation, joint, coordinated action with them. Just as most of the pioneers, leaders and standard-bearers of the communist movement in east Manchuria were Koreans, so the prime movers behind the communist movement in north Manchuria were Koreans. The core of the guerrilla movement in north Manchuria had also been made up of Korean communists.

Zhou Bao-zhong used every opportunity to speak highly of the Koreans painstaking efforts and exploits for the revolution in northeast China. He said:

"In 1930 most of the secretaries of the county and district Party committees in the northeast were Koreans. In Ningan, Boli, Tangyuan, Raohe, Baoqing, Hulin, Yuan and other counties in north Manchuria, to say nothing of many counties in Yanbian, most of the secretaries and members of the county Party committees were Koreans."

One spring day, when the anti-Japanese revolution had reached its final stage, I strolled with Zhou along a sandy track near the north secret camp in the vicinity of Khabarovsk, within a hailing distance of the Amur River. Recalling with deep emotion the joint struggle we had waged in the days of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, he said:

"One could not possibly talk about the development of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army separately from the exploits of the Korean comrades. It's a well-known fact that more than 90 per cent of the 2nd Corps are Koreans.... The protagonists of the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Corps are Koreans - Lee Hong Gwang, Lee Tong Gwang, Choe Yong Gon, Kim Chaek, Ho Hyong Sik and Lee Hak Man. Ever since Wei Zheng-min



and Yang Jing-yu died, you, Commander Kim Il Sung, have been fighting the Japanese for several years, as head of the 1st and 2nd Corps. Those of us, who are responsible for the revolution in northeast China, often feel like bowing to you. We will erect a monument to the Korean martyrs in northeast China when this war is over."

True to his words, a decision was adopted after the war by the Jilin Provincial Party Committee to build a monument in Jilin and Yanbian area to the Korean martyrs.

The Korean people were forced to lead a dog's life by the Japanese and Manchurian government authorities and landlords even in north Manchuria. The vast Song-Liao Plain and other plains connected by wasteland in north and south Manchuria constituted one of the world's largest granaries~ yielding tens of millions of tons of grain annually. But the poor Korean expatriates and pioneers in this place had to suffer a shortage of food, clothing and housing the whole year round.

At a modest party held immediately after the armistice, I saw Lee Yong Ho cry as he recalled the hunger he had suffered during his childhood in north Manchuria. He said it was experienced by his family when living in Wurenban, Sanchakou or in Raohe, so it must have been around 1915. The family had existed one whole autumn on cabbage stems because they had no food grain. He said that it had been as sweet as honey at first, but that after three days it made him feel nauseous. Yong Ho, then a little boy, used to spit the tasteless stuff out under his knees, avoiding his parents' eyes, and drink only thin soup; his mother would cover her face with her skirt and weep.

A pair of trousers made out of a rice sack was all that their poverty could afford to give him. polished rice had been stamped in large blue letters in the middle of the sack. The sack had been cut, with little attention paid to its inside or outside, so that the letters had remained on the outside of the right trouser leg. But that didn't bother him at all, as he did not understand the meaning of those letters. He had perceived them as a mysterious symbol of maternal love and became attached to them. Although he put on his only pair of trousers with those mysterious letters every day, he did not taste rice throughout his boyhood, the rice signified by the letters inscribed on his trousers. This is only one aspect of the poverty suffered by Korean expatriates in north Manchuria in those days.

In his Travelogue to South Manchuria, carried in the magazine Kaebiyok (Awakening), Lee Ton Hwa had said that there were mounted bandits everywhere in Manchuria and that they were extremely dangerous. But the mounted bandits in north Manchuria were more violent than the ones in east and south Manchuria. They provided another source of trouble in addition to the "punitive" atrocities ceaselessly perpetrated by the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo armies. The wild bandits regarded murder as a hobby. Every time hundreds of these bandits, armed with daggers and shotguns, would pounce on them in packs and commit murder, arson and plunder, so that our compatriots had to move from place to place from fear and anxiety.

The bandits would take innocent people hostages and then claim ransoms. They would take the hostages to deep mountain valleys, cut off an ear, a finger or a toe from each one, and send them to the hostages' parents, attaching notes, which explained that these were parts of their sons and that they would kill them,

if the demanded money was not sent by the required date. The families were thus forced to sell their property to save their sons. Or else, in most cases, the hostages were returned home dead.

North Manchuria was never a "paradise of righteous government" or a world where the "concord of five nations" flourished. Social evils and the law of the jungle ruled the land. There, too, Koreans were no better than servants or work animals toiling in the interests of Japanese high-ranking officials, warlords, big business, bankers and merchants. Their cursed lot stirred the Koreans in north Manchuria in the early days to fight against the Japanese for the freedom and independence of their fatherland.

Progressive Koreans in north Manchuria, like those in east Manchuria, initiated the communist movement all on their own. Every Korean, who was knowledgeable, clever and sensitive, joined the communist movement. All wise Koreans believed in communism and were totally devoted to the revolution, shouting, "Down with Japanese imperialism!" and "Down with the landlords and capitalists!"



*Photo: Choe Yong Gun - the commander-in-chief of the Korean People's Army in 1948.*

The pioneers of the communist movement in north Manchuria had started preparations for armed resistance in the early 1930s against the Japanese imperialists. A training course for 200 young Koreans was organized in Baoqing County led by Choe Yong Gon; this partly laid the foundations for the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. The training course, as indicated by its name, was a military academy, offering political and military training to the young, who would constitute the backbone of the future revolutionary army. As I myself had done at Whasung Uisuk School, the trainees studied history and military tactics and practiced shooting. The course comprised 10 companies and Choe Yong Gon was the commander and, concurrently, the chief of general staff, and Park Jin U (his real name is Kim Jin U), the political commissar.

Kim Ryong Hwa, who authored the 250-mile March and was also called "Moustache", had also worked at this course as a company commander. I think he was nicknamed "Approved Moustache" in the mid-1950s, when the anti-US war came to an end in our country. Some changes took place in our people's lifestyles following the laying of the foundations of socialism. Most notably people with moustaches, beards, long hair, shaved heads and shorts disappeared from the streets. The state did not pass any law, stipulating a rigid style of trousers, beards, moustaches or hair, but such wonderful changes happened naturally.

However, only Major-General Kim Ryong Hwa, an anti-Japanese veteran and Director of the People's Army Arsenal, sported a moustache similar to that of Ahn Chang Ho. Some of his comrades-in-arms advised him to shave it off. His wife and children, and even his superiors, "persuaded" him tenaciously, but it all fell on deaf ears. Instead he merely trimmed his moustache in front of a mirror even more enthusiastically every morning. One day he asked me, "Premier, what do you think of my moustache?"

"I think it's a masterpiece. How can you be Kim Ryong Hwa without it, no matter how handsome you

are? I can't picture Kim Ryong Hwa without a moustache."

"Then you approve of my moustache?"

"Approve? It's true that the people gave me, the Premier, great authority, but they still haven't given me the right to rule on other people's beards and moustaches. It's up to you what to do with it. If you like it, keep it, if not, shave it off."

"Then, Premier, everything's fine. Frankly speaking, I've been harassed a great deal because of my moustache. From now on, I shall feel strong."

He was all smiles as he left my office. However, a few months later, he was stopped, by an officer guarding the Cabinet building as he came to visit me, because of that moustache. The duty officers would not let anyone enter my office if their appearance was not clean and hygienic. Hearing the bickering from the entrance, I opened a window and asked the officer what the matter was.

"I told the Major-General that he couldn't enter, until he shaves off his moustache, but he insists that it's an 'approved moustache'. Is it true that you, Comrade Supreme Commander, approved his moustache?" the officer asked, casting a dubious glance at Kim Ryong Hwa.

"If that's the trouble, don't annoy the Major-General any longer. His moustache is inviolable."

Since then, he has been called by his nickname, "Approved Moustache" in the army, instead of his real name.

He was married at nine, and followed the plough at the age of eleven, playing the role of a householder; at the age of 13, as an orderly of Hong Bom Do, he had taken part in the famous battle of Iman, where tens of thousands of enemy soldiers were killed or wounded. That is the kind of brilliant record this veteran soldier had.

The training course at Baoqing was organized with only young Koreans at the beginning owing to the prevailing opinion that Korean independence could only be achieved by an army of pure Koreans, and that chaos would reign if foreigners were in the army. However, the view that a purely Korean army would not facilitate an allied front with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed units and that worse still they might be isolated from the Chinese people, gradually gained weight. Consequently the organizers of the course recruited two Chinese young men.

But these two men turned coat during the training and supplied secrets of the training course to the enemy.

The training course transferred to a place 75 miles away from Baoqing to take shelter from the enemy's whirlwind arrests and built a new building there. But it was unable to survive the enemy's "punitive"

attacks and broke up.

Choe Yong Gon moved the base of his activities to Raohe and organized with Park Jin U, Hwang Kye Hong, Kim Ryong Hwa, Kim Ji Myong and other comrades-in-arms, another training course at a primary school in Sanyitun, involving 70 young men, and selected the best trainees who were well prepared politically and militarily to organize a special red corps (or red terrorist group). Its main mission was to liquidate the enemy's lackeys, guard the military and political cadres and obtain arms. Using them as a backbone, Choe subsequently formed the Raohe Worker-Peasant Guerrilla Army.

Before and after the organization of the guerrilla units in Tangyuan and Raohe, armed units led by Kim Chaek, Ho Hyong Sik, Lee Hak Man, and Kim Hae San were formed successively in Ningan, Mishan, Boli, Zhuhe and Weihe. This marked the start of the protracted resistance against Japan.

Kim Hae San and Lee Kwang Lim laid the foundations of the 5th Corps with Zhou Bao-zhong, and Kim Chaek and Ho Hyong Sik, together with Zhang Shou-jian and Zhao Shang-zhi, organized the 3rd Corps; Choe Yong Gon, Lee Hak Man, Lee Yong Ho, An Yong and Choe Il, together with Li Yan-lu, rendered meritorious service as standard-bearers, by forming the 4th and 7th Corps.

The army song of the Korean communists could be heard almost everywhere in vast north Manchuria, covering hundreds of thousands of square kilometers from the Laoyeling Mountains in the south to the Amur River in the north and from the Ussuri River in the east to the Daxingan Mountains in the west.

While Kim Chaek led the guerrilla activities, centering on the Binjiang area covering the east and northeast of Harbin, Choe Yong Gon and Lee Hak Man constantly raided, from their bases on the Wanda Mountains, the enemy's concentration villages and supply bases.

In the second half of the 1930s, Ho Hyong Sik, in cooperation with Kim Chaek and Ma Tok San, organized a northwest expeditionary force and advanced to Hailun and several other counties to establish contacts with the guerrilla units in their flank, and made energetic attempts in this area. Kang Kon, using the Laoling Mountains as a base for his activities, attacked the enemy tactfully, operating continually in mountainous and open areas on both sides of the River Mudan. Although young, he was quick-witted and tireless; he rapidly developed into a promising military commander.

The fighters from Jiandao played a great role in the development of the guerrilla movement in north Manchuria. Kim Chaek, Han Hung Gwon, Park Kil Song, An Yong, Choe Il, Jon Chang Chol and others, who had been fully tested and tempered in the practical struggle in east Manchuria, became active organizers, propagandists and leaders in north Manchuria and achieved a breakthrough in the difficult anti-Japanese war.

The Korean communists in north Manchuria always paid serious attention to the overall development of the revolution in east Manchuria and engaged in unremitting efforts to establish contacts with Korean communists, active in east Manchuria. They regularly received news through various channels about east

Manchuria.

Zhou Bao-zhong delivered most of the news to the comrades in north Manchuria. The messengers, who frequented Wangqing from the 5th Corps, led by Zhou Bao-zhong and using Ningnan as its base, and the fighters who had been sent from the 2nd Corps to 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Corps, active in north Manchuria, widely publicized developments in east Manchuria.

The eastern area bureau of Jilin Province (the Eastern Area Party Committee of Jilin Province) also acted as an important propaganda center of east Manchuria. Comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria obtained Red publications through this bureau, published in east Manchuria and even such confidential documents as the Ten-Point Program of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. In those days the bureau operated as a switchboard, connecting east and south Manchuria to north Manchuria and vice versa.

Lee Yong Ho said that while head of the propaganda department of the Raohe County Party Committee, he had been to the bureau and officially received the ten-point program. On his return, he forwarded to his comrades all the information he had obtained at the bureau. He was extremely upset that he lost the original document during the anti-Japanese war. More than any other comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria, Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon, widely publicized our activities. They enthusiastically explained to the soldiers of the people's revolutionary army, to the workers and peasants, the general line, strategy and tactics, and the immediate tasks I had advanced to achieve victory in the Korean revolution and always stressed that one should learn from our battle results and moral traits.

When organizing the Raohe guerrilla army, Choe Yong Gon said to the guerrillas:

"I've heard that the revolutionary struggle in east Manchuria is now progressing in accordance with the strategy of Commander Kim Il Sung. They say that Commander Kim is a young leader and a favorite of the people. This is very fortunate for the white-clad nation (Korean nation? Tr.), which had suffered from a lack of leader. I'd like to take some time off to see him, but I don't know how I can make my wish come true."

He had written to me on four occasions. However, all the messengers, who left north Manchuria to convey the letters to me, had been killed on the way. Only one of them, despite great difficulties, miraculously managed to get near Dunhua, the arena of our unit's activities, but he was also killed, before fulfilling his assignment. If he had not been arrested by the enemy and had resisted for one or two more days, he would have met me. Then, I could have met Choe Yong Gon in some place in Jiandao or somewhere else in north Manchuria or in south Manchuria, the places of our activities, in the mid-1930s, and not in 1941.

When I met Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon in 1941 in Khabarovsk, I was very surprised to discover that they knew my personal history and family background in detail. They even knew that the dimples on my cheeks and bucktooth were targeted as distinguishing marks by Japanese secret agents, who had been hunting me for 10 years, and that tens of thousands of yuan had been set as a reward for my head.

Just as they knew so much about me, I had also learnt a lot about them through various channels. Kim Chaek knew full well that I had received a great deal of assistance from the Rev. Son Jung Doh, while imprisoned in Jirin. And I knew that Kim owed a lot to Ho Hon when behind bars in Sodaemun prison in Seoul. Such revolutionaries had experienced all sorts of hardships; their personal histories and experiences were replete with moving, tearful stories and fantastic episodes. The stories of the hard-working and most courageous individuals were the most interesting to hear. What kind of topics can we expect from loafers who eat the bread of idleness?

On his return from north Manchuria, one messenger of our unit made his comrades-in-arms laugh, by recounting the absurd tale that Lee Hak Man, commander of the 7th Corps, had grown up on milk to the age of eleven. All of us were convulsed with laughter. The guerrillas rebuffed the tale saying that when you turned eleven, you could get married, that it was mere invention and lie that he had taken breast milk at that age. I also considered the tale mere exaggeration.

Later on when I first met Lee Yong Ho, Lee Hak Man's nephew, at the north secret camp in Khabarovsk, I asked him whether it was true that his uncle had been reared on the milk of his elder brother's wife until the age of eleven. He replied in the affirmative.

If your uncle had been reared on the milk of his elder brother's wife, that means that he took the breast of your mother. Didn't your uncle, a bulky man, imbibe all the milk intended for you?"

When I said this, he hastily shielded his uncle, "Not at all. I wasn't left without. My uncle sucked only one breast. The other was mine."

You see: half of your food was therefore exploited by your uncle. That plunder was not a 2:8 or 3:7 system; and yet you speak in his favor.

Lee laughed at my joke till the tears flowed.

"Milk from one breast was enough for me. My mother had plenty of milk. After my birth, her breasts were so swollen that she squeezed out the remaining milk after I had eaten my fill. It was painful to milk by hand and she couldn't squeeze all the milk out. Consequently one day my grandmother told my uncle to suck my mother's breast. He did as he had been told. At first, he spat out what he had sucked, but he swallowed a mouthful once just for fun, and then said that her milk was as delicious as his mother's. He subsequently took her breast every day."

"Your uncle had plenty of guts."

"Yes, he was special. When my grandmother said, 'You take all of Sok Song's milk', he would reply, 'I'll take only one breast.' Sok Song was what I was called as a baby. He stopped taking the milk when I was two or three years old. But he would sit in front of my mother with saliva in his mouth, whenever I drew

on her breasts.”

That day Lee Yong Ho told some more anecdotes about his uncle.

I was totally fascinated by Lee Hak Man's personality. But to my regret, he was then already dead. By the 1940s when I first met Lee Yong Ho, many people in the anti-Japanese forces in north Manchuria had been buried in the wilderness. An Yong, who had fought in several units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in north Manchuria, shed tears when calling out the names of his comrades-in-arms who had been buried in the wilderness of north Manchuria.

But when we scaled the Laoyeling Mountains after the battle at Taipinggou, most of them were still alive and freely roaming the plains and mountains in north Manchuria, destroying the enemy like an angry tiger. These comrades-in-arms were so keen to meet us. They had many unsolved problems and had to overcome many difficulties to ensure cooperation with us. They also had to settle problems in their relations with the Comintern, Chinese communists and people and with the Chinese nationalist armed units. We, too, had many things we wanted to tackle with them. While in east Manchuria our heads ached, owing to the problems caused by the "Minsaengdan". In north Manchuria they had their own problems.

This state of affairs compelled us to hasten our second march to north Manchuria. We awaited from our comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria only the tender feelings of our compatriots. The anti-"Minsaengdan" hassle had transformed the guerrilla zones in Jiandao, where the ethics of love and trust prevailed, into a land devoid of all tenderness. We had felt the absence of human feelings and had longed for them for ages in that wasteland, the human feelings which resembled an oasis. No matter how steep the Laoyeling Mountains were, they could not stop our feelings from flowing like clouds to our friends in north Manchuria.

We also effected the second expedition to north Manchuria to consolidate the militant alliance with the Chinese communists there. an alliance established during our first expedition, and wage a more efficient joint struggle with them as the new times required. In the mid-1930s, the imperialists, alarmed at the advance of progressive people and socialist forces, opposed to imperialism and war, were strengthening their international alliance against the independent forces of the world. Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy and Japan, bent on plunging humanity into the holocaust of a world war were hastening the formation of an anti-communist, anti-peace alliance.

In this situation, consolidation of international solidarity with the communists of all countries, especially the Chinese communists, became a matter of urgency in order to develop the anti-Japanese revolution, as demanded by the new era. It was also the Comintern consistent demand that the units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army strengthen their relations in many places of Manchuria and destroy the enemy by combined effort and thereby overcome the tendency for individual, isolated activities.

At that time the forces of several army corps organized in northeast China were not uniform. There were some differences in the fighting efficiency and preparedness of all the army corps, owing to disparities in the abilities and qualifications of their commanding officers. Every corps fought alone, unconnected to

the corps in its flanks, entrenched mostly in fixed areas. This dispersed state made it impossible for the guerrilla units operating all over Manchuria to make comprehensive use of their forces to meet the changing military and political situation. This weakness could have engendered a piecemeal defeat of the guerrilla units operating in isolation in their fixed areas.

The guerrilla units in east, north and south Manchuria consequently sought to establish mutual contacts. All the guerrilla units in Manchuria had to correct the outmoded method of operating in isolation, defending limited areas in fixed guerrilla zones in the form of liberated areas and courageously develop their military and political activities on a broader scale, in close cooperation with one another. If they had not performed these strategic tasks, it would have proved impossible to raise the guerrilla movement in Manchuria to a higher level or promote its unification.

The anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle had caused discord and mistrust, which could have impeded the common struggle of Korean and Chinese communists. If we went to north Manchuria and cooperated efficiently with the Chinese communists, we could thoroughly dispel this awkward atmosphere.

If we continued fighting in north Manchuria for some months, Wei Zheng-min and Yun Pyong Do, who had gone to Moscow to receive an answer from the Comintern, would return. The meeting with Wei Zhengmin and Yun Pyong Do was another important aim we had set for the expedition.

While crossing the Laoyeling Mountains, the soldiers of the companies, which had switched from the puppet Manchukuo army, now operating under the Hunchun Regiment, suffered many hardships. As they were not accustomed to marching in mountains, they were already exhausted after the first two hours. On my orders Jang Ryong San from the Wangqing Regiment took charge of the three companies and helped them through the march. Jang had worked mostly between Zhuanjiaolou and Sanchakou as a raftsman and was a very strong man. Each time he wielded a bayonet, the surrounding bushes were slashed into heaps. He climbed up the steep mountain path at full speed with two or three soldiers' rifles and knapsacks on his back.

And he would jokingly encourage his fellow soldiers: "Hey, all of you who can't climb this mountain, change out of your pants into skirts and cut off your masculinity! Immediately!"

We scaled the mountains, undergoing all kinds of hardships. But it was only in July that we managed to find with much difficulty the place near Shandongtun, where Zhou Bao-zhong was staying. He had previously been the head of the military department of the Suining Central County Party Committee, but now the new post of commander of the 5th Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army weighed on his shoulders. Several months earlier he had bent over on a stick to greet us but this time he was without a stick and came out to Laoquangou 2.5 miles from his secret camp and embraced me.

Before I even asked, he excitedly told me about the situation in Ningan, "My wound has healed up completely. We've organized a new corps since the departure of the expeditionary force from east Manchuria. The Party and mass organizations in Ningan have been working energetically ever since. All



thanks to your expeditionary force, Commander Kim, which helped us so much last year."

"I'm relieved to hear that your wound has healed. Apparently the previous months have acted in your favor, Zhou. You're the commander of the 5th Corps and many other actions of yours deserve congratulations."

That is how I congratulated him and asked after Ping Nan-yang. As I trudged along the land of north Manchuria, I felt the feelings of friendship we had sealed in the flames of battle the previous year rise to the surface. It was indeed strange that the image of that coarse soldier had been so vividly engraved in my memory, as if he were a childhood friend of mine.

On our arrival at the camp of the 5th Corps, we discussed joint actions with Zhou Bao-zhong, and here there was a slight friction. For Zhou had attempted to impose a course of action for the expeditionary force from east Manchuria on Hou Guo-zhong, commander of the Hunchun Regiment, as if he was giving the orders. Consequently the conversation between the two sides ended in deadlock. At that time, Hu Ren, political commissar of the 5th Corps, was operating in the area of Muling with his corps. Zhou wanted our expeditionary force to go to Muling and help out Hu Ren in the fighting, and then advance to Wuhelin to take control of that area.

It was not difficult to comply with that request. However, Hou, a man with a strong sense of dignity, flatly refused. He apparently took it for an order, rather than a request. An Kil and Kim Ryo Jung held the same opinion. They became angry and said, "We have our own objectives on the course we have to follow. You have no right to order us to do this or that. The 5th Corps is the 5th Corps and the 2nd Corps is the 2nd Corps." They quite rightly lost their temper. As we had come to north Manchuria representing the 2nd Corps, we could not afford to act without discretion on the orders of other peoples even if it was all for the joint struggle.

Zhou called it a mere adventure saying that it did not typify guerrilla warfare for a guerrilla army to carry such heavy weapons as mortars and heavy machine-guns.

I agreed that his remark made some sense, but thought that we should wait and see if the heavy weapons were beneficial or not in guerrilla warfare. When we embarked on the anti-Japanese war, we defined the principle that the guerrilla army should on the whole use light weapons. However, after firing mortars and recognizing their might in the battle of Taipinggou, I came to believe that we should not necessarily rule out the use of heavy weapons in guerrilla warfare, and that they would be very effective in the existing situation if used properly.

In fact, the partisans of the Soviet Union had used big guns and Maxim machine-guns during their Civil War. Even though it was a partial phenomenon, some of the Chinese guerrillas were already using big guns by that time. We could see that Zhou Bao-zhong had gone a bit too far, when he had called it a mere adventure for the expeditionary force from east Manchuria to carry mortars and heavy machine-guns.

To ease the tense atmosphere, I proposed another talk, after giving deeper thought to the plans for joint action, and then the adoption of measures acceptable to both sides. Zhou Bao-zhong agreed. We would therefore have sufficient time to study the detailed plans for joint action and enable the expeditionary force, exhausted from the march, to have a rest.

Shandongtun village was home to about 100 Chinese peasant households. The name of the place originated from the settlement of people from Shandong there. To blockade this village, the enemy had kept a punitive" force of about 200-300 soldiers almost four miles from the village. I made contacts there with the secretary of Ningan County Party Committee and the Party organization in Shandongtun.

Around this time I met Li Yan-lu, the army corps commander, in Shandongtun village. At that time we were billeted on a landlord. Although a landowner, the host was a kind-hearted man, and this made his guests try harder to help out with the household.

One day, while helping the host harvest the wheat, we were caught outside in the rain. We carefully stacked the wheat, so that the crop would not get wet from the rain, and went back to the house. Liu Hanxing said that we had better rest after lunch as it was raining; he himself prepared a variety of dishes for our lunch. I knew that Liu Han-xing was an exceptionally good cook from the time Li Yan-lu's unit was in Wangqing. It was amazing that Liu, a middle-school leaver, was so skilled that he could have dwarfed professional cooks. As well as a skilled cook, he was also, however, a heavy drinker, drinking three cups to our one. We drank wine with his dishes and ate hand-cut wheat noodles. That day I probably drank some wine, because the side-dishes were so delicious.

While eating the noodles, there was a sudden explosion outside. We went out to find dozens of snakes killed in front of the piles of threshed wheat straw. The master of the house had looked after the snakes, believing that they brought luck, but they had been killed en masse by a grenade. The master had not touched them, even though they had crawled into the rooms and under his dining-table. It was a superstitious custom in that area to regard a snake as a kind of sacred guardian.

That day members of the young volunteers" corps, who had followed our unit to north Manchuria, stood sentry in the yard. While taking sentry in turns, it stopped raining and the sun came out. That is when the snakes, which had been in the straw piles, had poked their heads out. The guard, who did not know that people there believed snakes were sacred, had been so scared that he had picked up a hand grenade without thinking and had flung it at the snakes.

The host and hostess were very offended at the death of the snakes. They turned pale as if they were confronting an omen, which spelled misfortune. Zhou Bao-zhong and Liu Han-xing tried to comfort them, but all to no avail. This compelled us to leave the house without even finishing our lunch.

In late July 1935, a composite cavalry unit, comprising hundreds of puppet Manchukuo army soldiers and policemen, flocked to Shandongtun, on hearing of the arrival of the "Koryo red army" from east Manchuria. They numbered several hundred at a rough estimate.

The main force of the 5th Corps was in Muling and in the northwestern area of Ningan County in those days. The force of the 4th Corps headquarters was not great, either. The enemy troops were twice as large as ours.

Should we fight or avoid them? Zhou and Liu asked me. I decided to fight. Our joint operation with the 4th and 5th Corps was agreed upon, not around a conference table, but in the face of the enemy's cavalry, which was galloping in battle formation in rising dust, to attack us. According to the teachings of ancient sages, and the rules of guerrilla warfare, one should strike a weak enemy and avoid a strong opponent, but we could not apply these tactics indiscriminately. One demonstration of our power in north Manchuria could possibly have proved indispensable to enable us to attain our expedition aims. Moreover the odds were then on our side, given the situation and the terrain. Consequently, after a brief consultation, we decided to fight a close battle and began maneuvering.

We took up positions, where we could meet the attacking enemy and prevent him from pouncing on the village of Shandongtun and harming the villagers, and then gave each unit appropriate combat orders. The gunners of the mortar battery, who had distinguished themselves in the Taipinggou battle, and the crack shots of the heavy machine-gun company calculated the firing data required to counter the enemy's potential approach and awaited my orders.

The enemy, approaching at a terrifying speed on the mountain path along the River Liangshuilingzicun climbed the mountain to occupy the area, northwest of Shandongtun. We allowed them to close in as near as 150-200 meters from us, and then opened fire. The enemy's survivors retreated and then attempted to attack us along the southern ridge of the mountain across the River Liangshuilingzicun. But our men, who lay in ambush, checked their attack. The battle continued for some time in this way.

The enemy commanders then regrouped their forces to turn the tide of battle in their favor. When they were concentrated around their command post, our mortar battery commander ordered fire. The shells flew whistling in the air one after another and exploded among the packed enemy. The survivors mounted horses to flee in the direction of Ningan. Our mortars fired at the fleeing enemy. Driven to a dead end, they shouted that they had never dreamt that the communist army would have mortar, and ran helter-skelter amid the gun smoke, before taking flight in all directions under the cover of darkness.

Our mortar barrage in that battle had major repercussions. The enemy claimed that we were carrying mortars provided as aid by the Soviet Union, and trembled with fear at the mere mention of the "Koryo red army". During the battle of Shandongtun, we fired all the shells we had captured in the Laoheishan battle, and then buried the mortars in the ground.

The enemy soldiers had paid so dearly in the battle of Shandongtun that they did not dare provoke us afterwards. They closed the wall gates tight and did not venture out. Moreover, when we sent them a letter the enemy even sent us military supplies like grain, edible oil and footwear.

The Shandongtun battle, another victory in north Manchuria, along with the fantastic episode of the

snakes we had killed with a grenade, remains in my memory as one of the most impressive battles of my life.

The enemy trembled at the rumbling of the mortars, but the people bubbled over with joy. The joint operations with the Chinese communists in north Manchuria yielded good results from the very start. This served as a reliable basis for consolidating the military alliance between the communists of the two countries. From then on, Zhou Bao-zhong never again remarked on the unsuitableness of heavy weapons.

After leaving Shandongtun, we moved onto Dougouzi and debated again at the house of a Fang our joint anti-Japanese struggle with the communists in north Manchuria. At our initiative and in agreement with Zhou Bao-zhong, the expeditionary force from east Manchuria decided to split into several detachments to wage a joint struggle in areas, where the 5th Corps was active. It sent some of its force to Muling, where Hu Ren, the political commissar of the 5th Corps, was operating and to the area where Ping Nan-yang was active.

Zhou Bao-zhong attached some men from his corps to our detachments leaving for Machang, Tuanshanzi, Wolianghe and Shitouhezi. These areas were fertile lands we had cultivated with so much effort during the first expedition. We relied to a great extent on the revolutionary organizations in these areas and conducted brisk, political and military activities.

The underground organization in Wolianghe controlled village vicinities as well as places as far away as Dongjingcheng; we received a great deal of help from this organization. When I recall Wolianghe, I am reminded of one old Chinese woman. On our first expedition to north Manchuria she had been working in the women's association. Looking at this grandmother, who was nearly sixty and yet was attending to the expeditionary force, making uniforms for them, missing her sleep at nights, we were all reminded of our own mothers and grandmothers in our native homes. If she did not see me even for one night, she would ask my orderlies, "Where is Commander Kim?" The orderlies told me that she only went to bed, when she heard that I was all right.

On hearing that the "Koryo red army" had come from Jiandao, this same grandmother came to Dougouzi, bringing a cock pheasant and noodles wrapped in a vessel. At that time we prepared to leave the place.

Handing the noodles over to our comrades, she said. "I regretted not treating Commander Kim properly last autumn, so now I brought some noodles. I'll be pleased if you accept my sincerity."

She had cajoled my orderlies and found out that I liked noodles.

That day, together with Zhou, I ate with relish the food containing the sincerity of the grandmother. The noodles with pheasant soup and pheasant-and-vegetable garnish were exceptionally tasty. After eating two bowlfuls, Zhou asked, half jokingly, half seriously, "When did you win over that Chinese granny in north Manchuria, Commander Kim? I have always been impressed by your way of winning over the masses; I want you to teach our companies, attached to your unit, what political work methods you used."

While we were operating in the Emu area in September that year, Hu Ren, the political commissar of the 5th Corps, formally proposed a joint operation. But we avoided replying for some time, as we had to work with Kim Chaek, whose unit was advancing southward to Weihe at the time. For inevitable reasons in later days, we could not accept his proposal. However, throughout the anti-Japanese war, I recalled with gratitude the confidence he had placed in us.

Developing our struggle in north Manchuria, we regarded Emu as the most important after Ningan. We had no access to most of this area, and even the Chinese units failed to inspire it with a revolutionary influence.

Nevertheless, we had to enter that area if we were to effect a joint struggle with the 3rd Corps Kim Chaek belonged to. Emu bordered Zhuhe and Weihe on the northwest, the 3rd Corps area, and on the west it was the 1st and 2nd Corps area. This mysterious land was coveted by both friend and foe.

Several armed units in north Manchuria failed to establish themselves in Emu, because an anti-communist trend prevailed among the people there. The anti-communist wind had been strong in Ningan, but was nothing compared to the anti-communist trend in this area. The factionalists of the M-L group were in part to blame for the anti-communist contamination of the area, as they had disgraced communism through reckless Leftist ventures, such as the August 1 revolt which they had instigated. In the wake of the revolt, the people of Emu suffered enormous atrocities at the hands of the Japanese imperialists and the reactionary warlords. Subsequently the people there turned away in disgust from the communists. The Japanese imperialists dispatched the so-called appeasement squads there to drive a wedge between the people and the communists.

The account of the experience of a young man, who had joined the guerrilla army, after doing the work of a charcoal-burner in the forests of Qinggouzi, Emu County, eloquently proves the extent to which the people in this area had been poisoned by anti-communist propaganda. He had lost his parents and brothers in an epidemic in his early years and lived alone through all hardships, begging for help. He had drifted to Emu and was forced to work at a road construction site. There he had learnt a revolutionary song from a laborer; it had been the first song he had learnt since his birth.

He subsequently worked as a seasonal laborer at a farmhouse near Renjiagou. One day a marriage ceremony was held at a house in the village. The young man followed his employer to the house, congratulated the couple, and sang the song at the request of the officiator at the wedding, the revolutionary song he had learnt at the road construction site. His song caused a disturbance in the wedding ceremony. An old man of the village, who was more or less knowledgeable, had denounced the young man as a communist for his song.

Pointing his finger at the middle-class peasant, who had employed the young man, the old man said, "Hey, if you need to employ a farmhand, you should employ a sound man. That guy is a communist, who advocates common ownership of property and wife." The disgraced peasant chased him out of his house that very day. Tragically, the young man had sung the communist revolutionary song, totally unaware that

the song propagandized communism. Some listeners said that this was the consequence of ignorance, but this was not true; it was due to the anti-communist wind.

The Japanese imperialists propagandized the crimes, committed by local bandits or mounted bandits as ones committed by communists.

In this situation, it was quite adventurous, frankly speaking, that we decided to operate in Fmu. As expected, we were given the cold shoulder from the inhabitants, as soon as we set foot on Emu soil across Lake Jingbo. The village could be called the eastern gate to Emu; it was a cosy village inhabited only by Chinese. When we arrived, the villagers took their children and left the village, saying that Honghuizi (the Red-bearded - "Red bandits") had come. Only the old and weak remained in the village, but they, too, refused to come out, hiding instead in the houses.

I ordered the pitching of tents in the forest some distance from the village and told them to take a rest there; then I walked round the village. I went to a primary school only to find that the teaching staff and pupils were all hiding. It was too cold a treatment for guests, who had come all the way from east Manchuria to kindle the fire of revolution.

I brought a foot organ out into the yard of the school and began to play it, singing the Song of Su Wu and a song about Yang Kuei-fei together with men from the young volunteers' corps company. My comrades were all good singers of folk songs of Han nationality. Those two songs were famous ones which the Chinese working masses were especially fond of. The Song of Su Wit was a patriotic song I had learnt during my days in Jirin; its original title is Sit Wu Tends Sheep.

Su Wu had lived in the 2nd century BC and was famous as a loyal subject of the Han dynasty. He went to the Xiongnu in the north as a messenger of the Emperor of Han. The Xiongnu detained him as a hostage and threatened not to release him unless he surrendered, adding that he would not be sent back until a male sheep bore a lamb. Consequently Su Wu was held in custody by the Xiongnu for 19 years, but he never yielded. In short, the song truthfully reflected the patriotic ideas and feelings of the Chinese people.

When we sang those songs to the accompaniment of the organ, the senior pupils of the primary school were the first to come out of hiding, to approach us with curiosity and wonder. They sang to the accompaniment of the organ I was playing. Then the teachers and village elders hesitatingly came out. It probably surprised them to have the "Koryo red army" singing Chinese songs so fluently, or perhaps they had felt a vague community between the red army and themselves owing to our song. The people, who had acted coldly to the expeditionary force, began to turn kind and envious glances at us.

When all the people in hiding had gathered in the yard, I made an anti-Japanese speech in Chinese. Only then did they open their hearts to us. They praised us lavishly, saying that the "Koryo red army" was neither a gang of bandits nor a group of mounted bandits, and that it was really a patriotic, revolutionary and gentlemanly army.

I can justly say that we influenced the Chinese people in north Manchuria at that time by singing the Song of Su Wu. I personally experienced the great role played by literature and music in moving the people and bringing them to their senses from that day. I can also say that this experience led us to attach extreme importance to literature and art as a weapon of the revolution.

My experience at the Chinese village on Lake Jingbo was so emotional that I tried in various ways after liberation to find the text of the Song of Su Wu. It was only recently that I was able to obtain the text in Chinese, thanks to the aid of our officials.

I was so pleased that I sang the song, forgetting that I was in my eighties. How well could a man of eighty sing? A lump formed in my throat. Consequently I could not sing properly, but the fresh memory of my youthful days, which had vanished far beyond the clouds, welled up in my mind, together with my deep attachment to the soil of north Manchuria where we had pioneered the revolution with such difficulty.

Whenever I yearn for the days, when I was blazing the trail of the joint struggle with the Chinese communists, I often play this song on the organ. Sometimes I whistle it, but the sound is not as fresh as when I was in my twenties and thirties.

Here is the text of the Song of Su Wu.

### **Su Wu Tends Sheep**

*1. Su Wu was a prisoner in a land  
Which is barbarously wild and dull,  
But he did not betray his home even here.  
For 19 years he has been shepherding others' sheep,  
In the austere land of Xiongnu, covered with ice and snow  
He suffered year after year  
Grazing sheep at the north sea,  
Eating snow when he is thirsty  
And biting on his blanket when he is hungry.  
But his soul was in the land of Han,  
He has grown old but did not escape from his prison.  
But the suffering and privations in the alien land  
Have not broken his will.  
In the dead of night a flute sang sadly in the outskirts,  
Touching his heart and calling him back to his homeland.*

*2. Su Wu was a prisoner in a land  
Which is barbarous/v wild and dull,  
But he did not betray his home even here.  
The time has come and the cold north wind blew,  
The wild geese are flying to the land of Han,*

*Where the grey-haired mother is waiting for her son  
And the young wife is sitting alone by the wall.  
Only when they sleep do they see  
The face which is better than anyone's.  
The ocean will run dry  
And the mountain will crumble in dust  
But the son will remain loyal to his homeland,  
Causing the admiration of even the heartless Xiongnus.*

I still cannot forget among the impressions of Emu the meeting at Sankesong with the old man, Kim, from Jonju. Whereas Liukesong meant six pine-trees, Sankesong meant three pine-trees. When we were in Sankesong, my headquarters was billeted on the house of a landlord, not far from the county town. A small-built old man lived about 500 meters away from the landlord's house. He was cultivating a small rice field plot. According to my orderly, he was apparently a Korean. He spoke Chinese badly, and behaved like a Chinese.

One evening I went to visit him. We introduced each other, and I discovered that he was clearly a Korean and that his surname of Kim originated from Jonju just like mine. He had taken part in the Qingshanli battle led by Hong Bom Do. He told me that when the unit had scattered after the battle, he went to Emu, got married and lived there in retirement. When I told him that my surname was Kim and that my ancestral home was Jonju, he did not hide his pleasure at meeting a man in this remote foreign land with the same surname and from the same ancestral place. He told his wife to hull rice in the treadmill and boil some rice for me. It was the first boiled rice I had eaten in north Manchuria.

“We, too, set ourselves high aims at the outset. When I fought in the battle at Fengwudong led by General Hong Bom Do, I thought that Korea would soon become independent. In those days, I dreamt of entering the walled city of Seoul through an arch of independence. How depressing it is to get old doing nothing, just like a grain of sand or stone in the wilderness! I only feel real happiness in this corner of north Manchuria, virtually the world of the Han race, when I meet Korean compatriots, even though it is like seeing a star in a rainy season. How happy I would be if your unit, Commander Kim, stayed in Emu for ever rather than returning to Jiandao!” Saying this, the old man sighed longingly.

I inevitably felt sad that the great ambition inspiring him to take up arms and win back the country, was fading just as the wrinkles on his face deepened relentlessly. I decided more resolutely than ever that we, young people, must continue fighting in any adversity to defeat the enemy once and for all to make sure that the old man's original aim was not wasted.

The old man had only one ear. While chatting about various things after the meal, I asked him what had happened to his ear. He smiled bitterly, saying that he had lost it, while fishing via a hole he had made on the ice of the River Mudan; he had caught a big carp and clasped it in his arms, but it had shaken so violently that it had lashed off his frozen ear. I was very sorry to hear that. I called at his house every night during my week in Sankesong, and heard about Hong Bom Do from him.



Once we were on speaking terms, I found that the people of Emu were no less anti-Japanese-minded than the people of Jiandao. They had opposed communism, because they had not received any guidance from any organization. Working among the people, I made friends with Liu Yong-sheng, a head of one hundred households in village No. 4 at Qinggouzi and, some time later on, moved my headquarters to his house.

On seeing that my unit refrained from imposing any burdens on the people, and instead gathered together, men and women, around bonfires at night to hold recreation parties, dance and study, Liu considered us an exceptional army. The soldiers he had seen before had all been hordes of men who had lorded it over and yelled at the people, regardless of the names of their armies. But when he saw the “Koryo red army” from Jiandao fetch water and sweep the yards for the people, cut the children's hair and behave in a friendly way, without any distinctions between superiors and subordinates, the whole village whispered that it was an unusual army.

One night Liu informed me that the Japanese garrison and puppet Manchukuo army stationed in village No. 6 were preparing to assault his village. When I heard about this, I ordered the whole unit of soldiers to go to bed earlier than usual.

Liu found this strange. He thought: other armies might have taken to flight to avoid the enemy. Instead the “Koryo red army” planned to sleep in the village, rather than run away. He could not understand it. He could not sleep all night, obsessed with the fear of the enemy's attack on the village at any minute. He kept going in and out of the house.

I made him sit down beside me and said, “Our unit is defending the village like a fortress, so don't worry so much; please go to bed.”

But Liu was still anxious, all in a flutter. He said, “But, how can the soldiers defend the village like a fortress, when they go to sleep so early?”

“We’ve posted sentries. The ‘Koryo red army’ does not make wild claims. So you can have a sound sleep tonight. And tomorrow morning, after we’ve left the village go to the enemy and report that the ‘Koryo red army’ has been to your village. Tell them all you have seen.” “You mean report? I've no intention of filing a complaint against such a wonderful army as yours.”

“Please, sir. This is my earnest request. Do as you're told and don't refuse. This is the only way for us, you and the village to survive. Just wait and you'll understand why.” I told the head of one hundred households to report the movements of the “Koryo red army” to the police as they were, in a bid to lure the enemy out of the concentration village.

Next morning we left the village and marched along the road to Emu. In the middle of the march, I commanded the force of one company to lie in ambush on the southwestern ridge of a mountain. On receiving the report from Liu, the enemy sent hundreds of “punitive” troops to chase our main unit on the march.

That is how the expeditionary force fought a battle of baiting and ambush for the first time, since it had entered the land of Emu. The Japanese garrison (also called military police), committed to this battle, was annihilated. Only one man narrowly escaped death under the barrage of the people's revolutionary army. A plane came to his rescue, but it accidentally crashed on landing and I was told the man also went to “heaven”. When a group of visitors from our country went to Emu in 1959, a “monument to the loyal souls”, set up by the Japanese imperialists, was still standing in village No. 6 in Qinggouzi.

In December 1935 we fought another battle near Guandi, which is also called the battle at Liucaigou. We killed nearly 200 enemy soldiers in this battle. The story of an enemy officer who in despair hid in a coffin in the field instead of a corpse concerned this battle. It would be difficult to enumerate all the battles we fought in north Manchuria. In autumn 1935, when we were fighting in Emu County, the Comintern informed, through Zhou Bao-zhong, that it had organized a joint headquarters for cooperation between the 2nd and 5th Corps and that it had appointed me political commissar of the joint headquarters and commander of the Weihe unit. My record as political commissar in the battalion, regiment and division no doubt prompted the Comintern to appoint me to that post.

This was not what I had wanted. I was not ambitious for a high post; I was eager to meet the hard-core Korean communists active in north Manchuria. But the unexpected post of political commissar of the joint headquarters overpowered that desire. I was overweighed by the heavy responsibility of taking care of the political work of the other army corps, as well as the operations of the expeditionary force. Assuming this heavy responsibility, I was kept busy traveling about Ningan and its neighboring counties to continue the political work of the two army corps until the meeting at Nanhutou and after it, postponing a meeting with Korean comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria.

However, we were able to put our friendship with the Chinese communists on a more solid footing. The result was far more positive than we had expected when embarking on the expedition.

I was sorry that I could not meet Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon in person, which I had set as top priority objective for the expedition; I had to leave it as a matter for the remote future. Even in the days, when we maintained contacts with the Chinese communists, we always recalled the Korean communists and patriots, who were fighting bloody battles in the wilderness of north Manchuria, braving all manner of hardships. The more our meeting with them was delayed, the more intense and warmer became our feelings for them.

Only in early 1941 did the Korean communists in east Manchuria and south and north Manchuria meet for the first time, introducing themselves and hugging each other with deep emotion and affection. Then we all prepared for the final campaign to liberate the country, sharing bed and board in one secret camp, until we returned to the liberated homeland and embarked in nation-building. They are all faithful veterans, who fought against the Japanese and US imperialists and tirelessly carried out the arduous tasks of democratic reform and socialist construction together with me during the most dramatic decades of the 20th century.

The veterans, who had fought in north Manchuria, still share weal and woe with me to add a sparkle to the socialism of our own style. I hope that pure, beautiful memories, as well as the happiness of a bright future, lie in store for all these faithful people, who have consistently supported me and our cause for over half a century.

## 11.2. Strange Relationship

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The Emu area in north Manchuria was connected to me from my days in Jirin. Up till then Jiaohe, Xinzhan and Shansong, where I formed the Ryosin Youth Association, a revolutionary organization, in touch with Kang Myong Gun and worked among its members, belonged to Emu County. Apparently this county was renamed Jiaohe County in the late 1930s.

We marched thousands of miles in the Emu area during our second expedition to north Manchuria. Qinggouzi, Pipadingzi, Nantianmen, Sandaogou, Malugou, Xinxingtun, Guandi, Liucaigou, Sankesong, Mudanjiangcun, Heishixiang, and Tuoyaozi were all developed as the theatre of our operations at that time. They constituted unforgettable battle sites, where the expeditionary force to north Manchuria performed military feats.

I experienced many interesting events and met a number of impressive people during that period. Until our second expedition, many parts of this area had been beyond revolutionary influence. It was not accidental that Zhou Bao-zhong was so worried about our campaign in Emu when we debated the matter. He said: “Commander Kim, I don't think it necessary to worry about you, since you won over that bigoted Wu Yicheng in a single day, but we were shut out at every door, when we were there this spring. They abused us, calling us Hon ghuzi.”

The word Hon ghuzi that Zhou mentioned is the Chinese word for “bandits”. Wu Yi-cheng, who did not like communists, once abused Zhou Bao-zhong, calling him Hon-ghuzi. From then on, this epithet was applied to the communist army in general.

True to Zhou's warning, we were treated as Hon ghuzi, as soon as we set foot in Emu. The immediate desertion by the people of Emu of their village, at the sight of the expeditionary force, calling it the “Koryo red army”, means that they were steering clear of us as much as of the Hon ghuzi. Evidently, the word Hong (Red) was synonymous for them with immorality and cruelty.

Taking this situation into consideration, we devoted a great deal of time to working among the masses during the expedition. It was not a waste of time, as our efforts led the people who had shunned the people's revolutionary army to become its close friends and supporters. When these efforts brought former enemies into an alliance and alignment with the communists, we felt the greatest delight which could not ever be compared with the joy one would feel in winning a windfall.

At a time when the faces of people, who abandoned the guerrilla zones in tears after the Yaoyinggou meeting, still flashed before our eyes, and when anxiety over the revolution weighed heavily on our minds and body, it was marvelous for us to win such a big success in Emu. The greatest pleasure for a revolutionary is to gain comrades and friends, his greatest misery to lose them.

Before entering Emu County, we had already made friends with Chai He, a naive Chinese fisherman, on Lake Jingbo at Xiaoshanzuizi, and crossed the lake with ease. Chai had shunned the revolutionary army before meeting us. A fisherman, he had lived by the lake for 30 years since the age of nineteen; he had been fooled by the Japanese propaganda that the “Koryo red army” was a group of “bandits”. However, after seeing the stately, orderly appearance of the expeditionary force and won over by the men's simple, open-hearted personalities, he changed his stand and treated the revolutionary army cordially.

An army finds it as hard to cross a river as to march hundreds of miles. So I shall never forget the trouble Chai took to help enthusiastically the expeditionary force cross Lake Jingbo, behind the enemy's back. A group of Korean visitors to China returned in 1959, bringing his photograph with them. In the picture Chai was an old man, who was past seventy, with a wrinkled face. But I felt deep emotion on seeing his old figure with his great stature and long neck.

We gained many friends and won over a large number of people in Emu, including Liu Yong-sheng, the head of one hundred households, who supplied us with some necessities at the risk of his life during the battle at Qinggouzi and an old man, Liu Chun-fa, who sent his son to the guerrilla army in the vicinity of Heishixiang.

While working among people of various strata, we achieved friendly relations with a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army.

The event happened one day, when the expeditionary force was engaged on a forced march for a whole night, to attack a lumber station in Dunhua County, so it must have been the beginning of 1936. In the grey light of dawn, we stopped and billeted on a landlord's house by a roadside. It was no ordinary house; it was surrounded by earthen walls with forts. But he had no guards, as it occurred after the formation of the puppet Manchukuo army and the Japanese did not allow anyone to keep private soldiers.

The landlord's house consisted of two wings. The rank and file occupied one wing, while the headquarters and supply officers were located in the other. We posted three men at the gate in the guise of farmhands to guard the house by turns, while the others rested.

At about 4 p.m. the sentry reported that a carriage was approaching the house we were staying at. Soon it pulled up in front of the house and a lady stepped out with the help of a soldier; she entered the yard, saying that she would like to warm herself for a while. I looked out of the window to glimpse a beautiful lady wrapped in two fox-fur overcoats standing in the snow-drifted yard. My comrades struck by the luxurious coats, had already swarmed out to the yard and surrounded the strange lady in her dazzling outfit. They were questioning her.

When I inquired as to her presence, a young guard, in high spirits, as if he had captured a top-rate secret agent, responded, “She's a suspicious woman, Comrade Commander.” He maintained his sharp gaze on the lady.

The young Chinese lady turned pale, trembling in silence. I sternly rebuked the guard, who was trying to search her, and ordered, "Let her come inside so that she can warm herself."

In the room she still trembled slightly. She kept her head lowered. I spoke in Chinese to calm her, "Please, madam, don't be afraid. Make warm yourself. The young guard may have taken you for someone else and treated you impolitely. Please forgive him."

I offered her a cup of tea and pushed the brazier closer to her, so that she could keep warm.

"I don't know what you think of us, but we're the people's revolutionary army. The people here call us the 'Koryo red army'. Have you ever heard about the 'Koryo red army', madam!"

"Yes, but only a little," she answered almost in a whisper, still with her head lowered.

"Then, we're fortunate. The 'Koryo red army' is not a gang of 'bandits', which harms people's lives and property, as the Japanese allege. Our revolutionary army is a people's armed force, which aims to secure national salvation. We only fight against the Japanese imperialists and their lackeys who trample on Korea and China; we never do any harm to people's lives and property. Consequently, please set your mind at rest, madam."

She clasped her hands together as a token of gratitude. But her gaze still indicated mixed feelings of uneasiness, fear and uncertainty.

"We won't blame or punish you for taking a soldier of the puppet Manchukuo army with you. Nor will I ask you why he is escorting you. Why should we humiliate and harass travelers, if they don't harm the people and the revolutionary army? We are also travelers, enjoying a moment's rest in this house with the host's permission, so don't think otherwise; please warm yourself before leaving," I continued, until she looked more relaxed.

It was only then that she breathed a sigh of relief and raised her head cautiously. As she glanced at me, there was a hint of surprise in her eyes. She lifted her clasped hands to her breast and bit her lips.

"What's worrying you? Do you still not believe me?"

"No, it's not that... Frankly speaking, your face... I know that you are a kind-hearted man by nature..." she murmured incoherently and again gazed at me.

Then O Paek Ryong, who had been interrogating the escort, appeared at the door like a hunter who had just caught a tiger. He said in Korean, a language the Chinese lady could never understand, "General, the escort told me that the woman is the wife of the commander of the 12th Regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army. A big fish has entered the mesh of its own accord."

"Comrade O Paek Ryong, don't talk so big. Let's wait and see whether it is a big fish or small fry."

To be candid, although I rebuked him, I was surprised to hear that she was the wife of a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army. A regimental commander was not small fry. In the hierarchy of the puppet Manchukuo army it was the fourth rank down from the top which could only be occupied after rising 13 rungs from the bottom. In some cases a regiment in that army had a few counties under its jurisdiction, so that there was no need to go to the length of explaining the authority of a commander, who controlled those counties. In those days the 12th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Composite Brigade of the puppet Manchukuo army based in Jiaohe was stationed in Fmu.

I found it interesting to meet the wife of a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army, as we conducted a major strategic psychological warfare against the enemy armies. The knowledge of her identity made no change in my countenance at all.

"Well, madam, did you think we would inflict some severe punishment on you, because you're the wife of a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army?"

She rubbed her palms in confusion, saying, "Not at all. Perhaps I am wrong, Mr. Commander ... excuse me, but aren't you Kim Sung Ju?"

I was indeed surprised at the unexpected question. This was something unusual. I could not disregard the fact that the wife of a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army, whom I had met by chance in north Manchuria far away from Jiandao, knew my childhood name. How could this lady I had never seen or met before know my name? I was astonished and, at the same time, curious to solve the puzzle.

"It's indeed strange to hear my childhood name in this land of Emu. I am Kim Sung Ju or Kim Il Sung. But how on earth do you know me, madam?"

She blushed deeply. I guessed from her looks that she wanted to say something, but was hesitating.

"When you led the student and youth movement in Jirin, I attended a girls' middle school there. I have known you ever since then."

"Oh, is that so? I am very glad to meet you."

I only now realized what her sparkling eyes meant when she glanced at me before, with her head raised. But still, it was rare to see a former student of a girls' middle school in Jirin in this strange land of Emu. The word Jirin evoked in me a tingling feeling tantamount to nostalgia. As is the case now, I cherished a strong attachment at that time for the city where I had lived for years.

When she saw that I was recalling those bygone days, she asked in a somewhat calmer voice, "Surely you haven't forgotten autumn 1928, when the campaign against the projected railway between Jirin and

Hoeryong was launched? How violently Jirin seethed that autumn! You may not believe me, but I also took part in the students' demonstration. I still remember seeing you making a speech in the square in front of the provincial assembly building."

A student of Jirin Girls' Middle School who had shouted slogans among the demonstrators, was now the wife of a regimental commander traveling to her parent's home in fox-fur coats, escorted by a guard. Tears were trickling down her cheeks. Feeling as if ages had passed since her school days, I looked at her in a different light. This woman, who had opposed the Japanese until only yesterday, was now living the life of a pro-Japanese.

I gave deep thought to the reasons beyond her transformation. Did it reflect a degeneration, caused by the hopeless destiny of her nation? Looking at the earnest gaze of the woman, now recalling her days in Jirin, however, I realized that the bygone days, when she had fought against the Japanese imperialists, still lingered in her mind. Moreover, she had repented of her folly, here in front of me, with tears in her eyes, and recalled her school days. What made her start and tremble so much on seeing me? It must have been the prick of her conscience.

"Why are you silent, Mr. Sung Ju? Please forgive me, a girl, who responded to you, by shaking her fists when you made a speech... I am deeply moved to see you going through hardships in military uniform and feel so ashamed."

Tears streamed down her cheeks again.

"Calm yourself, madam. Don't feel too mean. The days are too grim for us to be driven to despair and self-abandon. The situation at home and abroad calls on all the sons, daughters and intellectuals of the Chinese nation, who love their motherland and fellow countrymen, to fight the Japanese and save the country. There's no reason to think that you shouldn't fight the Japanese imperialists, because you're a regimental commander's wife."

As I said this, she wiped away her tears and raised her head.

"You mean that there's a way for me to fight the Japanese?"

"Of course! If you influence your husband positively and make sure that he doesn't carry out 'punitive' operations against the revolutionary army, then you will be contributing to the anti-Japanese struggle. Frankly speaking, a regimental commander is an important person. But I don't think his rank is the moot point. Most importantly, he shouldn't forget that he's Chinese."

"Although a regimental commander, my husband is not doing it, because he wants to. He remains true to the national conscience. I will prevail on him as you say, Mr. Sung Ju, so that he won't mobilize his men in 'punitive' action. Please believe me."



"How good it would be, if you do! If you managed to convert a regimental commander from pro-Japanese to anti-Japanese it would mean that his subordinates become patriotic. Madam, this will lead to your revival and that of your husband."

To make her feel more confident, I enumerated the instances in Jiandao of puppet Manchukuo army officers, who had converted from the pro-Japanese to the anti-Japanese struggle.

She replied that it was like a godsend to meet me that day; she had many things to think over after hearing my words. She said I had revived her days in Jirin, and had now led her and her husband along the path of renewal. She decided to remember it for the rest of her life and live like a daughter of the Chinese nation.

I showed her the propaganda materials we had made and the six-point anti-Japanese national salvation programme published by Song Qingling, Zhang Nai-qi and others in Shanghai. It was the programme Wu Ping had shown us in Zhou Bao-zhong's hut in Ningan during the first expedition.

After glancing at her watch, she fumbled in her inside pocket and produced something wrapped up in a sheet of white paper. They were Chinese banknotes. Saying that she had obtained them by selling opium, she requested that I use the money as war funds.

I was thankful, but declined.

"Keep it. Today I regained my anti-Japanese schoolmate who had been lost, and this is my great fortune."

My words induced her tears.

Before parting, we prepared a rich dinner for her. On leaving she told me her full name, but I only remember her surname Chi. To my regret, I have forgotten her name.

Some days later we received a letter from the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army. It was a long letter, written in bold strokes, which stated that we were the noblest people in the world, and that he would help us with all his will, as we had protected his wife and saved him from a quagmire of crimes to follow the path of patriotism. His name was Zhang so-and-so, but my memory fails me in this matter.

In later days we sent our supply officer to the vicinity of Emu county town, to prepare for New Year's Day celebrations, according to the lunar calendar. To obtain various produce, such as frozen pork used to make New Year festive dishes, he went as far as the town, but was caught by the county police before he had fulfilled his mission. This fact became known to the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army through a certain channel. He demanded that the police hand over the supply officer, as the army dealt with matters related to the people's revolutionary army.

At first the supply officer believed that the regimental commander was going to kill him. But the commander allowed his wife to prepare a feast for our supply officer and treated him as an honored guest. Then, he said: "I am extremely grateful to Commander Kim's unit for the great assistance it accorded my wife; I will never carry out a punitive' mission against you whatever the circumstances; I swear on my life, so please believe me; if we come across your unit, we'll fire three shots in the air; at these moments, remember that it is my unit and that you can pass; I'll never forget Commander Kim's kindness; please convey my heartfelt greetings to him."

He kept his promise faithfully in the subsequent years, exactly as he had told our quartermaster.

When we were billeted in the village of Sankesong, a Japanese army unit was stationed in the village of Guandi and the puppet Manchukuo army regiment was located near Emu. The two units traveled from place to place to carry out "punitive" operations, but the 12th Regiment avoided engagements with us, whenever it came upon our unit. We also attacked only Japanese soldiers. The Japanese army could be distinguished from the puppet Manchukuo army at that time by the helmets. All guerrilla units knew that soldiers with helmets were Japanese and that those without were puppet Manchukuo army soldiers. But in later days, the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers also wore helmets when they were on the battlefield.

Consequently we told them we would shoot any one wearing a helmet, taking him for a Japanese, and that all those soldiers, who refused to fight against the guerrilla army, had to remove their helmets. In response to this warning, the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers indicated who they were by removing the helmets when they approached us.

When the soldiers with helmets on their heads headed their columns, the guerrilla army attacked the front ranks; when they were in the rear, we attacked only the last ranks. The Japanese shouted; "The guerrillas only strike us!" We demanded that the puppet Manchukuo army unit give a signal, by firing chance shots when they were conducting "punitive" mission, and they agreed. When they were unable to fire the shots, they would gather in one place in hundreds or thousands and raise a clamour thereby letting us know their position.

The regimental commander, Zhang, sent us many supplies. He would often leave his barracks with pork and frozen dumplings on carts, saying that he intended to carry out a "punitive" mission, and then ordered his subordinates to bring them to the place agreed upon with our unit. He would then take his men somewhere far from the guerrilla army and wander around there for hours, before returning to the barracks.

One day when our unit was billeted on a village near Guandi, some commanding officers came to me and reported on the soldiers' state of mind on New Year's Eve. They then requested my permission to obtain some buckwheat flour or starch from the villagers, so that they could make noodles on New Year's Day.

In view of the trouble we would cause the villagers, I refused and ordered the unit out of the village before long. The villagers had been pleased to know that they would be able to celebrate the New Year

with Commander Kim's unit and had been arranging a grand banquet. I feared that the villagers might spend months' provisions on the banquet to be given in honor of my unit. Consequently my unit suddenly left the village. Although we ordered the withdrawal from the village to avoid harming the interests of the people, all the men were sulky.

The expeditionary force moved to the dead end of the valley of Huangnihezi, mended the huts abandoned by the lumberjacks and celebrated New Year's Day there. Although it was a festive meal, a bowl of boiled foxtail millet was everything that was accorded to each of us. The men had already swallowed their shares, when the pork and dumplings sent by the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army arrived, much to our delight.

As our friendship deepened, the regimental commander even sent weapons and military information to the expeditionary force. The kindness we had accorded a woman was lavishly rewarded with tied grass? as the Chinese legend goes. Although he remained commander of a regiment appointed by Manchukuo, he bravely atoned for this before history and the people via his alliance with the communists.

Our policy of demoralizing the enemy forces, by winning over the rank and file, the overwhelming majority of the puppet Manchukuo army preferentially, and also middle- and low-ranking officers and some of the conscientious high-ranking officers, and thereby isolating and striking at a handful of evil officers, proved very effective in our work with the regimental commander. This enormous gain went beyond our expectations. The regimental commander, who never met us, was converted from a henchman of the counterrevolution to a patriot and an ally of the communists, influenced by his wife. I think his wife, a former student of Jirin Girls' Middle School, must have waged quite an active ideological campaign to transform her husband. She was a very wonderful woman.

The regimental commander was subsequently transferred to the Huadian area. I turned him over to Wei Zheng-min. Subsequently, I did not hear from him for a long time. It was only in 1941 that I heard about him from Kwak Ji San, who had been an assistant to Wei Zheng-min in Huadian. Kwak said that the 12th and 13th Regiments of the puppet Manchukuo army in Huadian would soon transfer to Jehol and that the commanders of the two regiments wished to join the anti-Japanese revolutionary army before moving.

But at that time there was no unit in Hua dian capable of dealing with two whole regiments at one time and no cadre could give an authoritative answer to their bold decision. He came for my advice. As Wei Zheng-min had fallen in battle, the military and political cadres of the 2nd Corps used to come to obtain my decisions on all matters, big or small, related to the activities of the corps.

I entrusted him with the urgent task of accepting them before their move to Jehol and sent him to Huadian. To our regret, however, it was too late, and their righteous action fell through. Later on, I heard that the regimental commander had been relieved in Huadian by a new commander with the surname of Yang. When he was being relieved, he had persuaded his successor to operate against the Japanese and advised the commander of the 13th Regiment, who had been his friend and neighbor, to help the anti-Japanese revolution.

I heard nothing about the 12th and 13th Regiments, after their move to Jehol. Only recently, when researching the collapse of the puppet Manchukuo army during our final operations against Japan, I found that they had rebelled at a decisive moment against the Japanese imperialists.

One conscientious friend in the enemy forces provided us with tens of thousands of friends. Consequently, ever since the early days of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we proposed the slogan, "Let Us Build a Revolutionary Battery among the Enemy Soldiers!" which meant creating positions in the enemy forces. In other words, it meant creating our revolutionary forces within the enemy camp in order to demoralize it.

In those days enemy break-up operations were commonly referred to as political work with the enemy. Destroying the enemy by force and disintegrating them through political work constituted, so to speak, the strategic lines of the anti-Japanese struggle. Throughout history, war has always been fought by both belligerents along two lines - one, fights by the force of arms, and the other, by psychological and ideological propaganda.

To maintain public peace and order, the Japanese imperialists established their three policies: the implementation of tentative measures, ideological and radical measures. Generally speaking, these policies had two aspects - one implied the "removal of bandits" through armed forces, and the other "ideological operations" through propaganda and appeasement. The enemy also went to desperate efforts to psychologically break our revolutionary ranks.

However, when we first proposed the idea of forming revolutionary organizations within the enemy camp for political work among enemy soldiers, a number of people were reluctant to agree.

Needless to say, none of them objected to the idea for cowardly reasons. They simply viewed it as a deviation from the class line. They would set the following objections: "We're an army of workers and peasants and our opponent is an army of the bourgeoisie: they are poles apart. This truth is as clear as daylight, just as water and fire are incompatible. Even a child knows that. It's ridiculous to form revolutionary organizations inside the enemy camp."

Proponents of Marxism branded it Rightist deviation, similar to class collaboration. They argued that it implied alignment with the class enemy, who maintained an antagonistic relationship with us, and that the classic Marxist works did not mention the break-up of enemy forces. Our young people may now denounce them for being so stiff-necked, but in those days, when you could not move an inch without referring to the propositions of the classics, such a unilateral view gained the upper hand in many cases.

Few people considered such a stand a serious deviation, as an uncompromising class struggle was under way and everyone in those days maintained a bitter hatred for the class enemy.

Many people started the revolution and endured all the hardships on the strength of their hatred for the class enemy, and, consequently refused to admit the slightest compromise on the matter of "class".

Worse still, the dogmatic approach of many communists to the Marxist theory of class struggle led them to feel more hatred than love, and yearn more for relentless punishment and condemnation than admit a generous quality of mind capable of forgiving and winning over the enemy. Pretentious Marxists even claimed that uncompromising behaviors typified in any circumstance revolutionaries, and transformed young people, who were ideologically and mentally immature, into narrow-minded individuals and literally cold-hearted Hon gliuzi.

The Marxist revolution suffered bitterly because of this childish practice and the image of the communists was tarnished. Advocating one-sided class interests, under the slogan that they should defend their own class and not compromise with the hostile class, the Leftist elements and dogmatists led many people to reject the communist revolution and join the enemy camp. The central issue was not whether there were propositions in the classics on the disintegration of the enemy forces, but that they did not try to formulate lines and policies in the fundamental interests of the revolution.

We believed that we should begin the revolution with a feeling of love for our fellow countrymen; when studying the Marxist classics, we first sought love and unity rather than an uncompromising spirit. We believed that we could build revolutionary forces within the enemy camp, because we were convinced that their high-ranking officers, to say nothing of the overwhelming majority, the rank and file, who were sons of workers and peasants, as well as middle- and low-ranking officers, included conscientious individuals, who sympathized with our revolution and pitied those suffering in an exploitative society.

If we won them all over to the side of the revolution and made them our allies, the enemy would be broken up to major extent and our revolutionary forces would expand far more. It would constitute an enormous offensive, annihilating the class enemy without any rifle or gunfire, a great propaganda success which would convince the people of the noble ideals of the communists, devoted to the cause of humanity's happiness and harmony.

With these ideals and purposes at least, we raised the slogan "Let Us Build a Revolutionary Battery among the Enemy Soldiers!" as the main slogan in political work with the enemy.

The belief that we could build revolutionary fortresses in the enemy camp was based on the Juche-oriented view of man's essential qualities. Man is the greatest being endowed with independence, creativity and consciousness and, at the same time, a beautiful creature who champions justice. Man, by nature, aspires to virtue and ennobling qualities and detests all that is evil and dirty. These unique features constitute his human traits.

The majority, including the middle and lower strata and some of the upper stratum, apart from a handful of reactionaries, can be encouraged to support the revolution, sympathize and assist it, if we exert a positive influence to them with magnanimity. If a man retains his human nature and loves his country and nation with a humane aroma, although he is a servant of the landlord and capitalist class, then such a quality will be the basis for winning him over to our side. Our policy is derived from this stand, based on the view that we can unite all the members of the nation, excluding a tiny handful of reactionaries and

villains, under the banner of great national unity.

After liberation, our people named Kim Gu the chief terrorist and identified him with Syngman Rhee, a reactionary. Admittedly, he had been malignant and hostile towards communists nearly all his life. There was a caricature in those days of Kim Gu and Syngman Rhee, crawling into a pigsty with pumpkins on their heads. The caricature indicated how bitter the hatred was. The workers of Kangson Steel Plant wrote "Down With Kim Gu!" on the plant's chimney. None of our people in those days thought that Kim Gu could ever be transformed.

During the April North-South Joint Conference, however, he transformed himself from anticommunist to pro-communist and allied himself with the communists under our influence. He did so under our influence, but more importantly he did it, because his love for the country and nation he had devoted his life to had been roused to the highest degree and his humanity had been developed to the fullest extent while witnessing the realities of the northern half of the country.

If we did not consider patriotism and human nature, we would not have joined hands with Choe Tok Sin, who had leveled guns at us on the anti-communist front line, and we would not have held dialogues with the present south Korean rulers. We sit at the negotiation table with the south Korean authorities to reunify the country through dialogue, because we place our hopes on their national conscience and human nature, albeit limited, and we also believe that both these traits will come to full bloom one day in the grand flower garden of national harmony.

We had long discussions on which enemy forces we should win over and how. No agreement was reached on the need to do political work to win over the Japanese army in particular. Most comrades admitted that the middle and lower strata of the puppet Manchukuo army could be won over to our side, but they argued that it was impossible to win over the Japanese soldiers who had been steeped in "Yamato-Tamashii" (Japanese spirit) since childhood and blindly worshipped their "Emperor", had been tamed by a coercive discipline and therefore constituted our enemy. They said it was difficult to eradicate anti-communist ideas from the minds of the Independence Army commanders, who had been trained at the Japanese military academy, let alone the Japanese soldiers and officers.

However, an unexpected incident negated this argument. One year typhus spread through some of the villages in Jiandao, and the Japanese soldiers locked the patients up in their houses and burnt them to death. The "punitive" force then came to the village, where Tong Chang-rong was bedridden. When a Japanese officer saw him lying in bed, he commanded his subordinate to lock the door and set fire to the house. As ordered, the Japanese soldier rushed to obey.

Tong thought his last moment had come and, determined to die an honorable death by propagandizing for the last time, he condemned the Japanese atrocities, beating the floor of the room with his fist. As he had graduated from a university in Japan, he spoke fluent Japanese. He said, "You must be the son of a worker or a peasant: why on earth did you come here and why are you killing the poor people at random? What do you get for this murder? How can a man be so immoral? How can you kill a sick man in this

way?"

The Japanese soldier was touched by his fiery speech, which pricked his conscience. He kicked the back door open and sent Tong out, unbeknownst to his officer, and then set the house on fire. Tong hid in the furrows of the field and thereby narrowly escaped death. This incident refuted the contention of individuals who had insisted that it was impossible to win over Japanese soldiers. It instilled us with confidence: we picked out stalwart, brave, clever and resourceful men and infiltrated them in the enemy camp.

Thanks to the efforts of a large number of sung and unsung heroes who acted single-handed, engaging in efficient political work among the enemy, without abandoning their principles in hostile surroundings, mutinies occurred almost every day in the puppet Manchukuo army and self-defense corps.

We trained the guerrillas to do political work among the enemy in diverse forms both orally and by circulating publications, influencing public opinion and disseminating songs. Thanks to our enthusiastic and impressive propaganda offensive, conducted both inside and outside the enemy forces, with both individuals and collectives, many of the puppet Manchukuo army units stopped fighting against the guerrilla army and became faithful "weapons suppliers".

They would respond to our letters by bringing weapons, ammunition and provisions. When we shouted "Yaoqiang buyaoming!" (We need your guns, not your lives!) on the battlefield, they surrendered and offered their weapons.

The enemy's "punitive" forces killed our people indiscriminately, while we treated prisoners like human beings, whether they were from the puppet Manchukuo army or from the Japanese army: we benevolently educated them and then set them free, even paying for their traveling expenses. One soldier of the puppet Manchukuo army was taken prisoner by our unit seven times. Each time he would bring a rifle with him. When our soldiers jokingly remarked, Hey, this chap's here again!" he would answer with a smile, "I've come to give a rifle to the revolutionary army.

During our operations in east Manchuria, we won many enemy company commanders and higher-ranking officers over to our side, including the company commanders of Wen's battalion in Luozigou, Wangqing County. "Qian Lianzhang", who so efficiently broke up Ma Gui-lin's unit in Nanhamatang in 1934 had been a company commander of the puppet Manchukuo army before we influenced him to switch to the communist cause.

We had some friends assisting us among the Japanese soldiers, whom we shall never forget. During the defense of Xiaowangqing, O Paek Ryong once brought me a note, addressed to the guerrilla army, which he had found on the body of a driver of the Japanese imperialist aggressor army while searching the battlefield. The writer of the note was of working-class origin and a member of the Japan Communist Party. He had been on the way to us, with 100,000 cartridges loaded on his lorry, but his plan had been discovered by the enemy at the foot of a mountain near the guerrilla zone; he had written the note and

stuffed it in his pocket before committing suicide. The profound revolutionary spirit of this proletarian internationalist affected us all.

The image of this member of the Japan Communist Party who had surpassed boundless spaces of water and steep mountains to help us, leaving behind his dear parents, wife and children in Japan, and was now buried quietly at the foot of a mountain in a foreign land moves our hearts deeply even now. I heard that the people of Xiaowangqing had named the primary school in their village after him. However, I don't know if today the school is still called by his name.

Drawing on our experience gained while winning over the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army in Emu, we successfully undermined the enemy forces in Dapuchaihe on the border of the Antu and Dunhua Counties. A battalion of the puppet Manchukuo army, notorious for its "punitive" operations against the guerrilla army was located in that place. It was a vicious battalion with rich combat experience. It was managed very well and used a well-organized command system.

Although we wanted to send our operatives, it was impossible to infiltrate them there. We studied the unit from various angles to find some weakness. We thereby learned that the battalion commander was dissatisfied with his superiors, because he was paid such a low salary, and was so hard pressed for money that he had become involved in drug-trafficking through his aide-de-camp. We profited from this fact to make a breakthrough in our break-up efforts.

One day, our operatives lay in ambush by a road and seized the aide-de-camp who was returning with large quantities of opium he had bought. He was afraid that the revolutionary army would take the battalion commander's opium, which was as valuable as money. However, our comrades did not touch it; they merely educated him well and sent him on his way. Moved by the way he was treated, he reported to his battalion commander on his return that, although he had believed the communist army to be "bandits" as the Japanese stated, he had found them gentle and well-mannered. The battalion commander was also deeply moved.

Later I sent the commander my visiting card and a letter through his aide-de-camp. The letter stated: The guerrilla army doesn't want to fight you; although you committed many vicious deeds while chasing our unit, we won't settle accounts with you; we don't want that much from you; we only want you never to harm the people and the people's revolutionary army; if you mean to repent your past actions and want to maintain friendly relations with the revolutionary army, then send us Tiejun (Invincible Army ?Tr.) and other publications now and then.

In response to my letter, the aide-de-camp brought us the magazine Tiejun, agreed on the secret place, where he could drop the publications and returned. Since then, they sent us on a regular basis, through a certain hollow in an old tree, a variety of papers and periodicals published in and outside the army as well as important military information. When we gave them money to buy some necessities for our unit and military supplies, they fulfilled all our requests.



Touched by our goodwill, the battalion commander voluntarily treated our wounded guerrillas. He would hide them in his barracks and take good care of them; he made sure that they received excellent treatment until their wounds healed. He regarded the people's revolutionary army as a genuine army of the people and, as our friendly relations intensified, he sent me a passionate letter, entitled "An Appeal to the Comrades-in-Arms on the Mountain".

Human conscience follows the truth and sings the praises of love. I always stressed to my comrades that, whereas the enemy were trying to demoralize our ranks through deception and fraudulence, threats and blackmail, we communists must imbibe the hearts of the enemy soldiers with truth and love. The operatives, who took my words to heart and faithfully conducted political work among the enemy included a young girl guerrilla. Her name was Im Un Ha. The well-known play, entitled Sunflower, describes her actual struggle.

I met her for the first time at a secret camp in Mihunzhen in spring 1936. When we debated some important matters on the formation of a new division of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the preparations to found the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, she became extremely excited as she thought that she would follow us to the area of Mt. Paektu in the future. She was a charming, pretty girl, who was not very talkative but, at the same time, very determined. She was then not quite twenty and small in build for her age. Whenever she saw me, she would try to coax me into assigning her to the main unit of the KPRA under my command, saying, "You'll surely take me with you this time, won't you, General?"

But we left her with Wei Zheng-min who was ill. As her hope of following me to the fatherland had not materialized, tears welled up immediately in her eyes. I consoled her. "Don't feel so disappointed", I said. "When we've established ourselves in the area around Mt. Paektu, we'll take Comrade Wei there for treatment. And you'll come with him."

"I see, General. Don't worry about me."

Although she said that to comfort me, she was gazing absent-mindedly towards the southernmost sky of the fatherland in low spirits.

A few days later, we left Mihunzhen and billeted on a village near Xiaofuerhe. Unexpected misfortune hit this remote mountain village with its four or five households. The enemy from Dapuchaihe attacked it at dawn. We quickly occupied one vantage-point and fired at the enemy, but those who billeted on a house on the opposite side of the valley did not escape in time. They were Wei Zheng-min, Chairman Li, who had been sent to us on graduation from the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow, the wife of Cao Ya-fan, and Im Un Ha.

We searched the battle site after repulsing the enemy and found Wei in the attic. His wounded thigh was bleeding. I was told that Wei's condition had turned for the worse that day and could not be moved. Im Un Ha had managed to hide him in the attic. But she had been wounded in the leg while running up the

mountain to escape from enemy fire and had been captured. Cao Ya-fan's wife and Li had been killed that day.

The enemy took Im Un Ha to a company of the puppet Manchukuo army stationed in the vicinity of Dapuchaihe, and made her laundress and cook. At first the Japanese instructor cruelly tortured her, in a bid to make her talk, but as this proved futile, he changed his method; he tested her by giving her odd jobs. Im, lonely in the enemy camp, thought again and again about how she could be of service to the revolution. She decided on the bold plan of trying to persuade the whole company to switch to the side of the revolutionary army.

She decided to try and stir the men's hearts by singing some beautiful songs and awaken the hearts which had become so uncouth owing to exhaustive military service. To make contact with the soldiers, she stretched out a clothesline in the yard of the barracks and sang a plaintive, nostalgic song, frequently touching the clothes. We composed a good song for political work with the enemy. We had set revolutionary words to the tune of a mournful old song, sung by a widow over the grave of her husband, killed at the construction site of the Great Wall. She sang this song for rank-and-file soldiers, and other ordinary songs for the officers. The company had previously belonged to the national salvation army, but it had been reassigned to the puppet Manchukuo army when the commander of the NSA had deserted.

Consequently the soldiers had a strong anti-Japanese spirit. Her lovely singing captivated the soldiers' hearts. When they heard her singing that plaintive song, even officers gazed at a distant sky absent-mindedly, deep in thought.

As the prisoner's good voice became common knowledge, soldiers came up and asked, "Will you sing a song for us, girl guerrilla?" She would reply, smiling, "Of course, as it's free I can sing hundreds of times." And she would sing in a sorrowful way, adjusting her voice. The plaintive song carried the grievances of the Chinese people who were bleeding and dying under Japanese oppression.

*The labor involved in the construction of the Great Wall  
Built the tombs of the Chinese in the past.  
Today the bayonets of the Japanese  
Dig our graves.  
Arise, and advance,  
To take vengeance on the enemy of the Chinese.*

The uncouth soldiers, as well as the girl would shed tears when she sang. She sang songs for them and also did their needlework and left them the food they liked and later gave them extra portions.

Thereby, a friendship sprang up between Im and the soldiers. A few greenhorns followed her around as they would their own sisters. They had been orphaned in childhood and had roamed about begging, before joining the army for the food. She took loving care of these poor lonely young men. Im soon became as dear to them as their own sister and mother for the soldiers had been so hungry for human

warmth.

One day three young soldiers came to her and requested that she swear brotherhood with them. They said, "You're our eldest sister, Un Ha. We'll sacrifice our lives for you, sister." Their pledge was solemn and earnest. Needless to say, she accepted and grasped their hands warmly, saying, "I'll sacrifice my life for you, brothers."

With these three soldiers as the hard core, she expanded brotherhood still further and developed it gradually into an anti-Japanese association. Meanwhile, she decided to approach the company commander to discuss rebellion. The company commander, too, had been in the national salvation army, and had always been aggrieved by the tyranny of the Japanese instructor. Grasping his state of mind at the right moment, she went to see him one day and told him in detail how former puppet Manchukuo army soldiers, who had defected to the guerrilla army lived. Then she ventured, "Why don't you defect with your soldiers?"

At first the company commander was embarrassed by her unexpected suggestion.

"How long do you plan to carry on being maltreated like a horse? Yesterday Wang, your most cherished man, was beaten by the Japanese instructor until he lost consciousness. However, you didn't utter a word of protest."

As the company commander trembled with anger, she continued, "I'll help you defect. All of your men are my sworn brothers and members of the anti-Japanese association."

He looked at her glowing eyes in amazement. What had this young girl guerrilla been doing up to that time? The company commander was shocked to find that she had such a big heart for such a small body.

He said, "As a man, I'm ashamed."

And he left hastily.

The next day the soldiers under her influence lodged a protest, demanding their salary which was now six months overdue. That day, too, the Japanese instructor beat the soldiers' representative to a pulp, hurling abuse at him. The girl thought this to be a critical moment and faced the soldiers boldly, appealing, "My dear brothers! Get rid of that cruel Japanese instructor! End your shameful service to the puppet Manchukuo army and follow me to the anti-Japanese guerrilla army!"

Responding to her appeal, the soldiers killed the Japanese instructor, swiftly formed ranks and set out in search of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. They took along three Czech-made machine-guns, 19 rifles, one pistol and 4,700 cartridges.

History hardly knows of a case when a girl, scarcely twenty years of age, persuaded an enemy company

to mutiny. A secret document of the Japanese imperialists mentioned this incident as an unprecedented, miraculous event.

Im Un Ha was the flower of the guerrilla army, a daughter of Korea possessing a capacious heart, a girl who, as we had expected, had led the soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army along the right road with the sincerity, love and magnanimity of a communist.

Our political work among the enemy troops intensified from the latter half of the 1930s onwards and the revolutionary organizations spread their network to the vicious Jingan army units as well. Our organizations held sway in many units of the self-defense corps and puppet Manchukuo army and police. Accordingly, most of the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers turned their guns on the Japanese imperialists or were about to break up during our final anti-Japanese campaign for the liberation of the country.

The inglorious defeat of the Japanese imperialist aggressor army and the puppet Manchukuo army, serving an unjust cause, was inevitable, dictated by the laws of history. Somehow or other, man is bound in the end to take the side of justice and truth by a straight or roundabout path.

I still don't know what happened to the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army I made friends with in Emu. But I'm certain that if he, his wife and children are alive somewhere, they will devote themselves to their fatherland and the Chinese nation.

## 11.3. On Lake Jingbo

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The southern shore of Lake Jingbo, an unprecedented scenic beautyspot in Manchuria, is home to a small village called Nanhutou, which means village on the southern tip of the lake.

The village Beihutou is located on its northern shore. Several miles up, River Xiaojiaqi flows into Lake Jingbo: here you used to come across two old log-cabins in a deep valley at the foot of a mountain. We held a meeting in February 1936 in one of them. I was told that it is difficult now to determine the site of the cabin owing to the surrounding thick grass and trees but 50 or 60 years ago a tall ash tree and pine-nut tree stood in front of that cabin, serving as a reference point for all those who were coming to the meeting place. The developments in the latter half of the 1930s can be traced back to this cabin known by our historians as the "log-cabin on River Xiaojiaqi".

In mid-February 1936, on the eve of Usu (the day of the first rains in the year) after Ripchun (the day when spring begins) we made our way to this place, after the second expedition to north Manchuria. It marked the beginning of spring according to the calendar, but the biting cold of north Manchuria was still rife and the wild continental wind whipped against us.

Now and then the sound of breaking ice rang out on Lake Jingbo, accompanied by the reverberations of oaks and birches cracking from the cold in the thick forests along River Xiaojiaqi. It was so cold there that even our experienced cooks could not boil rice in the open-air kitchen. Whereas the rice at the bottom of the pot burnt to a cinder, the rice in the upper layer would not boil, affected by the biting cold of 40°C below zero.

North Manchuria still impinges on me as the one place in my life, where I ate half-cooked food more often than anywhere else.

Almost four years had passed, since we had launched the war against the Japanese imperialists. Our revolutionary force had grown on a large scale in its military and political aspects, and the future looked bright. The anti-Japanese revolution had experienced a thorny path, and was now clearly advancing dynamically towards a fresh turning-point.

As I hastened towards Nanhutou to meet Wei Zheng-min, without a rest from the expedition, various thoughts of our revolutionary prospects surged inside me.

I had waited eagerly throughout the expedition in north Manchuria and also during our days in Xiaojiaqi after the expedition for the envoys who had been sent to Moscow half a year earlier. The major issue Wei Zheng-min was to bring to the attention of the Comintern by the decision of the Yaoyinggou meeting was apparently about the "Minsaengdan" case in which thousands of Korean communists in east Manchuria had been removed, but, in essence, it was about the independent nature of

the Korean revolution. In other words, it was about whether the Korean communists' struggle under the slogan of the Korean revolution was right or wrong, legitimate or illegitimate, or whether it contradicted the Comintern principle of one party for one country. From today's stand-point, it is natural and does not leave even a shadow of a doubt about its validity, but at that time, when the Comintern existed and the principle of one party for one country was regarded as inviolable, it was a complicated and serious issue, what defied a ready answer, but was vital to our destiny.

The tenacious argument of people, who wielded the principle of one party for one country, the contention that the Korean communists' struggle for the Korean revolution constituted a heretic act unworthy of a communist, and a factional practice alien to the Party, was terrible. They said, "A communist is an internationalist. How can he be preoccupied with the thought of his country, which lacks a Party of its own and be captivated by a narrow nationalist idea, instead of devoting himself to the revolution of the country whose Party he belongs to?"

This is the same attitude, expressed by the revisionists who adhered to the 'defense of the fatherland' slogan in the days of the Second International. Lenin labeled them traitors and enemies of the cause of socialism and communism and condemned them. If you Korean communists continue to insist on the Korean revolution, you could also be labeled traitors and enemies of the cause of socialism. Consequently, you would be wise not to act rashly."

Naturally enough, I was not that worried about this matter, and in a sense can say that I already had a rough estimate of the answer Wei Zheng-min would bring, because our opinion was just and Wei had understood it fully. I had no doubt that Comintern officials would approve the appeal we had submitted on the fundamental issues of the Korean revolution.

My conviction that the Comintern would treat our problems fairly was both based on the consistent belief that our appeal to Moscow through Wei conformed in all aspects with the revolution's principles and interests and related to the situation at that time, when the Comintern was seeking a new line.

Until 1919, when the Communist International was organized by Lenin, the Russian Communist Party was the only political party of the working class in power. The revolutionary left-wing broke with the revisionist Social Democratic Parties of the Second International and formed Communist Parties. However, they were very young in both ideological and organizational aspects and still not strong enough to independently carry out revolution in their own countries.

The victory of the socialist revolution in Russia sparked vigorous struggles to break the chains of capitalism and establish Soviet republics on a world-wide scale, but these efforts were frustrated. Despite the favorable objective situation, created by the emergence of the first socialist state in history, the revolutionary forces of each country were not sufficiently prepared to overcome the enemy and gain a conclusive victory.

In these circumstances, the communists all over the world were compelled to reorganize the international

communist movement and unite organizationally with newly-emergent Russia and the Russian Communist Party as the axis. They had to establish the principle of democratic centralism in the form of the Comintern organization and mode of its activities to make sure that the parties and revolutionary movements in separate countries obeyed unconditionally the directives of the international center.

By accepting this requirement in a dogmatic way, some communists revealed a flunkey tendency to blindly follow directives from Moscow, disregarding the revolutionary aims in their own countries and their own national interests; this tendency caused a considerable loss to the revolutionary movement in individual countries.

However, the revolutionary movement developed and revolutionary forces grew in separate countries under the unified guidance of the Comintern. Communists in these countries began to emerge as forces, capable of independently carrying out their revolutions.

From the early 1920s onwards, Communist Parties sprouted in the colonies and semi-colonial countries in Asia and, under their leadership, the national liberation struggles advanced rapidly. The parties of many countries could now have their say and demanded the right to independently define their own lines. It was in actual fact difficult for the Comintern, situated as it was in Moscow at the helm of the world revolution, to formulate policies in good time which would suit the actual situation in many countries of the world's continents or regulate and guide their revolutionary struggles in such a way, as to meet the ever-changing circumstances and conditions. The Comintern, composed of people from various countries, was restricted somewhat in the formulation of lines and policies and in their dissemination.

The international communist movement was beginning to understand the need for a gradual change in its organization of revolutionary force and guidance of the struggle's development. Revolution cannot be imported or exported. This fact, coupled with the pressing need to unite the revolutionary efforts of each country into one single force, aroused the communists in every country to the need to establish Juche, formulating and implementing their own line and maintain their party's independence. This change in the situation constituted an important guarantee, that the Comintern would confirm the independent nature of the Korean revolution.

When he set off for the Soviet Union via Hunchun in summer 1935, Wei Zheng-min promised to return via Harbin or Muling and meet me in Ningan. Consequently we planned to go to Ningan after the Emu campaign. At around the time when we hurried to Nanhutou, the fascist threat was looming ever larger on the international scene. The Spanish Civil War was developing into a violent war and was assuming an international character, owing to the fascists' overt armed intervention.

Japan was to be the hotbed of a new war in the East. She was being precipitated towards militarism. With the formation of the Saito Cabinet in the wake of the "May 15 incident" in 1932, Japan's party politics came to an end and the country was placed under the rule of a military cabinet. Japan thereby vehemently told the world, without the slightest hesitation, that "war is the father of creation and the mother of culture. The fascist trend in Japan culminated in the coup of February 26, 1936, at the time when we

planned to convene the meeting at Nanhutou.

The incident finally led to the oppressive phase, where the doctrine of overseas aggression, advocated by the junior officers' group, began to be implemented. The young officers, 1,000 non-commissioned officers and men who took part in the coup, assaulted the residences of the Prime Minister and several of the ministers, killing or seriously wounding important government officials, including the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, the Minister of Finance, the Inspector-General of Military Education and the Grand Chamberlain; they occupied the Metropolitan Police Agency, the Ministry of War, the General Staff Office and the residence of the Minister of War, thereby gaining control of the "heart of Japanese politics". The coup, staged under the slogan of "respecting the Emperor and eliminating treacherous subjects", was put down in four days. The political confusion was smoothed over by the execution of the master-minds behind the plot. This, however, constituted a danger signal of the rampage of Japanese militarism.

The incident on February 26, a product of conflicts among Japanese military circles, between the Imperial Way and Control factions, proved the grave stage of Japan's impending fascism and marked the advent of a military dictatorship. The maneuvers of the militarist force inside Japan itself implied the danger that they would launch a new war and larger-scale military actions.

Keeping a vigilant eye on the developments in Japan, we re-examined our fighting strategy in a bid to anticipate their consequences. Although the coup failed, it clearly demonstrated the outrageous nature of Japanese militarism in its participation in Japan's domestic politics and its aggressive intentions towards other countries. In actual fact Japan provoked the Sino-Japanese War less than a year and a half later and precipitated a still greater aggression.

The emergence of fascism in Japan weighed more heavily upon Korea, her colony. A frenzied campaign was launched on the Korean peninsula to wipe out all that was Korean and crush all forms of anti-Japanese struggle and anti-Japanese elements. To use Korean language instead of Japanese, wear white clothes instead of dyed colors and failure to hoist the Hinomaru (the national flag of Japan), visit the shrines, learn the "Pledge of the Imperial Subjects", or put on *geta* (Japanese wooden sandals) - these acts were all termed anti-Japanese, anti-state and treacherous behavior accompanied by a fine or penalty, arrest or even imprisonment.

Some former proponents of patriotism now abandoned the last vestiges of their conscience in this violent campaign of national extinction, became turncoats and declaimed that "Japan and Korea were one" and that "the Japanese and Koreans came from the same stock", in order to save their skins. Patriots were murdered while traitors cut a wide swathe. The whole of Korea was being stifled.

This suppressive situation made it imperative for us to move to Mt. Paektu and demonstrate that Korea was alive, Korea was fighting and that Korea would survive. These shocking changes occurred successively at home and abroad around the time when we met at Nanhutou.



These developments were indeed oppressive, but they did not depress us. I was convinced that we could defeat the Japanese imperialists, if we moved the armed struggle deep into the homeland.

The march was arduous and exhausting, but the men's spirits were high, as they anticipated the advance to the Mt. Paektu area. It was probably during our march to Nanhutou that we debated the significant lessons of the legend of Zhenzhumen village, situated off Lake Jingbo. It is a very interesting legend. A poor man and his daughter once lived in the village of Zhenzhu men on Lake Jingbo. The daughter, nearly twenty years of age, was a rare beauty. and all the young men around wanted to marry her.

Her father had been endowed with the divine gift of seeing through waters of any depth. He once told his daughter, "While angling the other day, I saw a golden mirror lying deep in the lake. To retrieve that mirror, I must first get rid of a three-headed monster living in the water. To do this, however, I need a very brave and bold assistant. I've been trying to work out these days how to find a suitable assistant."

His dutiful daughter answered, "I will marry the young man who helps you bring out that mirror."

He backed his daughter's idea. He disseminated the rumor about his daughter's decision in the neighboring villages. Many young men came to Zhenzhumen on hearing the rumor. However, when they heard the man's plan to get the mirror, none of them expressed a readiness to become his assistant. However, one young man whose surname was Yang, volunteered. The old man and his daughter accepted his offer at once and promised him that the girl would marry the lad if they managed to bring back the mirror.

One fine day the man went to the lakeside with the young man. After rowing out onto the lake, the man gave the lad three swords - large, medium and small - and said, "When I come to the surface for the first time, you must give me the small sword, the second time - the medium one, and the third time - the large one. When you hand me the swords, you must act as quick as lightning. Don't be frightened. If you take to flight in fright, before getting the mirror out, both you and I will die."

The boy comforted him, saying, "Please don't worry, sir."

Soon the man jumped into the water. The lad sitting in the boat gazed into the water's depths, and the girl on the shore watched him. A few moments later the man's pale face broke surface. The boy swiftly handed him the small sword, as he had been told. The man dived into the water with the sword. The lake then began to surge in the depths. The man rose to the surface with one of the bleeding monster's heads, as large as a man's, and disappeared into the water with the second sword.

In a few minutes, the lake ran high and the waves rose and seemed about to capsize the boat. The man, who was stained with blood emerged, this time holding another of the monster's heads, the size of a horse's, and plunged again into the surging water with a third sword. Thunder boomed in the sky and the waves raged. The boat rolled heavily on the waves, as if it were sinking. At this horrible sight, the girl on the shore felt as if her heart had stopped beating. She was so tense and fretful that she held her breath.

The lad became deranged and rowed the boat with all his might towards the shore, forsaking his promise to the man and his attachment for the girl, who had been watching him. Enraged, the girl shouted at him, stamping her foot, and persuaded him to turn the boat back; she climbed in and rowed with the lad to the center of the lake in search of her father. The wind and raging waves subsided, but the man was nowhere to be seen. The boy and girl called out for him again and again, but the man died in the water and therefore there was no reply. The girl tearfully reproached the boy for breaking his promise. Quarrelling, having no idea of the time, they both disappeared in the fog.

Although the story varies a little from village to village, or from Emu to Ningan, this is the general outline. Apparently the name of Lake Jingho originated from the Zhenzhumen legend. On hearing the legend we thought deeply about loyalty and a self-sacrificing spirit. My comrades cursed the young man as disloyal and cowardly. The legend affected them tremendously. Whenever a coward appeared in our ranks, the guerrillas would condemn him as "the boy Yang on Lake Jingbo".

To discuss measures and decide how to cope with the urgent historic tasks raised by the country and the nation, whose destiny was at stake, I considered it necessary to convene a meeting of military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army at Xiaojiaqihe, before leaving for Mt. Paektu.

One evening in mid-February, when I was putting the finishing touches to the draft report for the meeting and waiting for the envoys, who had gone to Moscow, the door of the log-cabin was flung open and Wei Zheng-min appeared before me.

He apologized profusely for arriving later than schedule, explaining that he had been laid up in hospital for a few months. Although he arrived late, he was met with our congratulations for returning to Manchuria, after recovering from his illness. He looked much better now, probably because he had been to Moscow. I could guess just by looking at his composed air that his trip had been successful.

Wei's return journey had not been smooth. He arrived in Ningan via Harbin by rail and met the comrades of the 5th Corps of Zhou Baozhong; on his way to Nanhutou he had been stopped near Wangou village by the patrol police. After a short interrogation, the policemen had suspected him and wanted to take him to their substation. Wei was carrying important documents from the Comintern in his bundle; everything would have been ruined if he had been taken to the station. He gave the policemen 50 yuan, and they let him go.

Wei said jokingly that he had thought his body would be worth tens of thousands of yuan but it turned out that it was only worth 50 yuan.

For some strange reason, he said: "Let me shake your hand once more, Comrade Kim Il Sung." "We've just shaken hands. What's it all about?" I asked, puzzled.

"I want to congratulate you on one matter. This is a significant handshake. So, be happy, Comrade Kim Il Sung. After a serious discussion on the matters you've raised, the Comintern concluded that your opinions are all correct and issued some important directives backing them. Everything was settled just as the Korean communists desired."

Feeling tears welling up in my eyes, despite myself, I grabbed Wei's two hands. "Is that true?"

"Yes. The Comintern criticized the east Manchuria Party committee for committing such grave Leftist mistakes in its struggle with the 'Minsaengdan' and other activities. All the senior officials of the Comintern and its Chinese Communist Party representatives expressed the same opinion on this matter.

"But most importantly, the Comintern has recognized the inalienable and inviolable right of the Korean communists to be solely responsible for the Korean revolution and has given its support to the revolution. The Comintern gave the clear-cut answer that the responsibilities should now be divided between the Chinese and Korean communists in such a way that the former would engineer the Chinese revolution and the latter the Korean revolution."

Wei Zheng-min stopped speaking for some minutes for some unknown reason. I soon realized that his conscience and remorse were bothering him. Were reminiscences of the heated argument, where he had tried to prove the validity of his own opinion, making him blush?

What serious arguments we had exchanged at the meetings at Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou and beyond the conference hall!

Thanks to Wei Zheng-min's visit to Moscow, the complicated issues were settled smoothly, just as we had expected and desired.

One source had alleged that Wei did not attend the Seventh Congress of the Comintern during his time in Moscow and merely left Hunchun, accompanied by ten local Party and YCL cadres on a study tour, and that he aimed primarily to report on the issue of the "Minsaengdan" to the Chinese representatives to the Comintern. Other materials were also untrue. The archives of the Comintern still maintain records of Wei Zheng-min's attendance of its Seventh Congress.

Wei Zheng-min told me that he had given the Comintern a detailed account of the guerrilla struggle in Manchuria. It went under the title "Feng Kang's Report". In Moscow he used the pseudonym Feng Kang, as well as his real name.

There were discrepancies in the reports of Leftist errors, committed during the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle. Some of them blamed Wei for the errors, while others asserted that the deviations in the struggle against the "Minsaengdan" were righted, following his appointment as secretary of the East Manchuria Special District Committee.

I did not believe that he was totally responsible for the injurious consequences of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle. Frankly speaking, however, it is true that in the early days when, in his capacity of secretary of the Harbin City Party Committee, Wei came to east Manchuria in the winter of 1934 as an inspector from the provincial committee, he was at a loss as to how to deal with such a complicated issue as the "Minsaengdan". At that time, he was more or less influenced by the prevalent opinions that many of the "Minsaengdan" members had infiltrated the revolutionary organizations and the guerrilla army and should therefore be purged to the last man. He subsequently confessed that at first he had suspected that most Koreans belonged to the "Minsaengdan".

This statement would seem to be more or less true, judging from his report about me to the Comintern; it reads, "Kim Il Sung. Korean. Brave and active. Speaks fluent Chinese. A guerrilla. Many people say that he is a Minsaengdan' member. Fond of talking to his men and trusted and respected by them as well as by the NSA soldiers."

Despite his mistakes in the early days, it is only fair to say that he contributed greatly to correcting the ultra-Leftist deviation in the purge, going as far as Moscow and receiving the Comintern answer on the "Minsaengdan". In fact, he had expressed his agreement with me on the issue at the Dahuangwai meeting. I was grateful to him for the accurate and objective report he gave the Comintern about the situation in east Manchuria, avoiding all forms of national prejudice and the satisfactory settlement of everything in our favor.

"Thank you. I'm grateful to the Comintern and all the more grateful to you, Comrade Wei, for taking such trouble to travel all the way to Moscow, despite your poor health. I won't forget all that you've done for me."

This was my heartfelt acknowledgement to him.

Wei said awkwardly that my praise was more than he deserved. He continued, "When combating the 'Minsaengdan', the East Manchuria Special District Committee and the Chinese communists under it made a serious mistake; they were narrow-minded and went to the extreme in dealing with people's destinies. Many Korean communists and revolutionaries suffered undeserved punishment. I am first and foremost to blame for not combating the 'Minsaengdan' in a just way. This was severely criticized by the Comintern'

I considered his remark a piece of honest self-criticism.

"A communist is also a human being, Mr. Wei. Consequently, he is also prone to mistakes. I'd like to say that the 'Minsaengdan' issue became complicated, basically because the Japanese had sought to sow dissension between our nations."

"You're right. After all, we've been trapped in their scheme for quite some time and committed fratricide. We killed our own people. When I first arrived in east Manchuria, someone told me that the Koreans

were claiming Jiandao and were thinking of restoring it. He added that I must be vigilant against their attempts to occupy it with Japanese help. For some reason, at first I believed him," Wei said and smiled bitterly.

I felt sorry for him.

"Mr. Wei, everything's fine now, so forget about the past. Frankly speaking, I felt heavy-hearted when I saw you off to the Comintern. But I felt complete trust on you, when you sincerely accepted our proposal and said that you'd convey it to the Comintern responsibly."

"Thank you. I was also convinced that you'd think so."

The Comintern made it clear that the Korean communists were not guilty in any way when they raised the slogan of the Korean revolution and that was in fact their sacred duty to do so, something the Comintern should have entrusted to them and their legitimate right inalienable even in terms of the principle of one party for one country. I felt as if I were a bird which had been freed from a cage and could now fly high up into the sky. We now had wings, so to speak, and the Korean revolution could now take off.

Wei Zheng-min provided me with a detailed account of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. In those days the Comintern was preoccupied with the urgent task of launching a world-wide struggle against fascism.

The emergence of fascism in Italy and Germany and its consolidation after the First World War had ushered in a dreary, unstable political climate in many European countries and was precipitating mankind into a new war. The fascism created by Fasci di Combattimento, organized by Mussolini of Italy, attained its highest peak under Hitler of Germany and the Nazi Party he founded.

Fascism advocated extreme national chauvinism. Consequently Germany became the source of a new world war. The extreme anti-communist mentality of fascism, combined with anti-Semitism, was the most vicious and pernicious trend of all reactionary views which had existed in all ages and all countries by that time. Fascism reared its ugly head as a force, which could not be ignored in the political lives in Germany and other countries. Germany's bourgeoisie considered iron fists of fascist dictators like Hitler to be the only instrument to be able to rid Germany of all its crises, overpower communism and bring about the restoration of the Third Reich.

Hitlerite fascism conspired against the German Communist Party as its first undertaking on usurping power. The notorious burning of the Reichstag building, which startled the whole world, was a rare farce which they staged. The political objectives of Hitler and Goring in this incident ended in ignominious failure. Of course, after the Reichstag fire, they outlawed the Communist Party and reduced the Reichstag to a mere rubber stamp, but also they vividly revealed the true nature of fascism to the world as the most reactionary and undisguised bourgeois political system. The world condemned German

fascism as a provocateur, dictator and warmonger.

The rise of fascism in Germany awakened the political consciousness of the progressive people throughout the world.

With the onset of fascism and the threat of an imminent new war, the Comintern set the important strategic task of preventing dissension between Communist and Socialist Parties and resisting fascism by concerted efforts. This culminated in the launch of an anti-fascist popular front movement on an international scale.

In these circumstances, the oppressed nations in the East and colonies initiated an anti-imperialist, national united front movement to rally all national efforts into a single force to counter imperialist aggression.

On the basis of this strategic objective, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern required the Communist Parties of all countries to rally all anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces.

Wei Zheng-min conveyed his respect for Dimitrov, saying that his report on the development of the struggle against imperialism and fascism on an international scale had been very impressive.

We believed that Dimitrov, hero of the Leipzig trials, which attracted the attention of the whole world, including progressive intellectuals, was an outstanding man of the times. His appeal to wage an active struggle against fascism gripped the hearts of progressive people throughout the world.

I would like to mention here that the fact that Dimitrov, a Bulgarian, and not Zinoviev, Bukharin or Manuisky of the Soviet Union, was at the helm of the Comintern symbolized a new phase in the development of the international communist movement; it marked the advent of a new age when the Comintern would function on the basis of the independent activities of separate Communist Parties. We can say that these demands of the times were reflected in the resolutions of the Comintern Seventh Congress, which accorded considerable independent activities to each party.

It was fortunate indeed that the congress fully recognized the rights and responsibilities of the Korean communists for the Korean revolution.

I was even more firmly convinced, on hearing Wei's report, of the justness of our cause and the correctness of our lines. When he gave me the Communist International, the organ of the Comintern, carrying an article On the Anti-Imperialist United Front in Manchuria written by Yang Song, and a letter from the Comintern to a senior official of the eastern area bureau of the Jirin Province, signed jointly by Wang Ming and Kang Sheng, working at the Comintern oriental department, Wei Zheng-min added that both the article and letter explained the main content of the resolution adopted by the Comintern on Korea.

Yang Song proposed in his article to overcome Left-wing opportunist deviations and form an anti-Japanese united front at the earliest possible date, and maintained that the Chinese Communist Party should from that moment on adhere to the slogan of a united front of the oppressed nations of China, Korea, Mongolia and Manchuria. He also stressed that the Chinese and Korean nations should unite to overthrow Japan's rule of puppet Manchukuo and set up a Jiandao autonomy by the Korean nation, and that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, operating as part of the Chinese-Korean Anti-Japanese Allied Army, should fight for the independence of the Korean nation as well. Yang Song was in reality Wu Ping, a representative from the Comintern, I had met in Zhou Baozhong's hut during the first expedition to north Manchuria.

The Comintern did not only provide moral and political backing; it also revealed its support of our activities by proposing measures to help us to speed up the Korean revolution in future.

One of them was a directive that the anti-Japanese guerrilla forces, which had so far conducted a joint struggle, should be reorganized separately into Korean and Chinese armies. This was, in effect, the nucleus of the issue on the responsibilities and rights of the Korean communists for the Korean revolution and played an important role in maintaining the Juche character and independence of the Korean revolution.

If we had organized a separate army of only Koreans, picking them out from all the guerrilla units in Manchuria, as directed by the Comintern, such an army alone could have proved to be a formidable force, capable of countering the two Japanese army divisions in Korea. If we had fought the Japanese army in a spirit of one man as a match for ten, the young people in Korea would not have remained mere onlookers. If they had joined us, the tide of the war would have changed and the country would have been liberated at a much earlier date.

Nevertheless, as communists, who had fought jointly in the same trench against the Japanese, our common enemy, for years, we could not be disloyal to our brothers and comrades-in-arms. If we had removed all the Korean soldiers to our advantage, then such a unit as the 2nd Corps, comprising 90 per cent Korean soldiers, would have come to an end. Chinese soldiers constituted the majority in other guerrilla units. However, most of them had come from the nationalist army: there were only a few communists in each of these units. Moreover, most of the commanders in each unit were Koreans. The core elements of each unit were also Koreans. If separate units of Koreans and Chinese had been created in this situation, it would have been difficult to maintain the Anti-Japanese Allied Army.

The Korean communists had carried out the anti-Japanese armed struggle with immense success by organizing the Anti-Japanese Allied Army with the Chinese communists in the mid-1930s and developing a joint struggle under anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese slogans. In the new circumstances, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was to advance to the border areas, directing its main effort to the Korean revolution.

However, we could not run the risk of weakening the joint struggle with the anti-Japanese armed units of

the Chinese people. At a time when the progressive forces supporting the popular front in Spain were fighting together against the allied forces of the fascists, it would have been irrational and contrary to the trend of the times to separate the Korean-Chinese anti-Japanese armed units into Korean and Chinese armies. If the Koreans had formed their own army, when fighting in China, the Chinese people's support might have weakened towards them.

We needed sovereignty, rather than a division of forces. We demanded recognition and respect for the Korean people's right to independence, their right to carry out the Korean revolution, without any restraint, restriction or interference but not divided forces. Needless to say, Wei Zheng-min and other Chinese comrades were well aware of this fact. But Wei seemed to think that the greatest gift he could give me on his return from Moscow was separate authority. He repeated his proposal to plan the reorganization of the armed forces by nationalities as the Comintern had advised.

I replied:

"I fully understand what you think, Comrade Wei. But I believe that we cannot look at the matter from only one angle. As we're we have to consider everything on the basis of revolutionary principles and class interests. When they talk about the Korean revolution, Korean communists do not seek to support narrow national interests. We believe that the national interests of the revolution should always be combined with international interests and that international interests must not be detrimental to national interests.

"Therefore, I must give deep thought as to whether it would be more advantageous to the revolution to preserve the united Korean-Chinese anti-Japanese armed forces, which have been fighting for years in the same trench, or separate them on the basis of nationality. Perhaps you're suggesting the reorganization of the anti-Japanese armed forces on the basis of nationality out of respect for the Korean communists, but we don't view this superficially. Furthermore, we are actually operating as the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, although fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese communists. Consequently I don't see any need to separate them."

Wei was clearly pleased, but then asked anxiously, "Does that mean we will adhere to the directives of the Comintern? From a moral point of view, we have no right to bind you, Korean comrades in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army."

"I don't think you need to worry about that," I said. "I would suggest that, while operating as an allied army, we call ourselves the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, when we're in our homeland and Korean villages in northeast China, and then announce ourselves as the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, when we're in Chinese villages. Surely that would mean preserving the allied army system and also carrying out the directives of the Comintern." "Thank you, Comrade Kim. I didn't expect such generous understanding. This magnanimous approach of the Korean communists represents strong support for the Chinese revolution." Smiling, I shook Wei's hand and said, "Have we been fighting together for only a few years?"



And must we part after fighting together only a few more years? Our friendship will last for ever, as long as China remains our neighbor and communism emerges victorious in your country."

"Thank you, Comrade Kim. It is indeed an honor for me to fight in the same ranks with Korean communists like you. I'd like to become your political commissar, Commander Kim Il Sung. I will assist the Korean revolution by uniting more closely behind our Korean comrades."

We embraced each other and laughed long and heartily.

To be candid, I had formed a new opinion of Wei Zheng-min after meeting him in Nanhutou. He regretted his past mistake. After restructuring the Party organizations in Manchuria, following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, he was appointed to responsible posts of secretary of the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee and political commissar of the 1st Route Corps of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army; but he accompanied my unit most of the time, rather than the unit of the Chinese comrades. As he said jokingly, he was virtually performing the role of political commissar of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army under my command.

For some reason he was fond of my company. It was not surprising that the Japanese official records listed Wei Zheng-min (alias Wei Ming-sheng) as my political commissar. He stayed for a long time in the Changbai area in my company and visited the secret camp on Mt. Paektu several times. He seldom objected to our lines or proposals in the years following the meeting at Nanhutou.

The alliance between the Korean and Chinese communists, which had undergone temporary trials due to the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, entered a new stage around the time of the Nanhutou meeting.

After it, we continued the armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists for nearly 10 years jointly with the Chinese communists and Chinese anti-Japanese forces, developing the Korean revolution and providing active assistance to the Chinese revolution. History of the mutual support and cooperation between the Korean and Chinese communists can thereby be traced to the early 1930s.

A Chinese leader, referring to this fraternity and assistance, said that the Korean people's support for the Chinese people was thin and yet long-term, and that the latter's support for the former was thick and yet short-term. I think that this constituted a sincere evaluation of what our people, a small nation, had been doing for a long time to help the fraternal Chinese people.

The meeting with Wei Zheng-min is an impressive event, which will remain in my memory for the rest of my life. As his visit to Moscow contributed greatly to the removal of obstacles to the Korean revolution, I am still grateful to him.

The following anecdote made my meeting with Wei still more memorable.

One day towards noon, when we were making preparations for a meeting of military and political cadres, my orderly hurried to tell me that a big tigress was threatening our long-range observation post and asked for permission to fire. He explained that the post was located on the top of a rocky cliff, commanding a good view, but that down below the cliff there was a den where a big tigress lived with her two cubs. He continued that the guards had tried to change the post out of fright, but they continued to get along because they had had no other suitable place and the tigress had meant no mischief, but she had gone wild since the previous day.

I figured that there must be some reason behind the tigress's sudden anger and went to the observation post. I looked down from the cliff and saw a very large tigress crouching in front of a cave. I asked what had happened and learned that our comrades standing guard had angered her. They had played with the cubs, sunbathing outside the cave; the cubs had accidentally scratched the backs of their hands with their claws, so the men had slapped the cubs lightly on the head. The tigress who had been out searching for prey had seen this, and from then on had roared thunderously several times a day at the observation post and jumped half way up to the middle of the cliff.

I said, "Don't be alarmed. The tigress must be rampaging to demonstrate her ability to prevent the sentries from harming her cubs. This is a warning that she wouldn't forgive you, if you were to molest her cubs again. She wouldn't become involved in a hopeless fight with a man armed with a gun, so don't worry."

Only then did the sentries abandon the idea of killing her. They decided to maintain friendly relations with the fierce "Queen" of the mountain. As a first step, they threw the limb of a roe deer down the cliff. They continued providing them with food for some days.

The tigress grew calmer. From then on she became our friendly neighbor. After our departure from Nanhutou and advance to the area around Mt. Paektu, the officers and men of the people's revolutionary army operating in this place maintained "good neighbourly relations" with the tigress.

According to Lim Chun Chu, Choe In Jun's company first discovered the tigress's cave, when camping in the valley of Dajiaqihe. A hospital, an arsenal, and a communication station were situated in this valley. The supply workers also resided there.

At the end of 1935 Lim, on our summons, had come from Wangqing to the direction of Nanhutou in search of the expeditionary force, and opened a hospital for a time in a vacant hut in Xiaogou, treating the wounded; when he found a better site for a secret camp on the plateau in Dajiaqihe, he moved the hospital there. The hut had been occupied by people, who had led a secluded life in the mountains. They used to come to the mountains when young and led a solitary life in huts, isolated from the outside world throughout their lives until they were 70 or 80; they engaged in hunting, picking medicinal herbs and cultivating opium. Most of the masters of these huts lived to a great age, but they, too, were only mortals. When their solitary life ended, the huts became bare.

The hospital Lim Chun Chu ran treated the guerrillas from our corps and those from the 5th Corps. Ryu Ran Han, chief of staff of the Wangqing Regiment, died while being treated in this hospital.

The Wangqing 3rd Company, led by Choe In Jun, was entrusted with protecting and supporting the patients. The company assaulted the barracks of the puppet Manchukuo army unit stationed in its vicinity to obtain weapons and provisions. They captured about 100 weapons in that battle. When they looked for a place to keep the weapons, they found a cave on the cliff below the plateau, where the hospital and communication station were located. Choe In Jun piled the rifles in the cave and blocked its entrance with stones. On his way down the cliff, he found another cave - the den of the tigress.

Whenever I look back on that Nanhutou meeting, I recall Wei Zhengmin and, at the same time, the tigress in the secret camp at Dajiaqihe, which became an interesting topic during the meeting.

We held a meeting of military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in Xiaojiaqihe for nearly a week in late February 1936. This meeting is also called the Nanhutou meeting. It was attended by 30 to 40 military and political cadres including Wei Zheng-min and other Chinese comrades and Kim San Ho, Han Hung Gwon, Choe Chun Guk, Jon Man Song, Choe In Jun, Park Thae Hwa, Kim Ryo Jung, Lim Chun Chu, Jon Chang Chol and others.

Yun Pyong Do, who had been to the Comintern and returned after receiving treatment at a Soviet hospital, also took part. He experienced quite an emotional reunion with Wei Zheng-min at Xiaojiaqihe after several months of separation.

Wei Zheng-min conveyed the opinions of the Comintern at the meeting on some issues we had submitted at the Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou meetings and its directives. The meeting expressed its deep gratitude to Wei for his journey to Moscow despite his poor health and congratulated him on the good results.

In my report I reviewed the experience of the military and political activities we had carried out in the areas along Tuman River in the first half of the 1930s. I made proposals on the important tasks facing the Korean communists to develop the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle in a period when we greeted a new turning-point in the revolution, and the new strategic policies for implementing them.

In other words, I advanced new ways of ensuring a major upsurge in the overall Korean revolution centering on the anti-Japanese armed struggle, including policies to transfer the main force of the KPRA to the border point and the area around Mt. Paektu and gradually extend the armed struggle to the homeland, expand the movement of the anti-Japanese national united front, step up moves to found a party, and reorganize the Young Communist League into an Anti-Japanese Youth League. I brought all these points up for discussion.

Everybody who took the floor expressed their full backing and agreement with the policies I had set out in the report. There was scarcely any bickering or arguing for and against a policy. Of all the meetings I had presided over since the start of the anti-Japanese revolution, this was the first one where the

discussion of lines went so smoothly and the attendants were in such high spirits. The meeting began and ended in smiles. The attendants vied with one another to take the floor and looked forward to the day when they would advance to the area around Mt. Paektu, deep into the homeland to fight a decisive battle with the enemy.

Our advance to the area around Mt. Paektu and deep into the homeland was vital to consolidate the motive force of our revolution and defeat the Japanese imperialists through the efforts of the Korean people themselves, by enlisting all their forces. The meeting expressed its absolute support for our proposal to proceed to the area around Mt. Paektu, strengthening our main force, first seizing the border and then extending the theatre of our struggle deep into the homeland.

If we built our bases in the area around Mt. Paektu and launched an intensive armed struggle in the border area and the homeland, we could inspire our people, suffering the brutal fascist military rule of the Japanese imperialists, with hope of national liberation, and promote confidence of victory in the minds of 20 million fellow countrymen, who were eager to see our revolutionary army. This would have a greater demonstrative effect than a hundred words.

The meeting adopted the strategic policy of our revolution on the organization of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and making preparations for founding a Communist Party on a nation-wide scale.

The Korean revolution enjoyed a fresh lift with the meeting at Nanhutou acting as a turning-point. In this sense, the meeting can be called a watershed in the Korean revolution, marking off the two halves of the 1930s. Thanks to the decisions adopted at the meeting, the Korean communists could set up a new landmark to raise the overall Korean revolution to a higher plane, centering on the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

The meeting at Nanhutou can be described in brief as the first time when we fully established Juche in the history of the Korean communist movement and the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle. The decisions it adopted enabled the Korean communists to adhere to a Juche-oriented stand during subsequent stages of the revolution and invariably uphold it as the lifeline of the nation in the face of any adversity.

The meeting can also be called a festival of victors. Victory had been won at the cost of innumerable sacrifices and blood and the strenuous efforts made by the Korean communists unsparingly for the fatherland and the people, and history and the times. The Korean communist movement, shunned by the Comintern, parties of fraternal countries, and by our people, albeit in part, owing to the factional strife among early communists, the break-up of the Korean Communist Party and the mistakes committed by the Leftist opportunists in the struggle against the "Minsaengdan", could remove these stains of the past and help us embark along the ever-victorious road with the Nanhutou meeting as a momentum.

A short course to implement the policies set forth at the meeting was conducted in Xiaojiaqihe for about

a week. A meeting of Party and political workers was held to debate ways of implementing the policy of building the Party.

At the short course and during the meeting we provided a detailed explanation of the policies established at the Nanhutou meeting and proposed a slogan for the immediate period ahead, which reflected the basic spirit of the meeting: "Let us advance to the homeland and raise the battle cry!" - in the hope of providing fresh impetus to our revolution.

After the Nanhutou meeting we embarked with spirits high on our advance to the homeland. The anti-Japanese armed struggle was entering a new development phase.

## 11.4. My Comrades-in-Arms to the North; I to the South

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The wind was howling fiercely on the morning when we left Xiaojiaqihe for the area around Mt. Paektu after the meeting at Nanhutou.

I remembered more than anything else on that southward journey, as I braced myself, the Korean maxim, "A journey of thousands of miles begins with the first step". We made the first prints of the march on the fresh snow with our feet when leaving the yard of the log-cabin in Xiaojiaqihe.

Our company included Wang De-tai, Wei Zheng-min and some other Chinese military and political cadres. Even Wei Zheng-min, who had been in a Soviet hospital, owing to a relapse of his heart ailment, walked with a light step that day, exchanging interesting pleasantries with Wang De-tai. Although the weather was cold and inclement, we made good progress.

To advance towards the Mt. Paektu area, in accordance with the decisions of the Nanhutou meeting, we should have taken the straight road from Xiaojiaqihe to the south, to Mt. Paektu, via the Laoyeling Mountains, Erqingpai, Mingyuegou and Antu; but we marched north towards Emu at the start, taking the roundabout route from Xiaojiaqihe via Qinggouzi and Guandi in Emu County, Antu and Fusong Counties. The detour was twice as long a journey as it would have been along the straight route.

We had to take the roundabout path northward, because our comrades in the second expedition to north Manchuria with me were waiting for the results of the Nanhutou meeting, at a secret camp in Qinggouzi, Emu County, where we had established ourselves. The guerrillas, the aged, weak and sick as well as the orphans who had come all the way from east Manchuria to see me, were expecting me there.

The decisions of the Nanhutou meeting, which condemned all ultra-Leftist stupidities committed in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao during the struggle against the "Minsaengdan", and declared the Korean people's right to independence and their right to carry out the Korean revolution, would also provoke enthusiastic cheers in the secret camp in Qinggouzi.

While fighting bloody battles, trekking over the vast tract of land in east and north Manchuria for years, they yearned to see their homeland and press forward towards it. But most of my comrades-in-arms in Guandi and the secret camp in Qinggouzi had to go farther to the north and fight, in conjunction with the units in north Manchuria, rather than advance with my company to the south, the homeland.

Ever since the Nanhutou meeting, which marked a turning-point in the Korean revolution, the idea of launching the armed struggle deep in the homeland from Mt. Paektu was uppermost in the minds of the Korean communists. However, as we were the ones who had defined the joint struggle with the Chinese people as a major strategic task of the anti-Japanese revolution and engaged in unremitting efforts to

implement it, we could not run the risk of abandoning the cause of joint struggle and leave for Mt. Paektu. If we had been preoccupied with the Korean revolution and moved all the Korean soldiers to Mt. Paektu, the guerrilla struggle in northeast China would have faced great difficulties.

The units in north Manchuria, which were in dire need of military and political cadres and hard-core men, frequently requested joint action with the units in east Manchuria. We had made two expeditions to north Manchuria in compliance with their requests. Around the time of the Nanhutou meeting in Xiaojiaqihe, army corps in north Manchuria had asked us for manpower support. This situation required the raising of the matter of assistance for the Anti-Japanese Allied Army units, fighting in north Manchuria as a secondary item on the agenda at the Nanhutou meeting and the implementation of practical measures to provide support for them.

Consequently, when we were about to advance to the Mt. Paektu area, I had to take a journey up north and part with my comrades-in-arms, who had shared life and death, weal and woe with me for several years. The historic advance to the Mt. Paektu area involved painful farewells with my comrades-in-arms and no promise when we would meet again, people I had trained for a long time with such care.

What would their feelings be, when they had to go northward farther away from the homeland, instead of going to the Mt. Paektu area in my company? This question haunted me, as I left Xiaojiaqihe.

In retrospect, I experienced such painful partings on innumerable occasions during the revolutionary struggle. I had been compelled to part with the people of my home town of Mangyongdae at the age of 13, and with comrades of the Down-with-Imperialism Union immediately after its foundation in Huadian, when we had just become friends. This farewell was followed before long by our reunion with passionate embraces and handshakes. The first members of the DIU I had bid farewell to in Huadian met me again in Jirin and began to rally young people and students under the banner of the DIU. Those who rallied under this banner were stout, brave young men and women, who would go through fire and water. Each one was worth his or her weight in gold and was dearer to me than my own flesh and blood.

On my release from prison, I had to move the theatre of my operations from central to east Manchuria, which made me part painfully with these comrades once again. My comrades, who had been working in groups of three or five took leave of each other again, as they all dispersed to continue new assignments all over the vast areas of central, south and north Manchuria. This farewell, unlike the one in Huadian, was really serious and more distressing, as there were no promises of meeting again.

My separation from Han Yong Ae, who had accompanied me as far as Harbin, was as painful as were my farewells with Choe Chang Gol, Kim Won U, Kye Yong Chun, Kang Pyong Son, Park So Sim, Choe Il Chon, Ko Jae Bong and Park Il Pha.

As I left Harbin, after getting in touch with the liaison office of the Comintem, Han Yong Ae came to see me and entreated me to take her to east Manchuria. She begged me not to refuse her earnest desire to work for the revolution under my personal guidance as she had done in Jirin. She had already been given

two assignments, which had not been carried out yet by that time; one was to re-establish contacts, while staying in Harbin, with the organizations, which had been destroyed. The other involved dealings with the inspector from the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee.

I left Harbin with conflicting thoughts; although I was anxious to take her to east Manchuria, I had to refuse because of our work. As I was then chief secretary of the YCL in the eastern region of Jilin Province, I parted with her with the optimistic thought that I would meet her again in at least two or three months' time.

I appointed her my special representative to the Harbin area against her desire, because I had confidence in her high sense of responsibility, which she had displayed in all the easy and difficult assignments given her by the organization, and because such a high sense of responsibility was imperative in promoting the revolutionary work in Harbin and its vicinity. Strangely enough, I had to leave my close comrades-in-arms behind or send them, against their wishes, to distant places. Consequently, I came to the south, leaving Han Yong Ae behind in the north. My farewell to her at that time was a sorrowful one. Leaving her at a place in north Manchuria, I waved goodbye to such a loyal comrade with stirring emotions. She used to share half her portion of pancake with me.

After all, separation had shadowed me every time the revolution had entered a new stage. To maintain and consolidate the revolutionary organizations I had developed with all my efforts, I had to leave those trained in the struggle there while I myself had to go to new places to lay the groundwork for training new fighters. Figuratively speaking, whereas continually I broke up virgin lands, my comrades transformed them into fertile farmlands and orchards.

This revolutionary requirement made our separation inevitable.

However, the devoted comrades, who were ready to lay down their lives, if so ordered, frequently disobeyed me and worried me, when we had to part.

Han Yong Ae was not the only one to importune me like a child to take her along when I moved to east Manchuria. For that matter, how can a farewell between blood-sealed comrades, who had shared joy and sorrow for several years, be as simple as that between people who have just met each other on a business trip? I reasoned with them and even reproached them, but they would not listen. Even Cha Kwang Su, who should have understood me so well, followed me for five miles and, worried me, asking passionately, "Have we shared life in the shadow of death to part in this way? Why not try to find the best way of fighting for the revolution without a need to part?"

This separation was so painful for Mun JO Yang that he cried like a woman.

I often asked myself: "Is revolution really so cruel? Is there no way of making a revolution without parting with one another, as Cha Kwang Su claimed?"



But it was actually impossible. Therefore, I tried to persuade them, saying, "We'll soon meet again. Separation is only temporary. Let's endure the sorrow of parting by looking forward to our reunion. Let's part with smiles, rather than tears. According to one saying, every separation has its end."

Reality, however, frequently betrayed my prediction; only a few survived to see me again. Even those men would leave me to go to the world of no return.

Some people say that life is an endless cycle of farewells and reunions, but many of us bid farewell to one another never to meet again. To be candid, therefore, I often felt uneasy and had ill-boding thoughts at partings.

Again I had to say goodbye to my comrades-in-arms at the secret camp in Qinggouzi, without making any promise as to when we would meet again, to the comrades I had fought shoulder to shoulder with in east Manchuria for years. This sorrow lurked in our happiness, as we marched towards the Mt. Paektu area.

Noticing the sad look on my face, at a time when I should be happier than anybody else over the advance to the Mt. Paektu area, Wei Zhengnun asked me if anything was wrong. I said no, as I could not express all my thoughts in one word and did not feel like showing my state of mind to others.

Wei guessed the reason for my sad mood in his own way and said, "By the way, Comrade Kim Il Sung, you only heard recently the news of your younger brother, Chol Ju, who died last year, didn't you? What a pity! But don't grieve too much. Brace yourself, please."

For that matter, the pain of my loss was unbearable. At that time I did not even know the whereabouts of my youngest brother, Yong Ju, my only kinsman in that alien land of Manchuria. I might have looked more mournful probably because, on top of this sorrow, I had to bid farewell to my comrades.

Wei Zheng-min said jokingly to divert me, "The best remedy for a troubled mind is humor, Comrade Kim. I'll tell you, Comrade Kim, about a quarrel my wife and I had in the old days. You'd better listen to the common events of conjugal life for future reference. You can't remain a bachelor all your life, can you?"

"You're quite right," Wang De-tai echoed Wei's joke to amuse me. "A man of 24 is behind the season. God only knows perhaps Commander Kim is heartsick at the thought of parting with his sweetheart?"

"Yes, it would seem so," Wei was elated. "Since you mention parting, I'll narrate an ancient Chinese tale, 'Willow-twigg Snapping', a tale of farewell, instead of a love quarrel."

He went on to say that fortune would smile on me if I did as the story bade.

This story came from the days of the Han dynasty. Apparently there was a bridge in the capital of Han.

People taking leave of their friends, Wei said, always came to that bridge, snapped some willow twigs and gave them to their friends as a token of good fortune.

This was the origin of the custom of willow-twig snapping during leave-taking in China; Wei said that the custom was also followed by his village folk. He advised me to follow the custom, when bidding farewell to my dear people so that they would enjoy good luck.

To me, the willow symbolized one's home town: the tale implied that even after one's farewell, one should remember one's home town and native folk by looking at the willow-twig.

If I were to give a willow-twig to each of my comrades, who took leave of me in the biting cold of north Manchuria, I would have to pick a whole load of twigs. Where on earth could I collect so many and could I shake off my sadness in doing so? Anyway, I was grateful to Wei for telling me the story to ease my mood.

Once Choe Chang Gol said, before taking leave of me, on a willowy bank in Guyushu "I'll vanish like the wind with no ceremony or farewell party, just like Tanjae when parting with Namgang."

Namgang, mentioned by Choe, is Lee Sung Hun's pseudonym, and Tanjae, Sin Chae Ho's pen name. As I have already mentioned, Lee was one of the richest men in our country who devoted his whole life to patriotic education and charity work ever since his early days. Even the younger generation knows that the Osan School in Jongju was founded by Lee. In Jongju he looked after the independence fighters who were going abroad. That is how he and Sin Chae Ho became close friends.

At Lee's earnest request, Sin Chae Ho once taught Korean and Western history at the Osan School. His lectures became so famous, that he gained renown abroad and was often the leading topic of the students' vehement speeches in Jirin. In late December Kyongsul (1910), when our country was reduced to a complete colony of the Japanese imperialists, Sin was in Osan. One day he suddenly said to Lee, "All things considered, I have to leave this place."

Lee was surprised and tried to hold him back. He said, "Ah, why leave abruptly in such cold weather? If you have to go, please go after the thaw."

"I must go, because I hate seeing the Japanese."

The next day Sin left Jongju like the wind with no promise of return. Apparently Sin went to Russia via China.

Lee regretted that Sin had left; he said to himself, "What a man! To leave even without saying goodbye to me when I could have paid him some of his traveling expenses!"

He used to give a grand farewell party in honor of each of the independence fighters he sent off, in

addition to liberal traveling expenses. Consequently he quite naturally felt such regret and sorrow on parting with Sin Chae Ho without even a handshake.

This was what Choe Chang Gol mentioned before leaving for Liuhe.

Kim Hyok said that Sin was very unfeeling to have left Lee Sung Hun without even uttering a word of farewell. But Choe Chang Gol retorted that, if he did not know Sin's qualities, he should not say so, and that Sin had a warm heart and considered Lee the dearest friend of all. He explained that Sin had left Jongju in haste without so much as saying goodbye, because he did not want to be a burden on his fellow independence fighters and could not endure the pain of leave-taking. Choe Chang Gol was right. Sin Chae Ho was a man of fiery passion, as well as a devoted friend of Lee Sung Hun's.

Not only Choe Chang Gol who said that he would follow Sin Chae Ho's example but also Kim Won U, Kye Yong Chun and other comrades-in-arms vanished like Sin Chae Ho when they left me on new assignments.

My comrades-in-arms all resembled these types of people.

While fighting in east Manchuria in subsequent days, I used to send able, military and political cadres, my precious orderlies and priceless men whom I had trained to various armed units in north and south Manchuria which were in need of manpower support. Tearful separations on those occasions used to tear my heart. Worse still, when I received news that such comrades had fallen in battle and how and when, a wound was left in my heart and soul which would never heal. On the basis of this experience, I felt the intense warmth of revolutionary comradeship and realized the great role played by comrades in the life of a revolutionary.

Consequently I used to tell officials during the construction of socialism after liberation, that revolutionary comradeship is more precious than the love between parents and children, between husband and wife, between brothers and sisters, and between friends.

One cannot experience the true love between comrades, until one has undergone a revolution in the true sense of the word, and one cannot understand such love, until one has shared one's life with comrades in the shadow of death under a hail of fire on the battlefield.

Even in the worst moments of adversity, when they had to fight bloody battles, drinking only water for their meals several days in a row, my comrades would offer any wild fruit they found in the snow by chance to each other.

As the sad legend about Kyonu and Jiknyo shows, the warmer one's love is, the greater the sorrow one feels at parting. That is why the leave-taking between revolutionary comrades is unbearable.

No matter how painful such partings were, could I avoid them as it was impossible to carry out the

revolution without separations?

As I considered each of my comrades-in-arms who would have to go away in different directions on my order, my heart seemed to be on fire.

Unaware of my inmost feelings, O Tae Song and Choe Kum San, my two young orderlies, followed me in high spirits at the thought of going to the homeland, but I knew that I had to send one of them to a unit in north Manchuria.

Late in the afternoon, after a long march, we arrived at the secret camp in Qinggouzi. Many people tumbled out of the log-cabin in the forest and surrounded us, offering us a boisterous welcome. They were comrades from Wangqing and also from Hunchun who had to remain in north Manchuria, as well as sick and wounded soldiers and the aged and infirm who were to be sent to the Soviet Union.

A little girl darted up to me, calling me by name. She clung to my arm.

"Who's this? So you, too, have come!"

I picked her up in my arms and gazed at her small face. She was Yang Kwidongnyo, Yang Song Ryong's daughter; she had lost her parents and her grandmother as well in the Wangqing guerrilla base.

"I came here, General, when I heard that you're coming. You're going to Mt. Paektu, aren't you?"

"Oh, my! How on earth do you know?"

"Uncle Lee Ung Man told me. He said that all of us will go to Korea with you, General."

I turned my gaze in the direction she was pointing to and saw Lee Ung Man on crutches, smiling among the men. I was so embarrassed that I was momentarily at a loss for words. I mentioned in previous chapters that he had been a company commander of the Wangqing guerrilla unit. As an officer he had proved capable of commanding a battalion or a regiment, given his qualifications and abilities, but when he had had his leg amputated, he had been discharged and withdrew to the second line. Although the wound had not fully healed, he had led an optimistic life, repairing weapons at an arsenal.

"General, I'm right, aren't I? While staying here, I've heard all that you've said over there."

He talked volubly for some time and then asked me to tell him about the Nanhutou meeting. After unpacking, I gathered together all the soldiers and civilians in the secret camp and informed them of the decisions adopted at the Nanhutou meeting.

Everybody cheered, raising their arms high. When I announced the Comintern recognition of the anti-

"Minsaengdan" struggle in Jiandao as ultra-Leftist and its declaration of the inalienable and inviolable right of the Korean people to fight for the Korean revolution, they shed tears, saying that now they could go to their homeland and home villages, and fight a decisive battle in the homeland against the Japanese imperialists. All those born on foreign soil were so eager to see their fatherland that they could not suppress their surging emotions. Someone talked proudly of Mt. Paektu at the gathering.

No one seemed to think that he or she would have to stay in north Manchuria. The more excited they became, the more embarrassed I felt, for I had to tell them the truth.

However, I broached the need for a painful leave-taking.

"Comrades, please recall! Whenever a new situation emerged in the dialectical course of the armed struggle, we were obliged to bid farewell to each other. Today is no exception, when a new turning-point in the Korean revolution has been marked by the Nanhutou meeting, so we must prepare for such a farewell. After the 'February 26 incident', the military fascist clique of Japan is more intent on their northward aggression than ever before. You know full well that the Japanese imperialists have occupied northern China, including Qiqihar, and are resorting to ceaseless provocations along the Soviet-Manchuria border in the search for an excuse to invade the Soviet Union.

The guerrilla units in north Manchuria endeavor to consolidate the anti-Japanese forces to cope with this. But they experience great difficulties owing to a shortage of hard-core forces. So they requested our assistance on several occasions.

"If all of us proceed towards Mt. Paektu in such a situation, comrades, what will happen?" I paused and glanced around the room for a while to see that they appreciated what I meant.

I could hear an uneasy whisper from one corner of my audience. The whisper spread from mouth to mouth, until it rose to a hubbub, echoing all over the house. I had expected a violent reaction, but I was quite perplexed by this reaction. I could not continue my speech with a light heart, as their reaction foreboded real difficulties for our departure.

But the audience soon quieted down, gazing at me. Feeling that the moment had come to say farewell, I announced the projected shake-up I had thought over and over since leaving Nanhutou.

"Now, the Wangqing Regiment should operate in Comrade Choe Yong Gon's area, and the Hunchun Regiment in the 3rd Corps area. Comrade Kim Chaek is in that 3rd Corps. Some parts of these two regiments will fight together with the 5th Corps, led by Zhou Bao-zhong in the areas of Ning'an, Muling and Weihe. The sick and wounded have to leave for the Soviet Union for treatment to recover at the earliest date.

"You'll have to excuse me, comrades. As you see, I came here not to take you to Mt. Paektu, but to say goodbye."

They stared at me in silence for a few seconds. Contrary to my premonition of confused mumblings of disobedience, an almost unbelievable quiet reigned. In oppressive silence they watched me composedly. This was, indeed, strange. I was more afraid of that silence than of thousands of words of outspoken protest. But the silence did not last long. Sounds of sobbing broke the strange silence and rippled from corner to corner.

I stood in confusion before the men who were disheartened at the declaration of leave-taking.

But I discovered a magnanimous character in Choe Chun Guk, who had worked as a political officer for some years under my command. He comforted me, saying, "General, don't worry. We'll deal with them properly. Please go and take a rest." For that matter, he also had to bid farewell to me and organize an Independent Brigade for further operations.

Leaving the work with those who were to remain in north Manchuria in his care, I met the wounded, aged and infirm who were to be sent to the Soviet Union. During the years of guerrilla warfare, many of our soldiers had been wounded or become infirm. They all had been treated at hospitals in guerrilla zones, but after their evacuation their treatment became a big problem. So we had sent most of them for temporary treatment near Shahezhang and Lake Jingbo; later on we built the secret camp in Qinggouzi and assembled them all there. But this did not solve the problem.

Fortunately, Wei Zheng-min had found, by negotiating with the relevant organization of the Comintern, a satisfactory solution to the problem and relieved us from this worry. Thus the wounded and weak soldiers of the people's revolutionary army were given an opportunity for treatment in the Soviet Union for the time being. Wei had consulted with the Comintern and agreed on the technical formalities regarding the transfer and delivery of the wounded soldiers to the Soviet Union.

Thanks to his efforts, the dispatch of students to schools under the Comintern had also reached a successful settlement. When the Wangqing and Hunchun Regiments were moving to units in north Manchuria, the group of students were to leave for the Soviet Union together with the group of wounded soldiers.

We planned to form two groups of wounded soldiers from our unit, the aged and infirm and orphans and send them to the Soviet Union one by one. Wang Run-cheng would escort the wounded to the border, accompanied by several men.

As we had decided this matter on our own at Nanhutou, the wounded soldiers at Qinggouzi knew nothing about this.

When I went to see the wounded, Lee Ung Man unexpectedly appeared on crutches before me and barred my way.

"General, it's a thunderbolt from the blue! Do you mean that I, too, must go to the Soviet Union?"

His voice was loud from the start and his cheeks were twitching from his excited state of mind.

"Calm down, Comrade Ung Man. Sit down."

I helped him onto a fallen tree in the forest.

Lee clung to my arm and implored, "Please, General, let me work for the revolution by your side until my dying day. Although I only have one leg, I can shoot and repair weapons. And I have a mouth to make Speeches which can stir people up to the revolution. Do you think that I'll live in comfort in the Soviet Union, when my comrades are going through hardships and shedding blood?"

Of course, I had expected such a reaction from this former company commander of the guerrilla army, a man of a fiery temper. In fact, he had had his leg amputated for the sake of the revolution.

I held his hands in mine and said, "If you act like this, the other wounded soldiers will become more stubborn. I, too, feel it painful to think of those who have to stay away from the anti-Japanese armed ranks. You've always suffered from physical handicaps. You could manage, albeit uncomfortably, in the guerrilla zone, but in the new fighting situation, where we have to get out of fences and rush now in the east and now in the west like Hong Kil Tong, how can you follow the unit in your condition?"

I talked to him for more than an hour, but it all fell on deaf ears.

"General, I have no thought of living in comfort, on the bread of others, in a country where the revolution has triumphed. If I thought of living in luxury and not taking part in the revolution, then why do you think I bought a box of Browning pistols with the money from my entire family property and joined the guerrilla army? Please, General, take me with you, for mercy's sake! I don't want to be a straggler."

Lee Ung Man was a dyed-in-the-wool communist, who dreaded straggling from the revolutionary ranks more than death. But there was something too extreme in his way of thinking. Going to the Soviet Union did not mean that he would abandon the revolution or live in luxury. We would be satisfied if he had enough time for treatment in safety and then returned to us with an artificial leg.

Unable to say anything against his appeal, I paced up and down the snowdrift in silence, recalling with emotion the days in Wangqing, when he and I had defended the guerrilla zone. The painful silence, however, moved him.

After studying my face for a moment, he abruptly buried his face in my bosom and said, "You're worrying about me, General. All right, I'll go to the Soviet Union. There I'll turn to Mt. Paektu and pray for your victory every day." He then burst into tears.

No less painful than my farewell to Lee was my parting with Yang Kwidongnyo. The little girl wept continuously after hearing that she had to go to the Soviet Union. During my stay in the secret camp in Qinggouzi I took her with me everywhere, had meals at the same table with her and slept with her at my side. On the night before we left the camp, the little girl did not sleep, but instead chattered endlessly under the blanket.

"General, they say it's colder in the Soviet Union than here. Is that right?" She had probably heard that there was a deadly cold tundra in the Soviet Union. "Don't worry. You'll go to a place where it's not colder than here."

I felt my heart rending as I answered, listening to the sound of the north Manchurian wind howling outside the log-cabin. I thought it was so cruel to send this orphan from one foreign land to another.

But the land, she imagined as a dreary land of snowstorms and biting wind was a socialist country free of exploitation and oppression, and also safe from the Japanese imperialists.

She would break away from a cursed world, which molested and oppressed honest people, and would live in that socialist country as merrily as a lark, as freely as an eagle and as happily as a dove. When she had grown up, she would return to our ranks and fight for the revolution. This thought was a source of comfort and hope to me as I sent Yang Kwidongnyo and those pitiful children to the Soviet Union.

"Uncle Ung Man says, General, that you will visit me once a month Without fail while fighting on Mt. Paektu. Will you?"

Probably Lee Ung Man had lied to her as she was so dead set against going to the Soviet Union.

I was struck dumb; I only kept my eyes on her crystal-clear eyes. I had never felt so confused by a child's questions as I was this time. Fortunately, however, she saved me from replying.

"If you leave Mt. Paektu and come to see us, General, the Japanese will kill more Korean people, while you're away. Don't come to see me; please stay on the mountain all the time." "You're a good girl. I'll not leave the mountain just as you say and will avenge the enemy for the murder of your parents."

I hugged the little girl in spite of myself. She huddled up to me; strange enough she was trembling, probably because the horrible sight of past murders of so many fathers and mothers flashed across her mind.

I believed that her wish for me not to leave Mt. Paektu reflected the wishes and desires of all Koreans.

"General," the little girl said after a while, "I've heard Mt. Paektu is too high for children like me to climb. So I'm following Uncle Ung Man to the Soviet Union, rather than Mt. Paektu, so they say."



I patted her on the head in silence. I said in my mind: My dear Kwidongnyo, come to Mt. Paektu later on: then our country will be as good to live in as in the Soviet Union.

That night I didn't sleep a wink. The tearful farewells, which were in store for me on the next day crowded in on me. How would I say goodbye to them? Should I pick twigs of trees here, and give one to each of them as in the story, or should I disappear quietly just like Sin Chae Ho?

At dawn Choe Chun Guk came to see me.

"When are you leaving, General?"

"Early this morning, after breakfast. The company in Guandi is no doubt waiting impatiently for me. What about the comrades here? Have they calmed down? You will also have to march north very soon.

Yang Kwidongnyo, who had been chattering all night was now sound asleep, although the day for leave-taking had come.

"Please don't worry about us, General. We'll fight well in north Manchuria, so leave with a light heart."

"Excellent comrades! That is why the farewell hurts me. And now, you, Comrade Chun Guk..." I mumbled and only looked at him for a while and then gripped his hands.

"I feel easier as I can say goodbye to you like this. But I regret leaving without seeing Comrade Han Hung Gwon. If you have a chance to see him in north Manchuria, please remember me to him."

We had a light breakfast together instead of a farewell party and took leave of one another. True to Choe Chun Guk's words, the comrades in Qinggouzi saw me off to Guandi with smiles on their faces. Only Yang Kwidongnyo wept sadly.

I can still feel now how my heart ached as I recall the day when I handed over the nine-year-old girl to Lee Ung Man and left the secret camp at Qinggouzi with a heavy tread. I heard later on that Lee and the girl had gone to the Soviet Union in the first or second batch of evacuees. I heard nothing more about them for a long time. I only heard about them again, after the liberation of the country, from Jon Mun Jin, a woman of the sewing unit of the guerrilla army, who had left her unit at Qinggouzi for the Soviet Union and returned to the homeland after liberation. I was very happy to learn, albeit so much later, that they were in good health.

Yang Kwidongnyo must be about 70 now, in other words she's in the twilight of her life. I still picture her in my mind's eye, the daughter of a former battalion Commander, who had been withering away from mental agony owing to accusations that he was a "Minsaengdan" member. I do not imagine a grandmother on this side of 70, but rather a little nine-year-old girl. I cannot picture her as a

grandmother. The image of a girl, chirping away like a sparrow that she wanted to follow me to Mt. Paektu, is engraved in my memory.

The farewell at Qinggouzi was not very difficult because Choe Chun Guk had talked so well to his men before leaving for the north, but it was extremely hard to send Kim Ryo Jung's company and the company which O Jin U belonged to, from Guandi to the units in north Manchuria. The company which O Jin U belonged to, insisted on following me to Mt. Paektu in spite of everything.

I tried to persuade them several times, but they said that they would go to north Manchuria and would merely accompany us as far as Antu. The platoon from the Hunchun young volunteers' corps insisted on the same thing and requested my permission. Hwang Jong Hae, behind the mutiny of the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers in Hunchun on my instructions, was in that platoon, and masterminded attempts to obtain my permission.

I talked to them for hours, explaining in detail the situation in north Manchuria.

As Wei Zheng-min was very envious of the platoon from the Hunchun young volunteers' corps, I had arranged to detach the platoon to his unit. The company O Jin U belonged to left Mihunzhen in poor spirits. As I sent off the company in tears with Wei Zheng-min on a windy hill in Mihunzhen, I, too, wept in my mind over the sorrow of saying goodbye.

The farewells to people who had been sent on an individual basis to the Anti-Japanese Allied Army units in north Manchuria were more heart-rending. These newly organized units of the allied army faced great difficulties owing to the shortage of military and political cadres. In accordance with their request, I sent such cadres as Han Hung Gwon, Jon Chang Chol, Park Kil Song, Park Rak Kwon and Kim Thae Jun to them and also my orderly, O Tae Song.

In fact, I transferred to them all the cadres I had trained with so much care in Jiandao. O Tae Song is Oh Jung Hup's younger brother. While O Tae Song was a member of the Children's Vanguard in Shiliping, his elder brothers joined the guerrilla army one after another; he had been so envious of them that he had volunteered to become my orderly.

When I told him that he was to go to a unit in north Manchuria, at first he simply smiled. He seemed to have taken my words as a joke. But when he realized that I was serious, he was almost in tears, saying, "Why are you sending me away, General? I won't go. Will the revolution fail, if I don't go there? Please allow me to stay by your side."

The orderly, who used to say "Yes, sir" to any of my orders and satisfied me with his ready obedience, was almost rude on that occasion. I only managed to send him to a unit in north Manchuria after many attempts to persuade him.

Although he was persistent in his arguments, he also comforted me like a grown-up at the moment of

farewell. When he saw that my eyes were wet with tears, he even joked, "Without me, will Kum San attend to you as I did, General?"

On the eve of our farewell O Tae Song spent all night whispering with my other orderly, Choe Kum San.

I usually went to bed in the small hours and got up before dawn every day, but that night I put out the lamp early and went to bed on behalf of the orderly who would make a long journey. The two orderlies whispered throughout the night, and at dawn left the room - I was curious about their whispers and strained my ears.

"Kum San, you must attend the General better, when I'm gone," O Tae Song said in a whisper. Kum San only sighed.

"There on Mt. Paektu, you must obtain chili bean paste by all possible means to serve the General at every meal. If you try, you'll obtain it easily, as many Korean people live there. You know how the General likes it? But we've never served it to him. We're not really worthy of being his orderlies. Such things weigh on my mind as I'm leaving the General."

"I'll do as you say, so please depart with a light heart. When shall we meet again?" Choe Kum San's voice was quivering.

"Well, I'm not sure. By the way, Kum San, please call on people from Phyongan Provinces on your arrival there. They may have things like pickled fish in their houses. I've heard that the General likes that kind of pickles. I was planning to obtain them on Mt. Paektu and serve as much as the General could eat."

After seeing off O Tae Song early in the morning, I found his note between the leaves of a book.

Dear General:

I am very sorry that I am leaving you, after bothering you so much when you've never slept a night in peace for years on end to liberate the fatherland. But I will fight bravely there, so please don't worry about me. When in distress, I will recall what you have always said, "Let us endure these hardships to win back the fatherland."

I will make a humble contribution to the sacred cause of national liberation by laying down my life without the slightest hesitation and maintaining unstained loyalty to the country which has been nurtured under your loving care. So please don't worry about me. Please take care of yourself, dear General.

This was too profound a note to be written by a young orderly.

All my comrades-in-arms were just as loyal and warm-hearted as him.

That day Wei Zheng-min said in tears that he had realized on his way to Mihunzhen from Nanhutou via Qinggouzi and Guandi, how warm friendship between the Korean comrades was. He said:

"Comrade Kim Il Sung, a strong general has no weak men, as the saying goes, and all your men are as brave and warm-hearted as one man. How I envy you! What an attractive young man Hwang Jong Hae, for instance, is!"

I transferred Im Un Ha as a cook, along with the platoon from the Hunchun young volunteers' corps to Wei Zheng-min. When departing with Wei Zheng-min and bidding farewell to me, Hwang Jong Hae was as sad as O Tae Song.

For all that, he also consoled me in tears, saying that he would take good care of Comrade Wei as I had asked and guarded Wei well until the last moments of his life, true to the pledge he made at that time.

When Wei's state of health was critical, Hwang carried him on his back and saved him, by fighting at the risk of his own life, every time they encountered the enemy's "punitive" forces. Consequently, on his deathbed Wei called his name with affection and said, "Even in the world beyond, I'll not forget what you, Jong Hae, and other Korean comrades have done for me. Fight stoutly until the day you return home in triumph with Comrade Kim Il Sung."

However, Hwang Jong Hae, whom Wei had been so thankful to and could not forget, did not return to me, but was instead buried in the wilderness of Manchuria. Whenever I recall Hwang, I am reminded of the southward march along thousands of miles of the roundabout route from Nanhutou to Mt. Paektu. At the secret camp in Qinggouzi, he had stamped his feet like a child, saying that he would follow me. He accompanied me as far as Mihunzhen and then left with Wei Zheng-min. I think my comradely love for Hwang Jong Hae increased during the long march.

How many of my comrades-in-arms I had sent to the north on the thousands of miles of southward march from Nanhutou to Mt. Paektu! Park Ku Song, Han Hung Gwon, Jang Ryong San, Jon Man Song, Park Thae Hwa, Choe In Jun, O Tae Song, O Se Yong, Kim Thae Jun, and other countless comrades-in-arms laid down their young lives on the mountains and in the fields of north and south Manchuria.

I also recall the death of Jang Ryong San, a crack shot and kindhearted man; unfortunately I did not see any more of O Tae Song who had, from a tender age, always run about for me. He was the love of his elder brother Oh Jung Hup. When I was bidding farewell to O Tae Song, his elder brother, who had been on an expedition to Jiaohe with the 2nd Regiment of the 1st Division, did not even see his departure for north Manchuria.

I once ate with relish boiled green maize with pickled shrimps in the Mt. Paektu area thanks to Kum San. The cuisine was not half bad, but I ate my fill because I remembered O Tae Song's best wish and the affection it contained.

The two brothers fought, the elder in the south and the younger in the north, and I firmly believed that they would surely meet on the day of national liberation, proud of their distinguished services. But both of them lost their lives in a desolate foreign land, never to return to their homeland.

True to our expectations and beliefs, those comrades who had sacrificed themselves displayed the mettle of the Korean revolutionaries and fought courageously everywhere in north and south Manchuria until the last moments of their lives.

I met Choe Chun Guk a year and a half after our tearful farewell at the secret camp in Qinggouzi, some others five or six years later, and still others in the liberated homeland. All of them solemnly remembered their fallen comrades-in-arms.

All survivors of the war came and told me about their brilliant records. Some of them had distinguished themselves as commanders of invincible, heroic detachments and still others performed brilliant military exploits as such prominent military and political cadres as company commanders, brigade commanders, and political commissars of divisions. But they still had the old habit of playing on my affections and said, shedding tears, "Away from you, General, we felt like children away from their parents. We missed you dreadfully all the time."

As I recalled comrades-in-arms who had not returned, they comforted me as warmly as they had done in the days of the anti-Japanese war, saying, "Don't feel too sad, General. How can there be no sacrifices in the fight to win back the country? That day's parting was the last farewell to them, but they'll not regret their sacrifices, because the country has been Won in return."

I have now lived for 80 years with the love of these comrades. The fallen comrades left deep wounds in my life, but they enlivened the history of the anti-Japanese revolution and the history of their fatherland.

Consequently I do not regret the sad farewells I bid to my comrades-in-arms during the anti-Japanese war in sending them to the north and the south.

## 11.5. Choe Hyon, a Veteran General

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We made a major stopover on our way from Nanhutou to Mt. Paektu at the rear base of the Independent 1st Division of the people's revolutionary army, located in Mihunzhen on the Mudan Mountain Range along the border area of the Dunhua and Antu Counties. At one of the large and small secret camps sprawling in the vast forest, we planned to discuss measures to implement the policies adopted at the Nanhutou meeting with Wang De-tai, Wei Zheng-min and other high-ranking commanders of the 2nd Corps.

Mihunzhen is situated in a mountain, where even a man who has been there once or twice can lose his way. The mountain peaks and valleys are so similar, that strangers to the place used to find themselves in a maze there. I marveled at the wit of the ancient folk, who had named this primeval forest maze.



*Photo: Choe Hyon.*

At first we were also at a loss on how to find the camps. Fortunately we came across the 1st Company of the 1st Regiment of the Independent 1st Division at Niuxindingzi which Park Song Chol belonged to, and asked them to show us the way to Mihunzhen. But they refused, saying that typhoid fever was rampant there. They explained that there were dozens of typhoid patients in that valley and that it was dangerous for cadres to visit the place. They added, "Many of them have already died. We cannot take you, General, to such a place. We cannot allow you to run such a risk"

They flatly refused to show us the way. In those days epidemic diseases took a heavy toll of lives in the people's revolutionary army. Eruptive typhus and typhoid fever, which broke out in guerrilla zones, harassed us even after the evacuation of the guerrilla zones, mercilessly taking precious lives. These diseases seriously weakened the combat ability of the people's revolutionary army.

"As typhoid is borne by man, it can also be controlled by man. Man can defeat epidemics. Epidemics cannot defeat man. So there's no great need to be afraid of them. You're making a mystery out of typhoid."

I thus reproached them for their fear of epidemics. However, they continued stressing the typhoid danger and insisted that I should not go there.

"What do you say, General? Can man defeat epidemics? No. These diseases don't discriminate between the weak and the strong. No man is immune to them, just as no mouse is safe from a cat. You know how strong company commander Choe Hyon is! But he's been bedridden with typhoid for weeks now in

Mihunzhen."

"What? Has that steel-like soldier contracted the disease? If so, all the more reason for me to go and see him. I've come as far as Niuxindingzi and if I turn back here and go to Mt. Paektu without visiting Mihunzhen owing to fear of the disease, then imagine how disappointed he'll be, when he learns of it some day! You worry about my safety, but I've already suffered from epidemic fever in Wangqing. I'm immune, so don't worry."

Only then did the commanders of the 1St Company detach a platoon as our guide and escort. They begged me not to enter the patients' ward on any account even if I visited Mihunzhen. To be frank, I was very disappointed to hear that Choe Hyon was ill. Although I said that a man could control typhoid fever, it was really a horrible disease. That cursed disease would even afflict a commander of the revolutionary army. It would naturally grow more rampant among such hot-tempered men as Choe Hyon. It would attack anyone, but used to play more havoc with hot-tempered and impatient people. I had the premonition that the life of my precious comrade-in-arms was at stake.

"What's happened to you, Commander Kim? Are you worrying about Comrade Choe Hyon?" asked Wang De-tal, as he saw me walking silently, in low spirits. Although a brusque, unsociable, taciturn military commander, Wang had an amazing ability to read people's minds.

"Yes, but how'd you know?"

I was grateful to him for breaking my silence. A man keeping silence is liable to be haunted by all kinds of trivialities.

"Why shouldn't I be able to guess? Your silence in the company of a friend like me indicates that you're preoccupied with the fates of people."

"You're right. I've been thinking of Choe Hyon all the time. I hope he'll be alright, but I feel very uneasy about him."

"Please don't worry. Choe Hyon will survive. He's a man of strong will."

"You think so? Then I'll be very happy!"

"Well, Choe Hyon is a very happy man. How happy it must be for a man to appear in other people's dreams, be remembered by them and live in their concern!"

Wang's simple and yet profound reasoning moved me. I fully agreed with him.

"That's very profound. But I've never thought about it."

"Perhaps Choe Hyon is yearning to see you at this moment. He's missed you so much in daily life that I was almost jealous of you. As far as I can remember, you've met one another only once, so how come you're such devoted friends?"

"I can't explain it myself. Two nights in his company was equal to about ten years of friendship. I was charmed by him at that time. I wonder if I'm carrying a torch for him."

"Oh-ho, you don't say! Since his experience at Macun he talks about you all the time." By Choe Hyon's experience at Macun, Wang meant his visit to Macun in Xiaowangqing and his interview with me. My first interview with him has already been mentioned in the Reminiscences of the Anti-Japanese Guerrillas and briefly in Volume 3 of my own reminiscences.

It is generally known that the battle of the Dongning county town occasioned that meeting. Choe Hyon arrived late at Macun owing to the messenger's carelessness and belated delivery of my orders for Choe Hyon to take part in the battle. He regretted it immensely on learning that the battle was over. He swore at the messenger furiously, and then, recovering his composure, asked me, "As only the good-for-nothings in Yanji were dawdling away, not even approaching the gates of the county town, when the NSA boys as well as those from Wangqing and Hunchun fought in the battle, how could I stop myself from giving vent to my anger? General, have you a plan to attack any other place, sir?"

"Please don't say 'sir' to a young man. Please call me by my name, Kim Il Sung."

My humble request frightened this tried veteran as much as if something serious had happened.

"What does a man's age matter here? I've long since regarded you, Commander Kim, as the top man of the Korean army. So it's natural that I address you respectfully."

"If you extol young people in that way, they'll soon become self-conceited and giddy. If you keep on extolling me in that way, I'll not keep Company with you any longer."

"For all my courage, you have the upper hand. From now on I'll not call you 'sir', just as you wish."

He changed his way of addressing me. He was a typical soldier, who would do anything he said he would. It was only on official occasions that he addressed me politely. This freed our friendship from bothersome etiquette and formalities; it stressed the truthfulness and originality of our friendship.

In the days, when each comrade we rallied through our "pearl-diving" efforts was treasured as a prime mover of our revolution, indispensable for its progress, it was evidently a noteworthy event and good fortune in my life to have found such a stout companion as Choe Hyon.

My interview with him at Macun afforded me enormous satisfaction from the very beginning. My first impression of him was too strong to even express. Strangely enough, however, Choe Hyon, though a new



acquaintance, seemed like an old friend. His voice, his features and manners were familiar to me. I even felt that at some time in the past I had discussed the anti-Japanese, national salvation struggle with this sturdy man.

Choe Hyon gave me this impression, probably because he had all the characteristics of the typical soldier I had thought up and perfected in my mind up to that time, and also because I had heard a lot about him since I had come to Jiandao.

Choe Hyon was born in Jiandao, a foreign land, in 1907 when the national crisis was at its height. The year 1907 was a grievous year, which witnessed many tragic events in the history of our nation. That year Lee Jun committed suicide in The Hague by disemboweling himself, King Kojong was dethroned, and the Korean army was dissolved. It was also the year, when the right of home administration passed into the hands of the Japanese imperialists, because of the "Jongmi Seven-Point Treaty" and "government by under-secretaries".

Choe Hyon's parents, who had brought him into the world in a land, which was struck down by an economic crisis with an unprecedented destructive power, were anxious about his future. The "annexation of Korea by Japan", the March First Popular Uprising and the massive "punitive" atrocities in Jiandao in the year of Kyongsin (1920 ?Tr.) were dramatic events which made young Choe Hyon's blood boil.

The Independence Army, which was offering armed resistance in difficult conditions in a corner of Jiandao, gave him a ray of hope in those despairing, dark days. Hong Bom Do and Im Pyong Guk were his seniors and mentors. His childhood was linked inseparably with these brave, indefatigable veterans. He learned marksmanship and horsemanship from them. When he was eleven years old, his father Choe Hwa Sim, who was an Independence Army soldier under the command of Hong Bom Do, began to assign him to deliver messages. That year his father presented him with a pistol.

The massacre of 1920 drowned all the Korean settlements in Jiandao in a bloodbath. Choe Hyon lost his mother in the massacre. He followed Im Pyong Guk to the Maritime Province of Russia with his father. Although a stranger to the place, the people and their language, he resolved to fight the Japanese imperialists all his life. Commander Im Pyong Guk appointed him as his orderly and sent him to one of his detachments. An excellent horseman, Choe Hyon faithfully carried out his duty, riding between the detachment and the headquarters on horseback. When the thirteen-year-old, small boy rode like an arrow on horseback through the plain, the Russian people admired and envied him.

At one point he rushed to the front line on horseback amidst a tirade of bullets with his three colleagues. The three were killed and he was mounded in the arm. But he rushed on boldly through the hail of bullets without caring for his wound, and dutifully delivered the message to the command post. Applying a bandage to his arm, Im Pyong Guk praised him, saying that he would become a general of the Independence Army.

After the routing of the Independence Army unit, he returned to Jiandao and joined the General

Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria, thanks to the good offices of Yun Chang Born, commander of the Independent Regiment in later days. His days in the GFKYEM can be described as the period, when he changed from a nationalist to a communist. It was during his seven-year term in the Yanji prison that the process of his change was expedited. The reactionary Chinese warlord authorities arrested him abruptly in 1925 and sentenced him to a term of life imprisonment on a charge of raising funds.

After the waves of the May 30 Uprising and the harvest and spring struggles swept the land, the Yanji prison was overcrowded with pioneers of the revolution and patriots in Jiandao who had led the masses in the forefront of the struggle. The small society of these vivacious optimists, who lived honorably, although their freedom was restricted, was a tempering school, which played a decisive role in his growth and development. He joined the Anti-Imperialist Union and the Red Guards, the secret organizations inside the prison. His trials in prison finally transformed this former orderly of the Independence Army into a fully-fledged communist.

Anecdotes about him and the breathtaking risks he took in Yanji prison, referred to by the warlord authorities as Jirin Prison No. 4, were well known in all the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria.

His life in prison started with a showdown with Gangtour, the "Emperor" of the cell. The Gangtour in his cell was a criminal, guilty of murder and robbery. He was taken to molesting the inmates. Each time a new prisoner was thrown into the cell, he robbed him of everything he had and made them his own. He used to grab the food portions of other people to fill his own stomach.

Determined to teach him a lesson, Choe Hyon put a high-quality cigarette of the Kal brand between his lips and purposely gave one to each inmate except the Gangtour. It was a wordless challenge aimed at provoking him.

Angered, the Gangtour ordered him to give all his belongings to him. Instead of answering, Choe blew out a mouthful of smoke, thus enraging him. As the Gangtour threatened to beat him, Choe Hyon leapt over some of the inmates and struck him in the face with his two handcuffed fists, and roared, "You scum! Whom are you talking such nonsense to? You've committed murder outside and you're harassing your fellowmen even in prison. Can there be a man more cruel and sinful than you? You're the son of a commoner like us, aren't you? I'll be lenient and forgive you this time, but behave yourself from now on. Get down, and take your seat by the commode. This upper seat's mine."

Realizing that he was no match for Choe Hyon, the Gangtour sat beside the commode, as he had been told, and crouched there cautiously. The inmates, freed from the Gangtour's oppression, followed Choe Hyon as their benefactor from then on.

Not long after Choe Hyon's life imprisonment the warlord authorities frequently sent student visitors to the prison from the Taesong, Tonghung, Yongsin and Unjin Middle Schools, the Yongsin Girls' School and several other schools in Longjing. In this way the enemy planned to benumb revolutionary

consciousness and break the fighting spirit of the young and students in this area, where the ideological enlightenment organizations and anti-Japanese, anti-warlord organizations were forming one after another and carried on brisk work.

Choe Hyon contacted all the other cells and told them to prepare Water pistols. When the students looked around the prison they squirted Stinking urine at the reactionary teachers and prison warders who were guiding the students. He shouted at them, "You rascals! Why have you brought these students here?"

The reactionary teachers, taken by surprise, led the students away and fled from the prison.

The prison authorities tried hard to find the mastermind, but to no avail; every prisoner asserted that he was the prime instigator.

During his days in Yanji prison, he worked in a shoemaking factory as a shoemaker, in a print-shop as a compositor and in a clothing factory as a tailor of high-quality suits. He also worked as a carpenter at a woodworking shop and cut the hair of the warders, chief warder and even the head of the prison, as well as that of the prisoners. In all actions, he never pardoned people who molested and harassed him without reason, whoever they might be; he meted out severe punishment to them.

One day he was caught by a superintendent of a workshop in the prison in the act of making chessmen with buck thorn to be used for the manufacture of desks and chairs and was beaten mercilessly. The superintendent thought it his daily job to beat the prisoners. Outraged, Choe Hyon struck him hard with the leg of the chair he was assembling. The prison authorities inflicted on him a week's confinement as punishment. But after that incident, the superintendent did not commit outrages on the prisoners any more.

Prison escapes constituted his most outstanding achievements in his struggle in the prison. With Yun Chang Bom and his other comrades, he succeeded in helping Im Pyong Guk, his former superior in the Independence Army, and other revolutionaries to escape. A man of inborn audacity and tough training in a wild world, Choe Hyon was ready to bum himself and jump off a high cliff, for the sake of justice.

After his release, he joined the Red Guards in Taiyangmao and, after arduous struggle, joined the Communist Party; he subsequently became a company political instructor of the Yanji guerrilla unit of the people's revolutionary army.

This amounted to everything I had known about this courageous man by the time I met him in Macun.

After greeting each other at our first meeting, he said,

"As things have come to this, I'll stay in Wangqing for about two days and have a chat with you before going. Will I bother you?"

I agreed to talk with pleasure.

We talked all night unaware that day was breaking.

Next morning the sentry warned headquarters that the enemy was about to attack the guerrilla zone. I manned the unit on the heights and, before climbing the mountain, said to Choe Hyon,

"Please wait in the barracks. I'll be back after a bit of fighting."

He leapt up on hearing this.

"Am I to wait in the barracks when I finally have a chance to fight? Choe Hyon is not a man to stay behind, instead of following you, Commander Kim. Even Heaven seems to understand me today. I wanted to fight under your command at least once, so please take me with you to the heights."

"If you're so eager, then let's fight together."

He kept on smiling as followed me up to the heights.

The enemy did not attack the line where the guerrillas were lying in ambush; they only fired some shots from a distance and then began to set fire to the grain stacks, permeated with the sweat and blood of the people in the guerrilla zone.

I ordered the guerrillas to mercilessly mow down the enemy by long-range sharp shooting, and said to Choe Hyon, "By the way, I've heard that you're a crack shot. Will you show me your skill?"

With a rifle he hit an enemy soldier approaching a grain stack with a fire stick with a single shot. We were about 500 meters away from the enemy, but he killed each of the enemy with one bullet. His marksmanship was really admirable.

"Well, do you feel a bit better now after such regrets about missing the battle of the Dongning county town?" I asked when the enemy had been repelled.

He shook his head, licking his lips, and said, "A little, but I'm still not satisfied." That night too, we talked until late mainly about the immediate tasks of the Korean revolution and ways of carrying them out. The allied front with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist armed units, the anti-Japanese national united front, the founding of a new Party of a Juche type, and some other important matters relating to the political line were topics of our practical talk.

Choe Hyon was very satisfied with the results of that conversation.

"Now, my regrets at missing the battle of the Dongning county town have been eased more or less by events in Macun."

On seeing him off, I gave him four Dataigan (a large-caliber pistol? Tr.) captured at the battle of Dongning county town and an amber cigarette-holder, as souvenirs of our first meeting. That cigarette-holder became his favorite one.

Whenever concentrating on decisive battles and campaigns, his cigarette-holder would belch out thick smoke. There were many heavy smokers around Choe Hyon, who kept a covetous eye on it. They all tried to get it by various methods, ranging from force, sweet words, barter to snatching it greedily from the owner's pocket when he had a bit too much to drink. But they all failed.

In the days after liberation some habitual smokers among the high-ranking officials of the Party and Government even tried to strike a bargain with him, saying, "Comrade Choe Hyon, they say your cigarette-holder sweetens cigarettes like honey. Won't you let me have a try at it? I'll pay liberal 'rent' for it." Such a bargain did not work with the stubborn owner either. Only Kim Ik Son, who was his close roommate in a holiday home in Rajin, managed to borrow it for one day.

The cigarette-holder is now displayed in the Korean Revolution Museum. At first the museum's officials thought that they could obtain it easily from him by a little persuasion. But that was a miscalculation. When he learned that they wanted the cigarette-holder, which he held dearer than jewels or gold for decades, Choe Hyon blazed with fury and turned them away, saying, "You're going to display this cigarette holder in a museum, eh? It isn't public property; it's my private property. Our General gave it to me for my own use, not to make it common property for every one to see and touch. If you ever want anything from me, pull off my moustache and take that."

The officials were dumbfounded, but they did not give up hope. They visited him persistently. They only managed to persuade the stubborn veteran on their fifth visit. The veteran, who had been roaring like a tiger just a few days before, was a changed man; he treated his guests with hospitality.

"From today on this cigarette-holder is not mine. It's the property of the entire people. I'll give it to you after smoking one last cigarette, so please wait."

He stuck a cigarette into the holder, lit it and drew in a mouthful of smoke, one after another with relish before exhaling. The veteran's half-closed eyes were gazing blankly at a distant sky in the north. The sky covered Macun, the historical site of our first meeting, and the theatre of war reeking with powder fumes he had trekked, with a Mauser at his side, until he had almost reached forty in the days of the guerrilla struggle.

Those memorable two nights and three days, which linked him and me and made him my lifelong companion, had built up an impregnable iron fortress, which guarded our friendship.

I got the strongest impression at our first meeting that he was very straightforward and frank. He spoke as he had seen things and thought. His ideas and feelings were reflected on his face at different moments. Lies, tricks and diplomatic dealings do not work with such a man. His childlike simple mind purified other people's minds with magical power. Fascinated by that bewitching power, I opened my inmost thoughts to him.

As soon as I arrived at the secret camp in Mihunzhen, I immediately went to the dug-out which housed about 50 fever patients, including Choe Hyon, whom I was so eager to see. When the supply officers, who had been guarding the camp, flung open the door to announce my arrival, he got up from the bed with difficulty and crawled to the door.

His face, reduced to skin and bones, had become so haggard that at first glance I did not recognize his former expression which had been engraved in my memory in Macun.

"I say, Commander Kim. Don't come in for mercy's sake. You mustn't!" He looked at me with blazing eyes, waving his arms, so I hesitated for a moment at the door.

"Well, it seems the people here are rather inhospitable. I came here to see Choe Hyon, and yet you're turning me away at the door. Where are your manners?" I said jokingly.

However, he would not listen. "It can't be helped, even though you say I'm inhospitable. Don't you know that this is a gate to Hell?"

"Ha, ha! You said you've shot a hundred boxfuls of cartridges, but I didn't know that you're such a cry-baby."

Realizing that his words had no effect, he swore at the supply officers who had brought me there.

"You fools, why did you bring Commander Kim here? Is this the way to attend to him?" The supply officers standing by the door became frightened and ran away. While he was reviling them, I strode to the middle of the room.

"You were as hard as a birch club, so why all this fuss about typhoid?"

As I took my seat beside him and held out my hand to shake his, he hastily hid his hands under the blanket.

"My body is full of typhoid germs, Commander Kim. Please don't touch me, for God's sake. Why did you come to this storehouse of epidemic germs?"

"Why did I come here? To see you, Choe Hyon. It's strange to see that you've contracted an infectious disease."

I pushed my hand under the blanket and took his hot hand and held it for a long time. His eyes immediately filled with tears.

"Thank you, Commander Kim. I'm not worth... I thought I'd die without seeing you." Although he had previously begged me not to come near him, he now gripped my hand tightly and would not let go. Choe Hyon was at that moment like a child.

He asked some questions about the second expedition to north Manchuria and explained for some time the damage typhoid had caused. I changed the conversation to personal affairs, related to his fate.

"I've heard that you suffered severely from suspected involvement in the 'Minsaengdan'. Is that true?"

"Yes, it's true."

He nodded his head sadly and explained in haste how he had come to be suspected.

"In Macun you told me a lot about the united front. I believed it was the only correct line in the world. On my return to Yanji, I explained it to my comrades in the unit, and even Wang De-tai, the corps commander, said that the united front was vital to us. But I was accused of being a 'Minsaengdan' member, while trying to realize the united front." After our leaving for the first expedition to north Manchuria, Choe Hyon, leading his company, had proceeded to the border area between Dunhua and Huadian Counties and carried on energetic political and military work to expand the area of guerrilla activities.

Expansion of the guerrilla zone in this area was dependent on good work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed units encamped at the dead end of the Dahuanggou valley.

There were two mountain rebel units, each comprising 80 and 100 men, in the valley at the time. The unit with 80 rebels was well disposed towards us, for the operatives from the guerrilla army had conducted a great deal of anti-Japanese propaganda. This unit maintained friendly relations with the neighboring self-defense corps units. The self-defense corps units in the area had switched from pro-Japanese to anti-Japanese troops and gave active assistance to the rebel unit in various forms and ways.

But the other rebel unit was given to robbing the people of their property and preparing to surrender collectively to the enemy, while maintaining secret contacts with them in Liushucun. Antagonism between the two rebel units, one aspiring to fight the Japanese and the other ready to surrender, was precipitating a bloody armed clash. If the unit trying to surrender had been left to its own device, it would have been impossible to lead the other rebel unit on to an anti-Japanese road or manage to effect the anti-Japanese allied front with it.

Choe Hyon gave a banquet, allegedly to help to reconcile them. The commanding officers of the unit,

who wanted to surrender, were also invited to the banquet. When they arrived, Choe Hyon's company disarmed them by surprise. But he did not touch the other unit or attack the self-defense corps unit, which was on friendly terms with that unit.

The fact that Choe Hyon did not attack the self-defense corps unit was fair and reasonable, as it conformed with the line of a united front. But the head of the political department of the corps headquarters and other Leftist superiors commented on Choe Hyon, publicly saying that as he had not attacked the enemy, he had actually surrendered to them.

They dismissed him from his post of company political instructor and deprived him of his favorite Mauser. This measure was so unjust that even Wang De-tai protested, saying, "If Choe Hyon is a 'Minsaengdan' member, who is not a 'Minsaengdan' in our 2nd Corps?" Choe Hyon was demoted to private, and subsequently worked as head of the supply department of Wang De-tai's corps headquarters for a year. He only became company commander at the end of 1935.

"I was saved, thanks to your efforts, Commander Kim. If you had not spoken out in our defense at the Dahuangwai meeting, at the risk of your own life, I would have been forced to live like a mole as a 'Minsaengdan' suspect. Please tell me, Commander Kim, was it a surrender not to have attacked the self-defense corps?"

He sprang up from his bed and gazed straight into my eyes. His serious face flushed scarlet all of a sudden.

I held his two hands in mine with affection and shook my head.

"How could that be a surrender? It was a just and good thing to do for the anti-Japanese front... Your demotion on a charge of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan' was preposterous." "That's right. I'm the last man to be a member of the 'Minsaengdan'. Damn those bastards! I can hardly repress my surging anger!"

"It's shocking that thousands of people have been punished like you or killed on a false charge of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan'.

"They talked nonsense. How can such revolutionaries as Yun Chang Bom and Park Tong Gun be 'Minsaengdan' members? They chose and executed only the hard workers and good fighters, and swaggered about, putting on airs, as if they'd performed some great exploit. If that had represented the communism that we're after, I wouldn't have come to Jiandao from Maritime Province."

"The anti-'Minsaengdan' struggle was a tragic event, which should never be repeated in the history of our anti-Japanese struggle. How many Korean communists were murdered!"

Fortunately, the Comintern officially pointed out the correctness of our opinions, expressed at the Dahuangwai meeting and the ultra-Leftist error committed in the anti- 'Minsaengdan' struggle by the east



Manchuria Party committee, and assigned us the task of taking measures to correct the situation as quickly as possible".

He shed tears while listening to me.

"If that's true, I want to give three cheers. Thank you, Commander Kim."

"What's important is how to make up for the wrongs done to comrades-in-arms who were murdered on a false charge and how to make up for the tremendous loss sustained by our revolution. Don't you think so?"

"You're right, Commander Kim. We must do our best to make up for the loss. As survivors, we must become seeds."

I was very satisfied with his answer. He was well-versed in military affairs and politics. During subsequent work with him over the next decades, I realized clearly that he was not only a master of military operations but also an able political worker with an opinion of his own. He was skilful in military operations and, at the same time, efficient in political work and agitation. He was experienced in military diplomacy and breaking up the enemy forces from within.

The soldiers and police of Manchukuo under his influence supplied him with ammunition and weapons regularly and frequently informed him of enemy movements. Regarding Choe Hyon as only a soldier is a short-sighted view. One day the veterans of the anti-Japanese war saw the Soviet film, Chapayev, and gave their impressions. One of them said, "That Chapayev is just like our General Choe Hyon. General Choe Hyon is a model Chapayev, in his way of speaking, moving, thinking and fighting...."

Choe Hyon retorted in anger, "So I'm Chapayev, eh? Choe Hyon is Choe Hyon and no one else!" His answer diverged from the views of his colleagues who were accustomed to seeing him as a man who commanded battles by rule of thumb. It is not correct to identify Choe Hyon with Chapayev. When one estimates Choc Hyon, one should always bear in mind that he was not only a military officer; he was also a competent political worker who had been political instructor in the guerrilla army and a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea.

Looking trustingly at his eyes, which blazed with ardor and confidence, I put my hand on the back of his hand and continued:

"If the seeds gain ten, one hundred and one thousand people and if those one thousand seeds gain ten thousand people, then we'll soon be rich in manpower. This is a great job that the Korean communists should undertake first and foremost. For this work, we must move to the Changbai area bordering the homeland and the Mt. Paektu area as we stressed at the Nanhutou meeting, and build new types of guerrilla bases."

He straightened his body up hastily at the mention of the phrase, new types of guerrilla bases, and twitched his eyebrows several times.

"Why do you talk about building guerrilla bases again when we've just evacuated them?" I explained the need to build new types of guerrilla bases and the differences between these bases and the former ones. His keen political mind which enabled him to understand everything quickly and digest things promptly, was really wonderful. Choe Hyon expressed his absolute support for the policies adopted at the Nanhutou meeting: policies which would act as a strong lever in developing the Korean revolution on a Juche-oriented line. The decisions adopted then saved Choe Hyon and all other typhoid patients in the secret camp in Mihunzhen from the abyss of despair.

Choe Hyon said, "I've gone through many deadly crises in my sickbed. On such occasions, I even wished I were dead. I was deluded into thinking that if I died, everything would come to an end and I'd forget the pain. But this reunion with you, Commander Kim, has chased away this foolish idea from my mind. It makes me want to live and fight to the end." As he spoke highly of our reunion, I gave it a profound meaning.

"You say you're encouraged by seeing me, but I've gained strength from seeing you. I'm very happy that you survived the 'Minsaengdan' fuss, for survival itself is a great achievement in that situation."

That day I went all around the whole secret camp with Lee Tong Baek.

The medical conditions and food situation in the camp were deplorable. The 7th Company of the 1st Division not far from Mihunzhen brought provisions they managed to obtain now and then, but they were far from enough to feed the dozens of people here. When food grain ran out, even gruel was unavailable; they then rubbed the rotten husk of maize, poured boiling water over it and drank it. Even that coarse food was not enough to go round.

A man named Kim ran the camp, but he was a coward, who only cared about his own safety. On arriving at the hospital under escort, Choe Hyon asked him to look after the affairs of the camp. But Kim neglected them on one or another pretext. In the autumn of 1935 Choe Hyon had buried a great deal of grain and subsidiary food in the vicinity of the camp, which he had captured from a landlord in the Dunhua area, but Kim whined that there was no grain there; he served patients with bean gruel once or twice a day, but not on a regular basis. Leaving the patients to the care of a few sewing-unit members, he himself went to another camp almost three miles away, so that he wouldn't contract the disease, and lived in luxury on rice and meat.

Kim also kept women guerrillas on guard duty.

Kim Chol Ho, Ho Song Suk, Choe Sun San and other women guerrillas underwent a great deal of hardships at that time, nursing the patients. There were the supply officers Kim, Kwak and Ryu, of course, but they were fully preoccupied by external activities. They were, therefore, unable to look after

the patients. The women guerrillas did the sewing, stood sentry and nursed the patients in turn.

The typhoid patients, who were extremely nervous owing to never-ending pain, were hard on their nurses. They almost went crazy from desire for cold water. For some unknown reason, it was rumored among the soldiers of the people's revolutionary army at the time that for typhoid patients drinking cold water was tantamount to committing suicide by taking poison, and this rumor was applied to their treatment. Taking the rumor as truth, Choe Hyon declared a ban on drinking cold water in the hospital and threatened to severely punish the patients if they disobeyed.

But the patients, who were going mad from thirst, cried for cold water despite everything. Some of them picked off the icicles hanging on the eaves and ate them behind the nurses' backs. They had been so obedient to the discipline of the guerrilla army, but they lost patience out of their thirst and behaved like unbridled horses. When the women guerrillas offered them gruel instead of cold water, they would fling the bowls away, raining foul language on them. However, the women guerrillas flatly rejected their demands, and kept vigil in turn and watched over them so that they would not drink the cold water from the jar.

One night a messenger with the peculiar name of Maeng Son, unable bear the thirst, crawled to the jar. Ho Song Suk was on duty that night. As soon as she saw him, she rushed to the jar and snatched the dipper from his hand, scolding him loudly, "Comrade Maeng Son, have you forgotten the order? Do you want to die? Go back to your bed at once."

At his wit's end, he took up a piece of firewood lying in front of the stove and hit her hard on the leg with it; then he greedily drank the water. He lay in bed through the whole night with the blanket pulled up over his face, as if he were dead.

Ho Song Suk thought he was dying and consequently kept vigil by his side all night, even after she had been relieved of duty. Other patients were also worried that he would have a hard time of it. At daybreak, however, Maeng Son, whom everyone thought would have died, pushed the blanket aside, got up, and hugged Ho Song Suk.

"Thank you, Comrade Song Suk. I'm alive. Thanks to your conniving at my drinking the water, my fever subsided. Where has my fever gone?"

"It's gone through the sweat pores of your body. Look! The blanket is steaming hot." Holding high the blanket, wet with perspiration, she looked around the ward. The patients awoke and gazed at the blanket.

As a result, the ban of drinking cold water was withdrawn, and the patients began to drink as much water as they wanted. Many of the typhoid patients in Mihunzhen escaped death with each passing day. Patients who recovered cooked the food together with the women guerrillas just as if it were for a festival.

We found, with supply officer Ryu, the large amount of rice and meat captured by Choe Hyon in Dunhua

in the vicinity of the camp. From that time on the meals in the camp began to improve. The soldiers, who had been trained in the expeditions and battle, stood sentry every day instead of the women guerrillas, without wilting from the fatigue, which had built up during the long expedition.

When everyone was again on his feet with the joy of recovery, Wang De-tai, Wei Zheng-min and I held a meeting of the military and political cadres of the people's revolutionary army in Mihunzhen and took practical measures to implement the policies put forward at the Nanhutou meeting. Kim San Ho, Park Yong Sun, Kim Myong Phal, and many other cadres above the level of the company political instructor of the people's revolutionary army attended it.

The decisions adopted at the Nanhutou meeting were strategic tasks to be implemented unfailingly in the latter half of the 1930s by the Korean communists, who had evacuated the guerrilla bases as fixed, liberated areas and begun to expand the theatre of operations to the region of Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. We had to take some relevant tactical measures to implement these tasks.

We had devised a plan to make the Mt. Paektu area the strategic base of the Korean revolution and, by moving freely to north and south Manchuria and deep into the homeland, raise to a higher plane the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle and the communist movement of our country via active military offensives and political activities by large units. In other words, we had decided to enlarge the theatre of our operations. To put this plan into practice, we had to solve first and foremost the manpower problem in three sectors - the Party, military and nationwide united front forces. We had to build them up in order to advance the revolution onto a higher plane.

We debated at the Mihunzhen meeting the reorganization of the people's revolutionary army units to meet the demands of the times and decided on the areas of activities for the divisions and brigades which "were to be established".

First of all, the meeting decided to set up a new division and an independent brigade in order to amplify the combat forces of the people's revolutionary army from two divisions to three divisions and one independent brigade. On the basis of this decision, the meeting allocated an area for each unit's activities; the 3rd Division (later renamed the 6th Division) to be newly formed was to operate in the border area along the Yalu River, centering on Mt. Paektu, the 1st Division in the areas of Fusong, Antu and Linjiang, and the 2nd Division in Jiandao and north Manchuria. The new brigade was to gradually proceed to the area along the Yalu River, after mobile operations in north Manchuria and keep the enemy forces appearing in the boarder areas under control. This was a militant decision, requiring the swift doubling of the combat forces of the people's revolutionary army by lightning measures.

The military and political cadres attending the meeting appraised the reorganization of the people's revolutionary army as a step forward in the overall anti-Japanese armed struggle, and enthusiastically supported this measure. However, not all problems were solved smoothly. When debating ways of implementing measures, an irrelevant opinion was advanced, which slowed down the meeting on the shortage of cadres.

It was quite reasonable that some people were apprehensive over the reorganization of the people's revolutionary army, owing to the lack of cadres, while welcoming the reorganization in all circumstances. During the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, a considerable number of military and political cadres had been removed from the ranks of the people's revolutionary army. The aftermath of ultra-democracy in the army was another factor which engendered the shortage of cadres. There were many cadres on the active list who had not even been freed from the stigma of the "Minsaengdan". Many units of the people's revolutionary army frequently requested commanding officers.

We mapped out a plan for appointing cadres for the new units to be organized on the principle of boldly trusting people and unhesitatingly promoting them. According to this plan, the 3rd Division was placed under my direct command. An Pong Hak remained the commander of the 1st Division and Choe Hyon was promoted to commander of the 1st Regiment of the 1st Division.

The meeting at Mihunzhen also debated the organization of a preparatory committee to found the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

While the Nanhutou meeting was a milestone between the first half of the 1930s and the second half, the Mihunzhen meeting was, figuratively speaking, a stepping-stone, along with the gatherings at Donggang, Xigang and Nanpaizi, leading the Korean revolution to the great events of the 1940s. The "express", departing from Nanhutou ran at full speed to Xiaohaerbaling via Mihunzhen, Xigang and Nanpaizi, those memorable "stations" on our historic advance from Nanhutou to Xiaohaerbaling: throughout this time our friendship, our hearts and souls had so profoundly been devoted to the journey.

I congratulated Choe Hyon on his promotion to regimental commander and bade him farewell.

"Next time let's meet in the Mt. Paektu area. I wish you health and success!"

He gripped my arm and, like a child, beseeched me urgently:

"If you don't take me with you, I won't let you go. I, too, want to go to the Mt. Paektu area and fight under your command."

"Why are you supposing that I like saying farewell to you, Comrade Choe Hyon? I, too, want to do the same, as a tender-hearted man. If all of you come over to my side, then what should we do with the other units? It's only when such commanders as you, Choe Hyon, and Choe Yong Con, Lee Hak Man and Han Hung Gwon take charge of big fronts and fight, that our revolution will advance at a fast pace in wide areas. I want to see the Choe Hyon who has become a tiger, not a chicken."

"Can I become a tiger? Oh, my!"

He repeatedly exclaimed "Oh, my!" and gazed at something far off, with narrowed eyes. "Then, I'll not persist any more today. But it'll be different next time. Don't forget me even in your dreams. I, too, will

dream that I'm beside you."

I met him for a third time at the secret camp of Yangmudingzi, Xigang, Fusong County. Of course, he again tried to strike the same bargain which had remained unsettled in Mihunzhen. But, his wish was not fulfilled then, either. As soon as he came up to me, he requested that I transfer him to the main unit, but his attempts ended in failure.

He wanted to be at my side all his life and tried his best to make this come true. But each of his attempts gave way to other temptations, which were stronger and more realistic than his own desire. In other words, he was impelled by his crystal-clear conscience and spirit of devoted service to come to the forefront of my concerns and interests.

Keenly aware that, despite his wish to assist me by my side, he should be the first to give way and take the brunt in response to my call, he thereby demonstrated his loyalty and the charm of his character. These two wishes were involved in a continual tug-of-war in his mind throughout his life. Although these two wishes were dear to him, he always left me with the firm resolve to do his bit, by taking up the post which I regarded as important in a difficult situation.

This was evidently a pleasant contradiction, which ran throughout his life. Apart from his later years, when he assisted me as Minister of the People's Armed Forces and Minister in the Administration Council, he had lived all his life amidst powder fumes on the front line. He had fought hundreds of battles in the latter half of the 1930s. Hundreds of battles - large and small - including the battles at Sandaogou, Wudaogou, Xiaotanghe, Huanggouling, Jinchang, Pulgunbawi, Komuijari, Jiansanfeng, Naerhong, Laojinchang, Mujihe, Fuerhe, Weitanggou, Tianbaoshan, Dashahe, Dajianggang, Yaocha and Hancongou, were all associated with his name and fully demonstrated his talent and unparalleled bravery as a distinguished military commander.

The nickname of "Tough Fellow", which we often see in classified documents left by the Japanese imperialists, was given to Choe Hyon. The Japanese army and police trembled at the mere mention of "Sai Ken's unit" (Sai Ken is the Japanese pronunciation of Choe Hyon). "Sai Ken" became synonymous with an invincible general, who struck terror into the enemy's heart.

In the days after liberation he helped build a new country by force of arms at the forefront on this side of the 38th parallel. During the war against the US imperialists, he commanded an army corps in the eastern sector of the front. His confident words of command, calling on the soldiers to charge, always reverberated across decisive battlefields, which the fatherland and people were watching.

The farther he was from me, the closer and dearer he was in my mind. Just as the saying has it that even a thousand miles seem only a hailing distance to bosom friends, I think space and time do not matter to friends who love and respect each other. Choe Hyon was a loyal man who assisted me more than others, although he was farther away from me.

Ever since the early days of construction of the new country, he carried along everywhere my photograph in the folds of his pocketbook. The photo was the size of a matchbox. Funnily enough, I had no idea how he obtained it. Apparently he coaxed Jong Suk to give the photo to him when leaving for the 38th parallel as commander of a brigade, but I can't be sure. When he formed a second front behind the enemy lines and fought guerrilla warfare, he looked at that picture whenever he missed me.

One day he decided to give an official commendation on his own to a squad leader, who had performed distinguished services in the enemy yea. The squad leader's name was Kim Man Song. During the operations behind enemy lines the squad had captured 50 vehicles - 22 three-quarter-ton trucks and 28 gun carriers and killed or wounded about 150 enemy soldiers. The exploits deserved the highest decoration.

But the corps headquarters, out of contact with the Supreme Head quarters, had no decorations or letters of commendation. But Choe Hyon, who would not hesitate once he had made up his mind to do something, called the squad leader and conferred on him my photograph, which he had been carrying since liberation.

"This is a higher commendation than a decoration. You know that General Kim Il Sung is the head of our country? When we were fighting guerrilla warfare in Jiandao, the General was our leader. At that time we yearned for him very much. If you keep this photo next to your bosom, no bullet will pierce your heart."

These were the words Choe Hyon had used, when conferring the photograph on him.

He subsequently reported back to me at Supreme Headquarters. I provoked him gently. "But, you are just Choe Hyon and no one else. However, the squad leader, Kim Man Song, suffered a great loss. Can a photograph the size of a matchbox be equal to a decoration?"

"That's stingy of you. Who, if not Choe Hyon, would confer such a commendation? General, the photo is one thing, but you have to give him the award. I mean in the name of the Supreme Commander."

This was a surprise counterattack. I was taken unawares by this master of allurements. The warm heart of this broad-minded "Uncle Corps Commander", who held his men very dear, almost moved me to tears.

"Yes, I will. The photo was your commendation. I will thank him and also confer a decoration on him in the name of the Supreme Commander."

From this detail we are able to get a deeper understanding of Choe Hyon. The story contains his noble outlook on the world.

This is roughly the kind of man Choe Hyon was.

I do not know what else to write to give a more faithful description of his human appeal. His

autobiography, stained by powder fumes and weathered by storms, included too many facts and events to provide a full description. Choe Hyon was an optimist, who knew no disappointments all his life, a tank-like man, who pushed straight ahead in the face of all adversities.

What kind of people did he love? He loved frank, ordinary, industrious, daring, faithful and imaginative people and also others who did not backbite and knew how to make the requisite decisions.

He did not like sycophants, cowards, idlers or chatterboxes. He was always guarded against people who were enigmatic and masqueraded.

The whole country knows that he was mad about chess. When he lost even one game, he would become so furious that he lost his appetite. For all this, he became even angrier if his opponent purposely lost a game or played for a draw just to soothe him. Choe Hyon was also a rare film lover. He was so fond of films that Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il presented him with a film projector. Choe Hyon liked war films best. But he hated seeing war films, where too many people were killed.

During his last days on his sickbed I visited him several times. Weak from fighting his ailments, he looked so fragile, and unsightly that he reminded me of a boy in his early teens.

I even wondered if this was Choe Hyon, veteran of a hundred battles and "Tough Fellow", who had struck terror in the enemy during two wars.

His hands, which used to be as stiff as a plank, were as soft as a child's hands, after losing their muscles and roughness. I gripped those hands and said, "Look here, Choe Hyon! Can the tiger-like 'Sai Ken' fall down like this?"

All of a sudden, his lips twisted and he burst into tears. I wiped the tears away with my handkerchief and calmed him down.

"Don't cry, Comrade Choe Hyon. Tears only make you weaker."

"I cried, Leader, because I was reminded of that day at Mihunzhen. The day when you also gripped my hand like this."

"Mihunzhen? Yes, I did. Somehow I miss those days. The times were hard, but we were vivacious young men in our twenties. By the way, you were thirty years old at that time, weren't you?"

"You're right. I was twenty-nine according to today's calculations. I remember making a pledge with you, hand in hand, 'Let us share life and death together!' Do you remember?" "Yes, and why not?"

"I'm afraid I can't keep the pledge and I'm going before... I'm sorry."



"There's no need. It's I who should feel sorry. If I had taken better care of you, you wouldn't have come to this pass. But I made you work too hard all the time, making you do only hard jobs. I regret it so much."



*Photo: Kim Chul Ho, a woman partisan, married to Choe Hyon.*

"Don't. On the contrary, I've given you much trouble all my life. When I die, you must remain healthy and reunify the country. Please take care of yourself, Leader. This is my last wish. The worst thing is that you don't care about your health."

Apparently he talked about me all the time until his last minutes. Whenever my assistants visited him to inquire how he felt, he used to ask, "Is the leader well? Is Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il fine?"

I so regretted overworking him all his life that I ordered a film about him, which was circulated across the country. The title of this film is A Revolutionary.

His merit in family life is that he taught his wife and children to be single-heartedly loyal to the Party and the leader.

His wife Kim Chol Ho was an indefatigable fighter who had devoted her whole life to the revolution. She conducted underground activities in enemy-held areas and fought shoulder to shoulder with us. It was far harder for a woman to fight severe battles against the enemy, carrying weapons for 10 years in the steep mountains and the sea of forests and snow in Manchuria in 400C below zero than go on an arctic expedition. Hearing the guns of the enemy's "punitive" forces, she gave birth to a baby on a snow bank.

She cut the umbilical cord herself without the help of a midwife and there and then fired at the enemy who were pursuing her. She fought like a phoenix. She considered all the hardships she had suffered in the days of the guerrilla warfare so valuable, that she used to cook uncrushed maize gruel once or twice a month for her children until the day she passed away.

Whereas Choe Hyon was an unfailing engine, leading Kim Chol Ho along the bright road, the latter was a ray of warm sunlight, who covered the latter's tumultuous career with beautiful flowers.



*Photo: Choe Hyon and Kim Il Sung.*

Together with her husband, she brought up her children strictly, as if she was raising them in the snowstorm of Mt. Paektu. Her sons now work hard in posts, appointed by Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il to add luster to our style of socialism, which regards the popular masses as supreme and educate the third and fourth generations of the revolution as loyal people.

Their son Choe Yun Hae, the general commander of the youth, performed a great exploit, by ensuring the holding of the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students, which would remain a grand monument in the history of the communist movement in our country. When his mother Kim Chol Ho died he stayed at her funeral ceremony for some minutes and then went to the

People's Palace of Culture to attend a meeting of the international preparatory committee to make the festival a success. On receiving a report about it, I thought, "Like father, like son."

It is an immutable law of nature that an apple tree bears only apples and a pear tree only pears. There is no difference between this law and the law of society. Accordingly a new generation, born with the soul of Mt. Paektu, grows up on the land of Mt. Paektu. It is indeed a matter of pride that the second, third and fourth generations, under the leadership of Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il, are inheriting and consummating the Korean revolution in a spirit of loyalty and filial devotion, the revolution, initiated and developed by the first generation, who devoted heart and soul to the cause, amid snowstorm and raging winds.

I am convinced that our younger generation will remain loyal to the last to the cause of their forebears. It is only natural for an excellent new generation to emerge from the embrace of excellent forebears.

## 12.1. The Birth of a New Division

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When we left Mihunzhen, our company comprised less than twenty people. Two young orderlies, ten guards including O Paek Ryong, Kim San Ho and the old man "tobacco pipe", who had followed us and in so doing had given up teaching at a village school in the secluded land of Helong. These were all members of my company. One company from the Wangqing Regiment, who had followed us from Guandi, left us towards Yilan County to join some units in north Manchuria.

Although my company on the journey was small, I was indescribably happy at the thought that my long-cherished dream would come true.

"I must go to Fusong quickly. The soldiers of the Second Regiment will be waiting for me at Maanshan. I must make them the backbone of a new unconquerable division." This was my intention, as I left Mihunthen.

It was imperative to organize a new division to carry out the Juche line of our revolution. Nobody would now dare to dispute or interfere with our concentration on the Korean revolution. There would be no more obstacles to the Korean revolution, along the path we had long sought and paved. If we ran straight ahead along this path, we would be able to liberate the homeland and build a country, a land of bliss for the people. To this end, we had to prepare a strong engine and train, which would run along this path and also had to build a powerful headquarters.

What engine would lead the Korean revolution? This meant the division to be organized as the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The future Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland might be compared to the train, which would be pulled by that engine. Mt. Paektu, where we soon established ourselves, would act as the headquarters of the Korean revolution. We had to grapple with these tasks straight away.

The new division we planned to organize at that time was not a conventional division, set aside exclusively for military operations to destroy the Japanese imperialist army and police. As well as conducting military operations, this division planned to advance to Mt. Paektu, our destination, and expand the network of Party organizations throughout the homeland, rally all the people behind the ARF and other anti-Japanese organizations and rouse them and lead their resistance against the Japanese. Consequently a political potential was needed to perform these tasks. Of course, other divisions also had to perform these tasks, but an elite division to lead other divisions in this undertaking was essential. Consequently I compared the elite division to an engine.

How was this powerful division, the engine of the Korean revolution, to be organized? Most of the people I discussed this matter with proposed the recall of all Korean soldiers from different units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army and the formation of a large force and then a move to Mt. Paektu. Some

others insisted that sturdy guerrillas be selected from different units of the 2nd Corps to form the division. Although their idea was sensible in some respects, none of them had considered the destiny of our Chinese comrades, who were fighting with us against the common enemy, or the prospects of a joint struggle. Their proposal was motivated by their impatience to witness the birth of the new division, without regard to everything else, or by a self-centred approach as it is called nowadays.

In the end I decided to divide hundreds of soldiers, who had been under my command during the north Manchurian expedition, among the units operating in Weihe, and go to Fusong to organize a new main force, with the 2nd Regiment operating there as the backbone, by recruiting excellent young people from east Manchuria and the homeland.

When we left Mihunzhen, Wang De-tai gave us twenty or so horses, which had been captured from an enemy's timber mill.

"Commander Kim, I am sorry to see you leaving, following the transfer of all the men you have trained with painstaking effort to units in north Manchuria. I hope you will accept these horses in exchange for your men and make them your companions. They will be useful because they seem to have been trained."

We made a southward journey on these horses. We almost lost three of the horses during a stop on the march. We had allowed them to graze, and they disappeared into the forest beyond our view. I ascertained that there was no enemy around and told my orderly to fire a few shots. At the sound of gun shots, the three horses appeared from different directions and ran towards us.

On our way we met evacuees from the Chechangzi guerrilla zone on a mountain, and gave them these horses for use as draft animals.

The march from Mihunzhen to Maanshan was the most difficult part of the whole southward journey of over six months from Xiaojiaqihe valley in north Manchuria to Sobaeksu mountain valley on the northern tip of Korea.

The enemy appeared from all directions and detained our small force. After leaving Mihunzhen, we had to fight one or two battles every day, Sometimes three or four battles. Now and then the enemy did not even give us time to cook or mend torn clothes. Battle was so frequent that the old man "tobacco pipe", who could allegedly skip meals, but not smoking for a single day, was not able to smoke all day for several days. We guards. At least one man was needed for the gate guard, two at the foot of the mountain and another two on the top of the mountain for each shift, but we did not have enough men to relieve them, if the wounded and nurses were excluded.

Consequently I also stood guard now and then in place of the soldiers. During his patrol one night Kim San Ho saw me standing as sentry, and made a great fuss as if something serious had happened. He meant that the commander was too indulgent to his men. It was very hard to soothe him, when he was complaining. I persuaded him to think of the young men.

I said to him: "Look how exhausted the men are from march and battle during the day and from guard duty every night! How many times can I stand guard for them? When we arrive at Maanshan, we shall have a number of people and I will have no opportunity to stand guard."

Aware that I would not listen to him, Kim San Ho went away in silence.

"Let's go to Maanshan quickly!" I said to myself.

I thought that the embrace of many comrades-in-arms and a comfortable shelter was in store for us in Maanshan and that our hardships would end there. Such hope strengthened and encouraged all of us who were exhausted by the march and battles to continue without proper food and rest.

Every valley and mountain ridge of Antu and Fusong on our route to the south were familiar to me, and each plant and tree evoked in me strong memories. Songjiang, Xinglongcun, Shiwuli, Xiaoshahe, Liujiafenfang, Fuerhe, Dadianzi, Liushuhe, Nandianzi, Dujidong, Wanlihe, Naitoushan and other places were closely connected in different ways with my younger days. Treading on familiar ground, I was stirred by irresistible emotions.

When we climbed on the hill west of Daxibeicha, a striking scenery unfolded, which awakened deep emotions in my mind. The out-of-the-way village at the foot of the hill was an unforgettable place, where I had worked underground in the guise of a farmland, preparing the foundation of the guerrilla army. On this very hill I would meet the members of an, underground organization at that time. Each of the plants, trees, and rocks was a memento of those days.

Scanning the stretch of rolling southern hills and recollecting my bygone days, I glimpsed a distant view of the Xiaoshahe hill, where I had declared the foundation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army four years earlier. My mother's grave was located on a sunny place, a little way down from the top of the hill.

A lingering desire to trace the familiar lane back to her grave and bow to it before proceeding to Fusong arrested my step. Four years had passed since I left the Tuqidian valley, after bidding farewell in tears to my mother's grave which was sparsely sodded.

Four years was enough for the turf to strike deep roots. My heart suddenly throbbed with a desire to talk to my mother in the grave, even for just one moment and press my cheeks against the new shoots, which might be sprouting from under dry leaves. I remained on the ridge of the hill, unaware that my men had already climbed down the hill. Apparently the memory of my mother was ever stronger as the day when foods are offered to ancestral tombs was approaching. I heard that Mr. Kang Je Ha's family visited my father's grave in Yangdicun twice a year to perform ancestral sacrifices and weed it, but I had never heard what had happened to my mother's grave at Tuqidian valley.

"General, why don't you come down the hill?" inquired Choe Kum San, turning back from descending the hill.

I only now awakened from reverie and quickened my pace.

"General, what are you thinking about? I have heard that your mother's grave is near here. Probably..." He asked in a whisper cupping his hands to my ear. This young orderly's penetrating insight compelled me to open up my heart.

"That's right! I was thinking about my mother."

"General, surely you should pay a visit to your mother's grave?"

"“Yes. But I have no time."

"Nevertheless, it would be too unfeeling not to. It is only a hailing distance to Xiaoshahe. I was told that your younger brother is living in Tuqidian valley."

"Even if time allows me to, I cannot. My mother herself does not want me to."

"That's strange. Why not?"

"As her last wish, she said that I should not move her grave before Korea gains independence. I do not call at her grave, because I respect her last wish."

Choe Kum San cocked his head, as if he were not satisfied.

"“Will Korea fail to gain independence if you call at the grave? General, her last wish is a last wish, but please pay her a visit."

"No, I can't. I was not an obedient son in her lifetime, so I want to be obedient, at least after her death. Don't tell me what to do. I haven't done anything great yet, so how can I visit her grave?"

Kim San Ho and O Paek Ryong joined the battle to persuade me to visit Xiaoshahe, but I declined. Deep in spirit, however, I was by my mother's side.

Climbing down the hill I said in my spirit, "Mother, I cannot visit you at the Tuqidian valley, because I am on a hasty journey. Treading the soil of Antu, I am very sorry that I haven't added a handful of earth to your grave and never weeded it, while you were exposed to the cold snow and cold rain through all seasons. I also haven't taken care of my younger brothers. I heard that Chol Ju fell in battle last year, but I do not even know where he is buried.

"But, mother, the prospects of the Korean revolution have become bright. I am going to organize a large division in Maanshan. As commander of this division, I will fight a decisive battle, centering on Mt. Paektu. If I fail to liberate the country, I will not visit your grave as you so desired. But trust me and wait for me, mother. I will liberate the country without fail and take you to Mangyongdae."

We hastened our march towards Maanshan. We expected a great deal of our journey to Maanshan. Consequently, when a saddle-shaped mountain came into view beyond a sea of forest, all of us shouted, "That's Mt. Maan!"

We first came upon a ginseng field. The edge of the field was covered by two shabby and empty log-cabins. In dusk we found another small log-cabin in a deep valley. Two or three men lived in seclusion in this cabin. Here we met Kim Hong Bom, the head of the political department of the 1st Division, who was eating baked potatoes.

"“Where is the Second Regiment?”"

"It moved to Jiaohe on an expedition early this month."

Kim Hong Born's casual answer acted as a thunderbolt from the blue. The absence of the 2nd Regiment meant that it was impossible to organize the new main force which we had planned at Nanhutou. I felt as if I had lost a trusty prop.

As it was operating as an Independent Regiment, it had been one of the pure Korean units renowned as the "Koryo red army" for its high combat efficiency. This regiment was composed of companies which had been selected from each county guerrilla zone in east Manchuria including Yanji, Wangqing and Helong. Most of its soldiers were closely connected with me.

Kwon Yong Byok, Kim Ju Hyon, Oh Jung Hup, Kim Phyoung, and other hard-core elements of the regiment, to say nothing of regimental commander Yun Chang Born and its political commissar Kim Rak Chon, had been trained by me.

I last met the 2nd. Regiment in May 1935 when it arrived in Tangshuihezi, Wangqing County, on my call. During the ten days I spent with the soldiers, I got them to study, gave them training and sometimes committed them to battle. They developed as quickly as men under my personal command. They were the very heroes who defended the Chechangzi guerrilla zone to the last and thereby created the legend of the “indomitable Chechangzi”.

When we were on the second north Manchurian expedition, the 2nd Regiment evacuated the Chechangzi guerrilla zone and advanced towards south Manchuria and then moved early in 1936 to Maanshan, Fusong County, via Naitoushan, Antu County. The regiment was due to stay in the Fusong area in the winter with its headquarters and supply base on Maanshan, waiting for us. This was all we had known in

Nanhutou about the activities of the 2nd Regiment.

When I left for Maanshan, I transferred the men on the north Manchurian expedition to other units, as I believed that if the 2nd Regiment came under my command, I would be able to organize a new division using it as the backbone.

"Didn't you receive the message we sent to the Second Regiment?"

On my arrival in Mihunzhen, I had sent a liaison man over here, with the instructions that the 2nd Regiment should wait for me.

"No, we didn't get the message. After the Second Regiment departed on expedition, nobody has come here."

Then, something must have happened to the messenger on the way. Even if he arrived without accident, he would have not met the 2nd Regiment which had left.

"Why did the Second Regiment move to Jiaohe?"

"I don't know....

"Didn't they say when they would be back?"

"No, they didn't."

"Who led them?"

"Regimental commander Zhang Chuan-shu and its political commissar Cao Ya-fan."

"Are you alone here, then? What are you doing here?"

When I asked, Kim Hong Bom replied, much to my surprise:

"There are more than one hundred 'Minsaengdan' members in the Sampho secret camp. I am remaining here to watch them."

"Why are there so many 'Minsaengdan' members? I found the log-cabin on the edge of the ginseng field empty."

"'Minsaengdan' suspects have now gone to Mayihe, Linjiang, to obtain foodstuffs."



"If they can be sent on such a mission, how can they be 'Minsaengdan' members?" "We can hardly starve them to death, can we?"

"Have you any evidence to indicate that they are 'Minsaengdan' members?"

"There are files of evidence for each of them. Written confessions, Written statements, examination records

Kim Hong Bom produced a big bundle of documents from a dark corner of the room. "These are the documents."

This bundle of "Minsaengdan" documents was the first reception at Maanshan for me, who had come all the way, despite all the hardships, to meet the 2nd Regiment. There were so many document bundles that they filled up a whole room.

When I received the musty bundles of criminal records, instead of loud cheers and exciting embraces, I trembled as if I had been deceived or mocked.

A mere mention of "Minsaengdan" made my blood run cold, but this "Minsaengdan" devil running wild in guerrilla zones was still torturing a lot of people. How had these old document bundles come to be brought here?

Almost one year had passed since we had repeated those arguments in Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou. Only one and a half months had passed since we had heard about the judgment of the Comintern. The news might not have reached the people here yet. However, it was beyond imagination that the "Minsaengdan" farce was still going on, long after the whole of east Manchuria had condemned the "Minsaengdan" case as fictitious.

Why were they trying to incriminate one hundred stalwart people? Were they not satisfied with the murders of people like Kim Rak Chon?

I ordered Kim San Ho to dispatch a messenger immediately to Mayihe, Linjiang, to fetch them all. Then, I unwrapped the bundles of "Minnsaengdan" documents and examined them one by one. I went through the papers, foregoing sleep and continued on the next day, too. The more carefully I examined the documents, the more enigmatic they seemed to me. These papers vividly recorded serious crimes, which nobody could dare deny. I closed the documents. Any examination of the papers could only do harm. If I believed these papers, I would lose so many people. I could not believe what had been written on sheets of white paper, which could absorb all kinds of ink.

After receiving my message, the "Minsaengdan" suspects, who had traveled round Mayihe, Linjiang County, covered more than a hundred miles in only two days crossing the Longgang Mountains and came to us.

On learning that they had reached the Sampho secret camp, I went to see them with Kim Hong Bom. When I opened the frosted log-cabin door, I found the room crowded with ragged people. It was a strange meeting, which did not arouse any excitement, cheers or tears. Nobody saluted me or stood up to report on what they were doing. No single man looked up to me. Only a dead silence reigned over the room - a hushed silence and quiet. How hard they had been oppressed! They even seemed to think that they had lost the right to glimpse or greet people. Could a felon be as depressed and miserable as they were?

"Comrades, you have gone through a lot of trouble." I could not speak properly, feeling a lump in my throat. "Seeing you, I can hardly ask 'How are you all?' But, I am glad to see you. I came here to see you, all the way from Lake Jingbo in north Manchuria." But none of them responded to my greetings. Still I was met only by hushed silence: there was not a sound of breathing or coughing. I had never been met by my men like that in the four years of war against the Japanese.

I continued:

"I came here to see you comrades of the Second Regiment, in order to set up a new unit and go to Mt. Paektu to fight there. But I was told here that all the sound people are on an expedition to Jiaohe and that the people staying here are all bad. I examined the papers which accuse you of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan'. According to these documents, all of you are 'Minsaengdan' members. But I don't believe that I can judge you by these papers. I can only have a correct view after hearing what you have to say. So I hope you will open up your hearts. Speak frankly without fear or trying to read another's face."

I appealed in this way, but the thickly-frozen silence did not break easily.

I told a man in the first row to reply first, asking him if it was true that he was a "Minsaengdan" member.

He hesitated for a while with his head dropped low and then said in a feeble voice, "Yes, it is true."

I had not wanted to hear such a reply. I had wished him to cry out against the charge in tears and beat his breast. His reply merely disappointed me.

I asked a tall young man the same question.

"Tell me, Comrade Lee Tu Su, is it true that you joined the 'Minsaengdan'?"

This young platoon leader from Chunchon in Kangwon Province had bitter grievances against the Japanese imperialists. There was a blue scar on his right thigh. Once I had asked him which battle he had been wounded in. He had replied that he had been bitten by a dog.

This had happened when he was ten or so years old. In a time of spring poverty, before the barley

harvest, his family lived on gruel which was not even salted. As the salt had run out, he made three bundles of firewood and went to the market. He sold them and bought one toe (1.8 litres) of salt. He was returning home in high spirits with the salt sack on top of his A-frame carrier. Passing a Japanese house, a wild dog swooped upon him and bit his thigh.

The Japanese boy, who had set the dog on him, hid in the house and latched the gate from the inside. Witnesses of the incident were indignant with the wicked Japanese. They carried the bleeding boy on their backs to the police station, protested and accused the criminal. His injury was very serious: a piece of flesh was torn off. The people hospitalized him.

Tu Su was treated in hospital, eating rice, for the first time in his life. The boy with disheveled hair, who hated eating gruel, was happy eating rice. He believed he would prefer to suffer the injury longer, rather than leave the hospital. He never imagined even in his dreams that his hospital life would bring great misfortune to his family and himself. He thought that the dog's owner would pay the doctor's fee.

Later, the hospital authorities declared that they could not continue treatment, unless he paid. The doctor's fee amounted to 20 won . Where could he obtain such a large sum of money, a boy who had been forced to leave school after attending it for only three months in the first year of primary school, because he could not afford to pay school fees of 20 jon a month?

The boy's grandfather, father and brothers frequently visited the dog's owner, the police station and hospital, begging, protesting and accusing. But nobody accepted the appeal, protest or complaint of the victim. They said that the boy who had been bitten by the dog was to blame for the accident. They were all Japanese, who could not take the Korean side. Finally Lee Tu Su borrowed 20 won and paid the fee.

The interest grew on the loan and in two years the debt had swollen to such an extent that he could not pay it back, even by selling his house, Mibich had been handed down through generations. His family, which could not live in Chunchon because of the continual demand for payment, left their dear home town secretly at night and made a northward journey. The money lenders chased his family five miles away and took by force a roll of silk, the family's last property, from his grandmother's bundle.

The descendants of the Lee dynasty, who had lived in the octagonal mansion with detached buildings for guests and servants and had owned several hectares of land, enjoying the respect and envy of others, became penniless, after losing everything - the dynasty, country, house and last roll of cloth and wandered from place to place.

The plaintive voice of a steward in the dining-room of a steamer from Wonsan to Chongjin stirred up the young boy's heart to feel the grief of a stateless nation and the sorrow of departing home. "The sorrow of people like you who leave the homeland for a foreign land can never be assuaged and the tears of blood shed by you wanderers flood the East Sea. But sighs and tears will get you nowhere. Please endure your sorrow and take this meal cooked with the rice and water of the homeland before you leave."

The boy, Lee Tu Su, felt his throat contract on hearing the steward's sympathetic words. Bidding farewell to the homeland, deprived of his country, his house and his home town by the Japanese, the boy thought that he could never live with the Japanese under the same sky. He made the firm resolve that once he had grown up, he would not tolerate the Japanese, not even a dog or cat, stirring under the Korean sky. Even before he had attained manhood, he took up arms and joined the guerrilla army.

It was evident that such a man would never join the "Minsaengdan".

But Lee Tu Su answered in the same way as the first man.

"Yes, I did join 'Minsaengdan'."

He said the same thing with the same attitude as Hunter Jang, when I called at the "Minsaengdan" prison in the valley of Lishugou, Xiaowangqing.

Repressing my surging resentment, I told him to explain in detail how he had joined the "Minsaengdan", if he ever had done so. He repeated stammering his written confession and statement. He spoke so logically that he left no room for doubt.

All the "Minsaengdan" suspects unanimously admitted their crimes.

With patience I asked Lee Tu Su again:

“Comrade, because of a Japanese dog, you fell into debt and lost your house and home town. A Japanese dog not only bit your flesh off, but also destroyed the livings of your family of more than ten people. Owing to a Japanese dog, you became more miserable than a dog. And you claim that as such you came to embrace the enemy of your own accord, and became a mad dog, which kills his compatriots and bites at his comrades. Can this be true? Is it true that you are acting like a lapdog of the enemy, and are not even fed?”

Lee Tu Su could say nothing, with tears trickling from his eyes. He trembled, sobbing and biting his lips. An oppressive long silence continued. I left that cursed log-cabin. The fresh air lightened my depressed heart and cooled my resentment. I felt very refreshed.

During my talks with the "Minsaengdan" suspects, I discovered something I could not understand.

Even when subjected to inhumane torture by the enemy, a torture mostly as cruel as the religious penalties meted in the Middle Ages, our comrades used to flatly deny their alleged crimes. Their resolve never faltered even in the face of death sentence. But these "Minsaengdan" suspects were saying to me, a communist, that they had committed crimes they had not committed. How could I explain this?

Walking up and down the forest, I wondered why they were giving me such a suicidal answer. They were

not "Minsaengdan" members any more than the sky is the earth. Why, then, were they saying that they had joined the "Minsaengdan" and admitting of their own accord that they had committed crimes?

Park Chang Gil, a boy in Gayahe, and Hunter Jang in Macun also insisted that their false statements were true. What caused this absurd state of affairs?

When they were first suspected, they all denied. But their true statements brought them even greater miseries. Their sincerity was taken for hypocrisy and their true hearts for deception and their honesty for craftiness. The more true words they uttered, the more they had been incriminated and the harder they had been tortured.

What incoherence would take place, when brutal tortures and mental afflictions reached a limit?

What was the use of living, distrusted and ill-treated by revolutionary comrades, who had shared weal and woe under the same roof for years? If they had wished to escape death, they could have abandoned their weapons, defected from the mountain and signed a surrender document or become stooges of the enemy. But how could they have, with a communist conscience, turned their coats? They must have abandoned themselves, leaving everything to their fates.

Stupid misunderstanding and distrust from their own comrades-in-arms had driven one hundred stout guerrillas to despair and self-abandon.

We can say that for a revolutionary collective united ideologically and morally on the basis of a common ideal, rather than pursuit of money or profit, confidence in one another is the lifeblood, which guarantees its unity and solid development. Thanks to mutual trust, communist morality runs high in the collective: comrades love one another, superiors take loving care of their subordinates, and subordinates respect their superiors.

For Korean revolutionaries, confidence is the starting-point of the communist relationship which links the past, present and future. In the past we rallied comrades and people on the basis of confidence and now we maintain the single-hearted unity of our society on the strength of love and trust. In our society based on collectivism, trust represents its strong foundation.

Our Party members and working people take the greatest pride in the trust displayed in them by their organization and comrades. But, when they think that their organization distrusts them and that their comrades shirk from them, they feel the worst anguish. Consequently I emphasize, whenever I meet with cadres, that we must work well with people.

Capitalists cannot live without money, whereas communists cannot live without trust. In our country trust is an integral part of social relations and the mode of existence of collectivism. Everybody who believes that his organization and comrades trust him can display unfathomable energy in the struggle for the Party and country. I think that the saying that trust produces loyal people and distrust traitors is based on

such a principle.

The bundle of "Minsaengdan" documents destroyed this principle of trust in our rank during the anti-Japanese war, when we waged a joint struggle in a foreign land. One can guess the great sense of confusion and damage infused by this bundle in the lives of fighters who had joined in the revolution, only with trust in the organization. In those days there was no distinct borderline between our camp and the enemy camp.

The enemy was everywhere around us, everywhere beyond a pass and across a river. Distrusted people could run away to the enemy area, saying, "Carry out the revolution yourselves." There was no way to prevent them. Branding innocent comrades in the revolution as "Minsaengdan" was tantamount to kicking them off to the enemy camp.

I could only save these desperate people by eliminating the stigma of "Minsaengdan" from them once and for all. Mere words were not enough to rehabilitate them. Action was needed. I went out of the forest and made for the log-cabin again. At that moment a woman soldier appeared suddenly before me from behind a tree. She was tall and beautiful with lustrous eyes. Apparently she was open-minded, but her face was bathed in tears.

"General, I am not a 'Minsaengdan' member!"

Her words surprised me and rejoiced me beyond measure.

"I was accused of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan', because I was married to a 'Minsaengdan' suspect. But he is not a 'Minsaengdan' member. Nor am I. How could we become spies of the Japanese? Both mother Jang Chol Gu and I were wrongly accused of being 'Minsaengdan' members because of our husbands."

This brave woman guerrilla was Kim Hwak Sil, who in later days was nicknamed "woman general" and received a gold ring as commendation for bayoneting six enemy soldiers at a stretch in the battle of Fusong county town.

As daughter of a slash-and-burn farmer, she had joined the guerrilla army in Chechangzi. The Dongnancha forest of the Chechangzi guerrilla zone was home to an arms repair shop managed by Park Yong Sun and a sewing unit run by Park Su Hwan. Kim Hwak Sil was a cook for 20 members of the arms repair shop and the sewing unit.

One day an accidental explosion occurred in the arms repair shop. The repair shop was enveloped in flames and powder fume in an instant. A young man, Kang WI Ryong, working in the repair shop after his discharge from the army, stigmatized as a "Minsaengdan" member, fell unconscious at the explosion, caused by mistake when he was salvaging cartridges. At this dangerous moment, frightened workmen rushed out in haste, but Kim Hwak Sil ran into the repair shop through the flames and took the faint man

out of the shop by carrying him on her back. Although Kang's burns were serious, the surgeon sterilized his burns, removed the burnt skin from his face, applied Vaseline to the burns and bandaged them. This constituted the only treatment he had received. T

hen, Kim Hwak Sil nursed him, melting beeswax on paper and applying it to the burns, removing the gums from his eyes and washing his feet. In the course of her devoted care of this young man, they fell in love with each other. They wanted to marry. But Kang Wi Ryong, suspected as a "Minsaengdan" member, because of the two accidents he had caused, was afraid of marrying for the trouble she might get into. They merely made a secret engagement. Park Yong Sun and Park Su Hwan encouraged them to marry, saying that they should not hesitate, as long as they loved each other. Encouraged, they went to the Chechangzi people's revolutionary government and registered their marriage. This marriage became an issue.

The purge committee regarded the marriage with a "Minsaengdan" member as a counterrevolutionary act, increasing the number of "Minsaengdan" members and benefiting the enemy. Leftist chauvinists separated Kim Hwak Sil from Kang Wi Ryong after a fortnight of marriage and banished her to Wangbabozi. They did not allow her to take part in organizational life, treating her as a criminal. Finally, they put her in a group of "Minsaengdan" suspects.

Nine months after her forced separation from her husband she heard that Kang was working at the arms repair shop near her, but she could not meet him, as Cao Ya-fan or Kim Hong Bom did not approve.

Some time later Kang Wi Ryong was compelled by Cao Ya-fan to go to Jiaohe with the 2nd Regiment. The expeditionary unit needed a man who could repair weapons and so it took him to Jiaohe.

"If Kang had been a 'Minsaengdan' member, I would not have taken him out of the flames, let alone married him. His father and brothers were killed by the enemy in the 'punitive' atrocities. He fought courageously. Even men of the Chinese national salvation army spoke up in his defense at his public trial."

I was thankful to her for her words.

Kim Hwak Sil, like Jang Chol Gu, was being treated as a criminal because of her marriage. I entered the log-cabin with Kim Hwak Sil. The people in the cabin did not stir and their heads remained low.

Looking around the room I said in an emphatic tone:

"Comrades, raise your heads. I have not come here to accuse you of any crime or judge you. I am here to find comrades who will go with me to Mt. Paektu to fight. I am here to see my comrades-in-arms and revolutionary comrades. But you comrades claim that you are all pro-Japanese traitors and reactionaries who cannot become my comrades-in-arms. I refuse to believe this. If you joined the 'Minsaengdan', why don't you go to the Japanese, rather than suffer hardships in mountains without eating or dressing

properly?

Why are you suffering all these hardships, instead of living in comfort with your wives or husbands in a well-heated room, engaging in farming? Tell me why. Have you borne your crosses for years merely for the Japanese imperialists? Have you endured the icy cold and snowstorms, eating and sleeping in the open in this desolate land of Manchuria to become a lapdog of the Japanese and kill off your fellow countrymen and comrades? Tell me, Comrade Lee Tu Su. Have you fought through all these hardships to become such an animal, like the Japanese dog which bit your thigh?"

Lee Tu Su burst into tears and cried.

"How can I... how can I be a Japanese lapdog? No, I am not their dog. I am not a 'Minsaengdan' member!"

Then, they all shouted, "No, nor am I."

They spoke spontaneously, as if at a meeting of indignation, condemning those who had incriminated them and giving vent to their grief caused by the "purge" campaign. Everyone gave free expression to their pent-up sorrow, waving their fists and shedding tears.

Towards the end of the meeting, I instructed Kim Hong Bom to fetch all the bundles of "Minsaengdan" documents and burn them. Kim Hong Bom was surprised.

"How can we destroy legal documents, without the permission of the purge committee which prepared them? You will get into a great trouble if you burn them."

Kim Hong Bom was an experienced political worker who had been a full-time Party worker even before joining the army. He was a graduate from Yanji Normal School. He was well-informed and experienced, but was incapable of creative thinking or judging and dealing with things at his own discretion.

"Don't plead the law as your excuse: instead go and fetch the bundles of 'Minsaengdan' documents. There is no reason not to do things on our own".

"These documents were drawn up following the procedure on the basis of the organization's decision. How can I answer if asked why I connived at the destruction of the documents? How can I answer when you, General, are gone?"

His face turned pale and his legs trembled. I did not blame him.

I, too, had never heard that any individual had burnt a legal document at his will with impunity. It would be a rare incident. But I was firm in my resolve to destroy these evil documents, which would bring nothing other than distrust and desperation to these one hundred "Minsaengdan" suspects.



I knew full well how dangerous my decision was.

In fact, it amounted to a great risk for me to deal with an issue, which could only be handled by people who had organized the "purge" campaign and drawn up the documents. The destruction of a piece of written evidence alone was a serious enough offence for me to be punished ten or a hundred times by the executors of the "purge" campaign, who had unlimited power to ascribe, if necessary, any undesirable occurrence to the work of the "Minsaengdan" and could invent any story. By way of reprisal, they could punish me as I had brought the issue of anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle even to the Comintern.

I told Kim San Ho to fetch the "Minsaengdan" documents.

My decision to destroy them was really audacious.

I was resolved to do anything to save one hundred men, even if it meant sacrificing myself.

To finish off the meeting after preparing to burn the "Minsaengdan" documents, I said: "It is difficult now to decide who is a 'Minsaengdan' member or who is not, as nobody can prove it. However, I can declare clearly today that there is no 'Minsaengdan' member here, as you all denied this fact. I believe what you have said. You must understand that you should start with a clean slate now. Your stained records will no longer exist.

"However, you should bear in mind that the value of a revolutionary is appraised not by his past, but by his actions at present. All of you now have a white paper. The priceless nature of the life and struggle you record on this paper is entirely dependant on your efforts.

"I believe that you will make a fresh start and record on this white paper the distinguished service you rendered to your fatherland, your fellow people and history. By declaring null and void any suspicion of your involvement in the 'Minsaengdan', which troubled you so much, I wish to announce that from now on all of you belong to the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army."

I selected a few people from "Minsaengdan" suspects and told them to pile up the documents on the ground, and then set fire to them.

While setting fire to the documents, I wished to bum away the dishonorable past of "Minsaengdan" suspects and hatred and mistrust in human beings, which are the root cause of all social evils.

The destruction of these papers is still vivid in my memory, after much more than half a century, no doubt because I wished for something too great and serious to be forgotten. When the bundles of papers turned into flames, the men and women burst into tears. They understood me.

They were born again as new men and women. Now they trusted, helped and loved one another. Even Kim Hong Bom became a new man.

Next day, I organized hunting for recreation. Aware of this fact, Kim Hong Bom brought a hundred rounds of ammunition, which he had kept in reserve for his own security. It was a great event, that he presented all the ammunition to people he had treated as prisoners until the previous day.

Everybody had been given only a useless weapon as taotong and three or four rusty cartridges. So their cartridges contained only wooden bullets. Apparently the people who had distrusted and treated them badly had been afraid that they would retaliate, if they had good rifles and ammunition.

Kim Hong Bom, looking at the ashes of the "Minsaengdan" documents, said:

"General, when you set fire to them yesterday, I trembled with fear and meekly left the place. I thought that I would be dismissed as a conspirator in a felony for my mere presence on the scene."

"Don't you tremble now?"

"As I believed that death in support of justice was honorable, I could dispel that fear." "Thank you for your thinking so."

"Don't mention it. I must thank you. General, you've transformed me into a new man. You've saved me as well"

I felt awkward at his flattery. He was older than I.

"Don't extol me, a young man, to the skies." As I said this, he shook his head.

"No. I'm not extolling you. I truly envy your large calibre and heart. I'm not flattering you."

"Enough of your flattery. Won't you go hunting with us today?"

Kim Hong Bom accepted my suggestion in a cheerful mood.

That day, hunting was very interesting. I lent my bodyguards' rifles to the former soldier suspects, so that each of them could try a shot with a good rifle.

That day we bagged seven or eight wild boars and roe deers, thanks to many chasers. In terms of woman soldier, Kim Hwak Sil distinguished herself by killing a roe deer at the first shot.

I made sure that supper was served that day in plenty by cooking the meat of hunted wild animals and

some maize and wheat flour, which still remained. The dinner was followed by a recreation party.

The dinner and recreation party held in the dilapidated log-cabin of the Sampho secret camp on Maanshan was simple, but it was a significant event.

Instead of organizing a new division with the 2nd Regiment as the backbone, the new division was born from the flames, which reduced the iniquitous documents of distrust into ashes.

News that the "Minsaengdan" documents were burnt and that a new division had been formed, spread quickly. Consequently, people in hiding came to us from everywhere. The Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Corps men from Helong, who were taking refuge in the Dajianchang valley, were the first to appear. They included Paek Hak Lim who became an orderly of the Headquarters later, as well as Kim Hye Sun, a renowned singer, nicknamed "oriole".

Park Rok Kum (real name Park Yong Hui) also joined us at that time. She was the first commander of the women's company, which provisionally existed in the new division.

The young men, who suffered from typhoid in Laomudingzi, Fusong County, were enlisted in the new division. I organized a platoon with them and appointed Kim Jong Phil its leader. Kim Ju Hyon and his fellows, who operated in the forest near Wudaoyangcha, Antu County, also joined us. Kim Thaek Hwan's small unit came to us from Chechangzi.

I organized regiments and companies with all the requisite formalities. I appointed Lee Tong Hak, nicknamed "hasty man" and Kim Thaek Hwan as company commanders, and Kim Ju Hyon as political instructor. Kim San Ho, who assumed the duty of regimental political commissar of the main force always smiled happily.

We were about fifteen, when we arrived in Maanshan, but our unit increased rapidly to hundreds of soldiers in Donggang.

We strove to improve the weapons and equipment of the newly-organized main force. I had already mentioned that most of the weapons of the "Minsaeng-dan" suspects were raotong. I organized groups of 10 to 15 men and appointed their leaders. Instructing them to prepare for fighting on their own, I said:

"You must obtain new rifles and ammunition within a month. The Japanese have lots of rifles. You can lie in ambush and launch surprise attacks on the enemy. You may bayonet or shoot them to capture weapons from them." Then each of them had a bayonet. They came back in a fortnight, rather than a month, carrying new rifles with the necessary ammunition. Some of them even captured machine-guns.

I organized a regiment with these men as the backbone and later on I drew on this experience to organize the 6th Division and the 2nd Directional Corps, by recruiting many new men and women to fight against the Japanese imperialists.

During the battle of Xigang, which followed the attack on Xinancha, we achieved our aim of comprehensively re-equipping the main force.

In Xigang there was a regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army. We had our eyes on the modern weapons of this regiment. As this was a virtually inaccessible isolated area, surrounded by a vast forest, it was favorable for our surprise attack. Aware of such weak points, the enemy had built a wall of logs three times higher than a human being around the barracks as well as gun emplacements at its four corners.

As it was difficult to break through the wall from any direction, I decided to create confusion in the enemy's position, by launching a fire attack and forcing them to surrender. The enemy barracks consisted of wooden buildings. When it was dark, I ordered Kim Thaek Ryong and other skilled grenadiers to set fire to the roofs of the enemy barracks by throwing oiled and kindled cotton balls at them.

The roofs, which were still wet from early summer drizzle, did not catch fire easily, but the fire attack was successful. Our soldiers instantly shouted, "If you surrender, you will not be killed. Lay down your weapons and come out from behind the wall" But the enemy refused and put up a stubborn defense. I sent some men to a house, located nearest to the enemy's underground gun emplacement to dig a tunnel from the kitchen of this house to the target. Meanwhile, I sent scouts to find the mother-in-law of the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army. We advised the old woman to persuade her son-in-law to stop his reckless resistance and hand over their weapons.

The old woman disappeared through the wall and came back with a letter from her son-in-law, which indicated that he would surrender if allowed to escape to Fusong with half his men. I rejected his proposal and demanded unconditional surrender. After seeing her son-in-law again, the old woman said that he was ready to reduce the number of soldiers accompanying him. Obviously he was delaying the negotiation process in the hope of external reinforcements.

We had already dug half of the tunnel to blow up a gun emplacement. I showed the old woman the tunnel and explosives and asked her to convey our ultimatum that, if he did not surrender we would blow up all the emplacements.

The old woman went through the wall a third time and came back to me with a smile. She said that her son-in-law requested that he be allowed to take only two bodyguards with him. I agreed.

He lined his men and gathered their weapons in one place before escaping with two guards through the northern gate. All these weapons fell into our hands.

If we had not organized the new division, we could not have thought of attacking such a big county town as Fusong and could not have won victory after victory on the Yalu River and around Mt. Paektu.

Contrary to my expectations, the 2nd Regiment was unable to help us organize and consolidate the new division. Only when we had established ourselves on Mt. Paektu, did we meet over six months later the 2nd Regiment we had planned to see at Maanshan. By that time our main-force division had become fully-fledged.

Although their arrival was belated, my reunion with Oh Jung Hup, Kwon Yong Byok, Kim Phyong and other close comrades-in-arms marked the happiest event for all of us, because we were able to share board and bed with them. Kang Wi Ryong also reached us safely and joined the new division. It was fortunate for me to think that the last scar would be removed from Kim Hwak Sil's heart.

The day after his arrival, I summoned Kang Wi Ryong.

"Comrade Kim Hwak Sil is your wife, isn't she?" This tall man went crimson. Apparently he felt awkward admitting that he had a wife.

"Comrade Hwak Sil is not here. She is working in the sewing unit in the Hengshan secret camp in the rear several miles away. Go and see her there. I will give you a guide," He hesitated smiling awkwardly and replied that he would go and see her later.

"If I send for her, it will take you twice as long to meet her. So you might as well go there yourself."

"I would prefer to meet her later. Thank you."

Kang's indecisive attitude was a big disappointment to me.

"You may not mind, but I cannot remain indifferent to her loss of weight because of you. Go at once and don't make any more excuses.

He dropped his head for a while and looked at me imploringly with tears in his eyes. He said that he could not go and see his wife, before he had been appointed to a unit and that he had taken up arms for the revolution which he considered his first duty to attend.

I felt obliged to give him an excuse for going to his wife. "I will assign you a task. You should take over to the sewing unit the women soldiers who came here with the 2nd Regiment, and make cotton-padded military uniforms there. You will be punished if you return before finishing this task."

Kang Wi Ryong obeyed the orders.

This was how the couple who had been separated against their will for a long time by the Left-wing chauvinists met again with deep emotion.

The destruction of the "Minsaengdan" documents at Maanshan gave birth to new men, a new division and new love.

Thanks to our trust in people, we won everything.

I can say that such trust generated absolute and unconditional loyalty to the leadership of the Korean revolution in all our revolutionary ranks and further consolidated genuine ideological and moral unity behind this leadership during the struggle.

Following the birth of the main force of the KPRA, the historical roots of our single-hearted unity were irrevocably established in the minds of the Korean communists thanks to the values of trust, love and benevolence.

These "Minsaengdan" suspects in Maanshan remained loyal to the revolution until the very last moments of their lives, devoting their unstained consciences and warm patriotic hearts to time and history.

They rendered distinguished service which will shine on for ever in the history of our national liberation revolution.

## 12.2. Twenty Yuan

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While Leftists examined the "Minsaengdan" papers in the secret western camp of Maanshan, dozens of children suffered from illness, dying and shivering with cold and hunger in the shade of the secret eastern camp of Maanshan, where the spring thaw had still not set in.

Most of these children were orphans who, with their elders, had experienced for years trials and tribulations in Chechangzi, the last stronghold of the revolution in Jiandao. After the evacuation of guerrilla zones, they came via Naitoushan to this rear secret camp in south Manchuria, where the enemy's atrocities occurred less frequently, under the protection of a people's revolutionary army unit which was engaged in a westward march. Some children in the Maanshan secret camp were Children's Corps members from Yanji.

It was laudable that, when the guerrilla zones were evacuated, they came to this remote place of Fusong, instead of wandering in the enemy area, begging or picking pockets on roadsides, at shops or in markets.

But how had these children, now under the protection of communists in the secret camp of the people's revolutionary army come to be victims of hunger and cold? Did the people in charge of them suddenly become cruel to them, acting like stepfathers or stepmothers? Or did the children become spoilt and cry or grumble at a small difficulty?

No, neither of these was true.

What, then, did their crying mean? Did it represent an inarticulate warning that their physical pain from cold and hunger had reached the limits of endurance? No, they had frequently experienced such hardship in the guerrilla zones. Our Children's Corps members did not resemble rich men's children, who would complain about such hardships. Such cold and hunger were overcome by these children, who had been orphaned and even bereft of their brothers.

However, it was true that they were living in tears. One day when the meeting for the organization of the new division was about to close, Park Yong Sun slipped a note into my hand. The note said:

"General, can you spare time for the Children's Corps members in Maanshan after the meeting? They are now in dire straits. I hope you will visit the Maanshan secret camp with me after organizing the new division. The children are eager to see you, General."

Kim Jong Suk, too, gave me a detailed account of their miseries when I reached the secret camp later. Many of the orphans in Maanshan had been under her guidance before. She had been a Children's Corps instructor, when she lived in Fuyandong. She said that the children were very fond of her, when she was in the guerrilla zone.

Naturally Kim Jong Suk cared about the children. When the people suffered from famine in the Chechangzi guerrilla zone, she became closer to the children. Then she became cook for the corps headquarters. The starving children used to look in on her every night and ask for food. Sometimes they slipped into the kitchen and ransacked sideboards and rice jars.

On those occasions she would give them scorched rice or pine bark cakes out of her own share which she had kept in secret. She used to miss one meal every day for the hungry children.

The Children's Corps members, who had suffered all sorts of hardships in Chechangzi, never forgot her benevolence. When these children came to Naitoushan with the guerrillas, Kim Jong Suk directed the Children's Corps there. I understood the reason for her tears, as she explained the children's miseries in Maanshan.

The dire existence of dozens of orphans in the care of communists in the revolutionary army camp, far from the battlefield, constituted an alarming accident which must not be overlooked. I grew nervous. What trouble made them await me so expectantly?

Children's tears cry out for justice. When brute force mocks or tramples upon justice, they declaim their indignation. This crying indicates the young souls' denunciation of all those who offend and maltreat them. It protests and condemns all injustice and also complains of their damaged dignity and violated rights. Their tears forewarn an imminent disaster and appeal for their delivery from it. Their crying is their strongest appeal to all those who love or can love them. People listen to this crying with anxiety, as the love and care of children represents the most elementary human qualities.

The Children's Corps members in Maanshan comprised the sons and daughters, our fallen comrades-in-arms left in our care. They were worth their weight in gold. In wills, their parents entrusted us with the future of their children. They wanted us to raise them as revolutionaries, just as they would have done. We shouldered a heavy responsibility for training them as defenders of justice, the soundest and best men in the world, and this noble task reflected the demands of our conscience.

My concern over the fate of the children in Maanshan was not due to human sympathy or motivated by petty bourgeois sentimentalism. It was the right and duty handed down to me by their parents when they parted this world. Even if their parents had been alive, we would not have remained indifferent to their tears. This was the humanistic feeling of a communist.

In communist human relations, the son of my comrade-in-arms is my son and vice versa. When I am ill, my comrade also feels my pain and vice versa, and when I am hungry my comrade also feels my hunger and vice versa - this communist ethics and morality transforms the communist into the most beautiful human being in the world.

While rescuing his comrade's daughter from drowning, the chairman of the management board of side-



line fishing teams discovered that his daughter was also floundering in water. An ordinary man would have rescued his own daughter first and then the other girl. Even if he had done so, he would not have been blamed. But the chairman saved his comrade's daughter first, and then swam to his own daughter, but she was already dead. The villagers ran to him and consoled him in his sorrow, but he said calmly as he looked at the delivered girl: "I do not think my daughter is dead. This girl is also my daughter."

Communists make the ultimate self-sacrifices, which are inconceivable to narrow-minded or selfish people, but they themselves regard it as nothing unusual, blush and feel shy at compliments. This is the personal charm of communists and a particular virtue of Koreans. Our original plan was to advance straight to Changbai through Fusong, after organizing the new division. However, the miserable state of the children in Maanshan led us to change our original plan. I would not have been free of anxiety without seeing them even if I had gone to Changbai.

After the meeting at Mihunzhen I went to see the Children's Corps members who were in the Maanshan secret eastern camp. Park Yong Sun, head of the Maanshan arms repair shop, guided me to the camp. I was grateful to him for volunteering to guide me of his own accord.

It provided a good opportunity for me to know him inside out. Our friendship, which had started in Macun was consolidated by this reunion. At that time he told me the long history of his family: it could serve as the source for a multi-volume novel.

His ancestors were the first Koreans to settle in the foreign land of Jingucun in the 1860s, the pioneers who popularized the Korean method of farming in that area. In his father's generation, his house was furnished with a simple blacksmith's. As a boy, he worked as his father's assistant at the blacksmith's. It subsequently made him famous as an excellent technician, repairing and manufacturing weapons. During the farmers' slack season, his father would often go hunting with a gun.

When he was 17 years old, he became interested in hunting as a hobby. Because he had to hunt now and then without his father's knowledge, he could not enjoy it to the full. His father kept the hunting gun under his strict control. He allowed the eldest son to go hunting, but did not allow Park Yong Sun, the second son, to touch the gun. Even if he merely touched the barrel, his father would shout, scowling at him. But when he was 18, the situation changed. He killed a tiger with one shot, which old hunters from Jingucun failed to do, although they tried several times.

He pulled a bristle from the tiger's moustache and brought it home in high spirits. It was a hard-gotten hunter's license of his own. All the villagers came to his house to see the tiger's moustache. His father inevitably recognized this young hunter's marksmanship. Since then, the old hunters of Jingucun called him "Hunter Park". Needless to say, he was allowed to hunt. By the time he started underground revolutionary work, after taking a job in the Jirin Coal-mine and the Baogelazi Mine, he had hunted hundreds of wild animals with the gun.

Hearing his account of the event, which had led to his nickname "Hunter Park", I thought that if he had

become a sniper of the people's revolutionary army, rather than a workman in the arsenal, he would have killed more enemy troops than the wild animals which he had killed. But I was surprised to learn that he was more skilled in smithery than marksmanship. In a combat unit he was regarded as an ordinary soldier, whereas in the arsenal he was regarded as indispensable.

Park Yong Sun joined my company with several pheasants in a straw bag. His bag full of pheasants reminded me with deep emotion of Lee Gwang who had come to Mingyuegou carrying on his back a heavy rice knapsack laden with several pheasants.

"Comrade Park, do you go hunting nowadays?" I asked him pointing at the bag. He hitched up his bag wrinkling his face.

"I gave up hunting a long time ago. I caught these pheasants with a noose. I could not go and see the children empty-handed, so I caught them."

"You clearly love the children greatly. That's laudable."

"Do I love them?" He queried and for some reason made a wry face.

"I am not worthy of such a compliment. I am a coward."

"Coward? Why?"

"I am ashamed to think about it. Nevertheless I must confess to you, Comrade Commander. Once I called on the children in Maanshan with a dozen hares I had caught. How they were rejoiced seeing the hares! I was pleased, too. Then the head of the political department of the 1st Division suddenly blocked my way and rebuked me, saying 'Who are you? Why are you hanging around here without permission? Who told you to offer such charity? Don't you know that they have been labeled as suspects?' He dressed me down and waved me away as if I were a fly."

"What happened next?"

"I returned to the arsenal with the hares."

"Were you scared?"

"Yes, I was afraid and indignant. Now I have sufficient courage to talk big, but I dared not to in those days. If the head of the political department had branded me a counterrevolutionary, who helped young 'Minsaengdan' members, that would have been the end of me. But fortunately there was no such branding. Subsequently I could not visit the children's village. I am ashamed of my actions."

Hunter Park frowned at Kim Hong Born, head of the political department of the 1st Division, who, wearing leggings and straw sandals, was walking ahead of us in the snow. "What do you feel now? Are you still afraid of him?"

"No, I have nothing to fear. I feel strong by your side. It disgusts me to think of those years of the oppressive 'Minsaengdan' fuss."

"It was literally a nightmare. The younger generation will bow to you for the mere visit you paid to the children taking the hares with you. How noble and beautiful it is to love and sympathize with children!"

When I said this, his strained look was relaxed and he strode along. I was tearfully grateful to this stem, brusque and dignified man for his candid confession: it was typical of the diary entry of a literary young girl. The upright and pure character, expressed in his words, behaviour and kindness, moved me to the heart.

If anyone asks me when I am most happy and joyful, I will respond:

"Joyful and happy events occur every day in my life, because I live optimistically all my life among people who are the most independent politically, most progressive ideologically and most civilized and pure-hearted culturally and morally, in a country, which creates the most beautiful and ideal life in the world. Every day and hour of my life is full of joy and happiness.

"It gives me particular pleasure or happiness to be among the people, discover amongst them excellent people who can set an example for the whole country and debate state affairs, their living and our future.

"It also gives me great happiness to be among the children, we call the flower buds of the country."

I can say that this is my lifelong view of happiness.

The talk with Park Yong Sun no doubt gave me such satisfaction, because of my view of happiness. Park Yong Sun was one such exemplary revolutionary and model conscientious man, I discovered in life. His practice in subsequent years proved once again that he was a man of unusually strong revolutionary principles, who never compromised with injustice and was fair and square in all his dealings.

In 1959 Park toured different places in northeast China, leading a group of visitors to the old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. One hot summer night his group lodged in the front room of a simple, cozy farmhouse. The farmers in the village papered walls of the room and spread new mats for the guests from the neighboring country, who were continuing a laborious expeditionary tour every day following the footprints of their forerunners.

At midnight, however, some group members, who were sensitive to bed-bugs, left the room one after another with their beddings, owing to the bed-bugs and spent the night on a straw mat spread out in the

yard. Park Yong Sun alone remained in the room all night. The group members considered that the headman was either an unusually sound sleeper or immune to blood-sucking.

Next morning he grouped all the members and criticized them severely:

"You expeditionary group representatives of one country have slept on the straw mat in the open air like a vagrant tribe, unable to endure the pestering of bed-bugs. Don't you realize that you have rejected the hospitality of this village people, who bothered to provide us with good lodging? Haven't you any sense of honor or patience to endure such inconveniences? If you disgrace our delegation again, I will send you back to the homeland, as I deem it a serious offence."

Only then did the group members realize that this upright and taciturn man, a veteran of guerrilla war, had remained in the room, despite the pestering bed-bugs, because he could not afford to abuse the host's hospitality. I subsequently heard this anecdote from the group members.

On our arrival at the secret camp, the children crowded out of the log-cabin vying with one another shouting "General!" The voices of the children, ringing like a silver bell under the sky of the secret camp evoked strong emotions in my body and soul. I hurried to them.

They were the children I came to see. They were the children who followed the revolutionary army to this place, treading the thorny path across the steep mountains, deep forests and snow-fields, determined to avenge the enemy for killing their parents and brothers by beating, bayoneting and burning them. They were the children, who had awaited us in sorrow through the winter in this merciless, desolate mountain, in a prison without a wire fence, falsely accused of relations with the "Minsaengdan".

The national chauvinists and Left opportunists, who had become used to putting the slogans of ultra-revolutionary "principle" and "class spirit" above the interests of the people, mocking and maltreating the masses, turned their faces away from the children claiming that they were a burden of the revolutionary army. Afraid that the location of the secret camp would be exposed to the enemy if the children resided nearby, they built a small kingdom for their self-protection and were living in seclusion in a deep forest.

And they forbade the children from approaching edges of the forest. These "stepfathers" had not given them even a handful of grain or a piece of cloth, although they knew full well that the children were living on grass roots, shivering with cold in the severe winter cold.

Even the children's sympathizers as well as the individuals who dressed their wounds with ointment and bandaged them, blew warm breath on their frozen cheeks and hands, patted them with affection and cried with the children when they were crying, had been registered on the list of "Minsaengdan" suspects and persecuted.

On the way to Maanshan, leading the Children's Corps members, Kim Rak Chon, a crack shot, who became acting commander of the Independent Regiment after Yun Chang Born's death, had suits made

for them from the fabrics, kept by the workers of the regiment's supply department, as he could not remain indifferent to the ragged children. The children thanked him tearfully.

For this kindness, however, he was accused of being a "Minsaengdan" member and executed. Not a trace of human or communist fragrance remained in this secret camp, where sympathy for children was regarded as a crime and rejection was considered as a merit. Scores of eyeballs glistening with tears and surging towards me, accused all those who had lost human nature and discarded even elementary human morals.

The children running at full speed towards me suddenly hesitated. The tallest leading boy halted in the middle of the open space as if he had come across an obstacle. The other children following him stopped abruptly, like waves breaking on a rock, and looked at me from a distance. Seeing them hesitating in a crowd, I asked Park Yong Sun in a low voice: Comrade Park, why are they hesitating like that?"

"They may feel ashamed. Look at their shabby appearances.

I was struck by their ragged appearances. They were virtually naked. Their burnt, torn and worn-out clothes were in tatters. Threatened with death and starved for months, they all looked pale.

The miserable sight of these young sufferers reminded me of my brother Yong Ju, whom I had never seen since our farewell at Xiaoshahe. Yong Ju was about the same age. My youngest brother saw me off in the waist-deep reed field, choking down his sobs together with another brother Chol Ju: that sight was still fresh in my memory. I regretted that I had not worried about my brothers, not writing to them for four years ever since leaving Xiaoshahe, entrusting the future of my brothers to neighbours, who were neither relatives or even carried the same surname.

When she met me in the Donggang secret camp in spring 1936, Kim Hye Sun told me that Yong Ju was directing a Children's Corps organization in Antu and once went to Chechangzi leading a children's art troupe in spring or summer 1935 and gave performances staying there several days. She said that she cooked for art troupe members at that time Claiming that his song was impressive, Kim Hye Sun recited from memory the words of the song. The Saenal Children's Union and the Paeksan Youth League members used to sing this song when I directed the art troupe activity in Fusong. The song reads:

Dear friends, participants in this meeting!

Please take care of your backs and shoulders.

What fun it would be

If you strained them with laughter?

Then you won't need the medical men Hua Tuo and Pian Que. Let's better do a jig. But then, shoulders

can strain from dancing. So, take care of your backs, participants in this meeting!

Hua Tuo and Pian Que were famous doctors in ancient China.

I was greatly relieved by the news she brought me in Donggang. However, while visiting the children in Maanshan, I had not learned of the whereabouts of my brother. Looking at the sad eyes of the children, who crowded vacantly like late autumn fallen leaves, which were blown into a corner by the wind, I thought that my Yong Ju was also shivering with cold and that he would go hungry in rags like those children and miss this unkind elder brother.

How could those cruel and hateful men label as "Minsaengdan" members children who had followed them to this mountain with a determination to take part in the revolution? Surely they could realize that they were not and could not have become "Minsaengdan" members. Had they no mercy or sympathy to feel pity for them and take care of them?

How could those men, who had pledged to dedicate their lives to human emancipation, remain indifferent, while children got into this mess, children who were the weakest human beings and needed care more than anyone else?

Pang Jong Hwan, a writer and famous champion of the children's movement, who coined the word Orini (child) and established "Children's Day" for the first time in Korea appealed to the world in his article Promise on Children's Day:

"Treat children better than grown-ups. Adults can be compared to roots and children to sprouts. If roots sit on sprouts, because roots are more important, then the tree will die. Only when the roots raise the sprouts, can the tree (the family) thrive..."

This is one paragraph of the leaflet he wrote and distributed on the occasion of "Children's Day", May 1, 1923. Every word of the appeal reveals his warm affection for children.

When I attended Changdok School, my teacher Kang Yang Uk often said similar things to the parents of schoolchildren. I am not sure whether he copied them from the Promise on Children's Day or adopted them in his own way. Anyhow, I saw truth in his words whenever he said to the schoolchildren's parents and brothers that one should respect children and that otherwise one cannot enjoy respect from them.

Their appeal to treat children better than grown-ups is the voice of a noble idea which can ring out from the souls of people who love the younger generation more than themselves. How strong an appeal to love for children is the famous saying "A world without children would be a world without sun"!

All great men in the world, who left their names in history ardently loved children. It was not only Karl Liebknecht's writings, which revealed that Marx was a faithful friend of children. The anecdote of how this great man used to become a "horse" or "coach" for his charming children is used throughout the

world as a good topic of conversation. People still remember Pestalozzi of Switzerland, because he was an excellent educator who devoted all his property and life to children.

All the great men of the East and West recalled by mankind were children's true friends, teachers and fathers, who regarded love for children as the noblest of all virtues. Why did the masters of Maanshan, who were neither nobles nor bourgeoisie, the communists in this secret camp, who preached humanity and chanted human emancipation whenever they opened their mouths, make the children so miserable?

I could not repress my surging indignation. It was appalling to see that pure young souls, who had considered the revolution more sacred than their own lives, had been trampled upon mercilessly in their buds. I was one of those who knew them inside out. I knew better than anyone else how these children had overcome famine in Chechangzi together With adults, how they carried rice balls to the people's revolutionary army in Naitoushan and stood guard day and night to help them. Each child's biography remained fresh in my memory like a story.

The experience of nine-year-old Lee O Song from Baicaogou, who was now shivering with cold like a rain-wet chick under the shoulder of a taller boy, covering his exposed knees with frozen hands, eloquently spoke of the grave nature of the hardships experienced by these children. He had already witnessed mass starvation in Chechangzi. When hungry, like other children he found frogs in hibernation or dug out seeds in the field, when the spring sowing season ended.

Lee O Song's father died of hunger in Chechangzi. He picked barley rears in the field, rubbed them between his hands and placed a small handful of grain into his father's mouth, but could not prevent his father's death.

With his younger sister, he overcame spring famine before the barley harvest season, by living on herb roots and tree barks, and left Chechangzi following the people's revolutionary army, which withdrew to Naitoushan. But he was also treated as a "Minsaengdan" suspect because he was a brother of Kim Rak Chon's wife.

On the long march to Naitoushan, fourteen Children's Corps members, headed by Son Myong Jik, fully demonstrated the indomitable fighting spirit and loyalty to the revolution, which they cultivated through their organizational life. Waist-deep snow and steep mountains blocked their way forward and the "punitive" troops followed on their heels.

On the first day of their march, they ran out of food. They appeased their hunger by chewing pine needles or making snow balls and licking them. When a maize cake was divided among fourteen for one meal, it was decent food. When they slept in the open at night, Son Myong Jik, Ju To Il, Kim Thae Chon and other older boys from higher classes sheltered the children under ten years of age in their arms from the wind and kept watch, snatching a short sleep in turns.

Son Myong Jik, head of the Children's Corps, demonstrated a distinguished organizational ability and

leadership, when looking after the ranks. Ever since his days in Wangyugou, he worked well with the Children's Corps members. Once he became engaged in underground work in the enemy area led by Kim Jae Su. He had begun learning classics in the village school at the age of seven and mastered a primer of Chinese characters and Myongsim Pogam before he was ten and moreover was clever and quick in visual learning. Consequently he was the right boy for underground work. In his Children's Corps days he managed to oust seven reactionary teachers including a Japanese language teacher from his school by mobilizing the organization and thereby won the confidence of revolutionaries from his early days.

His family was made up of true revolutionaries: it had inherited a patriotic spirit through generations. His grandfather was a commander of the righteous volunteers around the time of "annexation of Korea by Japan". His father Son Hwa Jun was a revolutionary fighter, engaged in secret work as the head of one hundred households in the enemy's administration. Kim Pong Sok (Son Pong Sok), a male cousin of his father, was my faithful orderly, who died several hours before the liberation of the country, while leading a small unit's operations.

What crime had these children committed, if any? They followed us to this remote mountain blowing on their frozen hands, saying that they would follow the revolutionary army even if they had to die. They would snatch a light sleep around a campfire, covering their bodies with dried leaves longing for the liberated homeland, while the rich men's children dined on all kinds of delicacies on a table inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Why couldn't we dress these brave buds with decent cotton clothes and serve them with bean gruel, even if we could not afford to supply them with luxurious food and clothing?

"Hey, boys and girls, raise your heads. You are not to blame for your worn-out clothing. Come quick."

I approached the children with open arms.

I had hardly finished speaking when tens of children wept loudly, surrounding me.

I went into the barracks with the crying children. Four or five children who were bedridden from illness for several days still lying, huddled up in a corner of the room without a blanket. I inquired into the disease they were suffering from: nobody replied. The soldiers guarding the camp said that it was an internal disease, but they were not any more specific. Only Park Yong Sun knew full well that they were suffering from heartbreak. What disease could they name, when they themselves had branded the innocent children as "Minsaengdan" suspects?

I called my orderly and told him to take out my blanket from the knapsack. It was my one and only blanket, which we had captured when attacking a Japanese supply convoy in Wangqing. I thought I would feel much easier, if I covered the sick children with even one blanket. The men took the hint from my words and bustled about to remove their blankets from their knapsacks. I returned the blankets to them.

"Comrades, take them back. Can my mind be warm, even if I cover myself with one hundred blankets,



when these children are ill in bed and shiver with cold? You'd better take care of them, before you become concerned about me."

The supply department members of the secret camp dropped their heads on hearing my words. I continued in a thick voice:

I cannot help pondering about the revolutionary view of worth. Why did we start the revolution and why do we still carry on the revolution overcoming all hardships? We have embarked on the revolutionary path, not because we want to destroy something, but because we love people. We rose up in revolt against the hateful world to free people from all sorts of injustice and abuses, defend humanity and safeguard all the wealth and beauty created by mankind. If we had not sympathized with the oppressed class, if we had not felt compassion for the people, who were crying in sorrow as a ruined nation, and if we had not loved our parents, wives and children who were living in poverty deprived of all rights, we would have returned to our well-heated homes, unable to endure the hardships even for a single day.

How can we communists leave children in such a miserable state? Your unstained love for the people, the love you cherished, when you set out on the road of revolution, began to cool down. This is what I regret now.

In a sense, our revolution represents a revolution for the younger generation. How can we claim to be working for the revolution and be proud of being communists, without feeding children properly or providing them with decent clothing?

The children are the flowers of the working class, the nation and mankind. It is the noble duty of us communists to cultivate these flowers with due care. The future of the revolution depends on our education of children. The revolution is not carried out by one generation: it is consummated through many generations. Today we are responsible for the revolution; tomorrow, however, these children will be the main force, bearing the destiny of the revolution. Consequently, if we are to be loyal to the Korean revolution right to the end, we must raise stoutly our successors, who will carry forward our revolution.

Moreover, they are the bereaved children of our comrades-in-arms. For the sake of our loyalty to these comrades-in-arms, we must value and take good care of these children.

If anybody turns away from the children for fear of persecution by higher authorities, how can he hold out his chest to the muzzle of an enemy's rifle? You have become unconsciously stupid, recoiled in a shell of self-protection, instead of sympathizing with suffering people. Comrades, please ask yourselves one question. Is this the behavior of communists who are out to transform the world?

If you despise children, you despise yourselves. If we neglect them or shy away from their difficulties for the sake of our own self-protection, posterity will not remember us in the remote future. Our efforts for the children will affect their attitude towards us after many decades as well as the looks of the country they planned to build. The more warmly we love them, the more prosperous, civilized and beautiful the

homeland will become in future.

Comrades, by loving the children we immediately mean that we love the future. Thanks to the efforts of these children, our country will be built into a garden, which is bright with flowers. Let us take better care of the younger generation and train them for the bright future of our country and humanity.

This was the gist of my speech in the barracks that day.

I can say that this is my view on the younger generation, a view I have maintained throughout my 80 years. I still feel the greatest value of life and happiness, when valuing and taking care of them.

What pleasure would we find in our lives without children? This belief motivated us to bring up the pencil problem, as an item on the agenda of the first session of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea and prompted us to celebrate New Year's Day with children every year. Our love for the younger generation is also expressed in our respect and love for the teachers who educate the children.

One of the first Cabinet members of our Republic was Minister of Public Health Lee Pyong Nam. He was a famous doctor and a conscientious patriot, engaged in medical service as a pediatrician since the pre-liberation days. He came to Pyongyang from Seoul to attend the April North-South Joint Conference. At our request he became the first Minister of Public Health of our Republic. He was distinguished by his warm love for children and great skill in dealing with them.

The pediatrician always carried a small toy bell in his pocket to soothe crying babies. By jingling the toy bell several times, he could calm crying babies, who were suffering from recurrent disease and examine them easily. Thanks to humorous looks which outdid any clown, and various jocularities which would make anyone burst their sides with laughing, he flattered his baby patients and treated them in an instant. This great skill always gained him respect and friendship from his patients.

On one occasion my daughter Kyong Hui caught measles and suffered greatly: a rash did not appear on her skin. Worse still her disease was complicated by pneumonia, due to careless exposure to the wind. She cried all the time, calling out for her mother. Whenever his younger sister cried out with pain, her brother Kim Jong Il would say, "You must not call for mother in the presence of father." The pediatricians of the government hospital were at a loss what to do. At that moment Health Minister Lee Pyong Nam came to her sickbed.

He recognized the symptoms without even taking out a stethoscope and diagnosed her disease. "Pneumonia came before measles," he said. In accordance with the Minister's prescriptions, the pediatricians gave her oxygen inhalation. Kyong Hui regained consciousness from a coma within a single day, bursting out in tears. At the same time a rash appeared.

I asked Lee Pyong Nam, "Doctor Lee, how is she? Why is she crying?"

"That's a good sign. When they get better, the children burst into tears. Your daughter will recover completely within three days."

Lee Pyong Nam took out his pocket watch - the frame and string were all made of gold and an amber toy was attached to it - and waved it before her nose. He used the gold watch as a sedative with the toy bell to soothe infant patients. My daughter stopped crying and smiled. She completely recovered in three days. I admired his skill.

"Indeed, it's wonderful. Your prediction comes true every time. You are more a friend of children and child psychologist than doctor. In my opinion pediatricians should love children more passionately than anyone else."

"Yes, they should. A man who does not love children should not apply his stethoscope to their chests."

I met Lee Pyong Nam in Kosanjin in autumn 1950. He remained unchanged, save for one thing.

He had a shabby pocket watch without String, took it out and looked at it when necessary. I asked him what had become of the bright gold watch which he had used to soothe Kyong Hui. He replied that he had contributed it to the country to assist in the procurement of military equipment. I was greatly moved by his patriotic devotion and unstained conscience, which involved a sacrifice of his all for victory in war. As his watch was so shabby, I subsequently gave him a new wristwatch.

These facts proved to me that only those who love children wholeheartedly can be true patriots and only those who love human beings sincerely can be real patriots. Love for the younger generation is the most devoted and dynamic kind of human love; it is the purest and most beautiful of all paeans dedicated to humanity. Communists create such paeans and serve and fight for them.

If there had been one friend of children like Lee Pyong Nam in Maanshan, the children would not have been driven to such a plight.

I thought that now the time had come to spend the 20 yuan my mother had given me before she passed away. She had told me to use the money only in an adversity, which could not be overcome without money. She had earned it by working on hire until her fingers bled.

My boyhood was spent without any knowledge of money. My father never gave money to his children. When I needed notebooks or pencils, he asked my mother to buy them, forbidding me to go to a shop or market. My father held that if one became interested in money in childhood, one would grow up a miser and snob devoid of regard for one's country and nation.

One day, my father, who was bedridden, suggested going sightseeing and came out of the house taking me along. It was an unprecedented event for my bedridden father to go onto the street with me. He had occasionally taken me along when he needed an interpreter, because he did not speak Chinese well. I was

a faithful interpreter for my father.

"Apparently, something urgent has happened, as he only leaves the house when he is seriously ill. Why is he in a hurry? Whom is he going to meet?" I thought as I helped my father out of the bed.

Only when I was outside did I remember that it was my birthday. As my father was sick in bed, I had no time to think of my birthday.

After looking round the street, my father unexpectedly went into a shop taking me by the hand. This outing went beyond all my expectations. "Why has he brought me to this shop?" When I looked at a showcase, silently preoccupied by this thought, my father told me to choose a pocket watch. This shop displayed a lot of pocket watches; some of them bore portraits of Sun Yat-sen.

I chose one without Sun's portrait and my father paid 3 yuan 50 fen for it.

He said in a serious tone of voice:

"You are old enough to have a watch. A man fighting to win back his country must value two things. One is his comrades and the other is time. I give you this birthday present in the hope that you will value time. Keep it well."

I accepted his words as meaning that I had become a man.

Somehow I felt that I was hearing his last wish. He apparently felt that his days were numbered. In this frame of mind, he gave me the watch and also passed on to me the independence cause which he had devoted all his life to. The event amounted to a celebration of my manhood.

Less than two months later, he passed away. I subsequently entered the Whasung Uisuk School with this watch, met like-minded people there and organized the Down-with-Imperialism Union. During the guerilla struggle, I followed my daily routine by this watch and set the time of attacks and rendezvous by this watch.

Around the time of the Pochonbo battle, I received a wristwatch in place of the pocket watch. My comrades-in-arms suggested that I wear a new wristwatch for the sake of a commander's dignity, as my pocket Watch was now outmoded. I gave one of my comrades the pocket watch I had kept for 10 years and put on the new wristwatch.

My father thereby made sure that I grew up with no knowledge about money until I began to fight for the revolution. Only in Jirin did I buy myself things in shops.

If I say that in this way I became indifferent to money, the reader will not consider it strange. Reviewing my 80 years of hardships, I would like to tell young people that if you are captivated by money and

wealth, you become a dirty man, who is disloyal to the leader and the Party, the fatherland and fellow people and, worse still, thinks nothing of his parents, wife and children.

Strict control of the children, to prevent them becoming interested in money from childhood, represented a peculiar family tradition established by my father.

However, my mother broke with this tradition for the first time, when she faced her death and gave me 20 yuan as an inheritance, the epitome of her life of hardships.

I received the money as a treasure, feeling as if the whole of my mother's hard life were condensed in a few notes. These notes were like an amulet for me. This money dispelled hunger, cold and fear from me. I felt as if my mother were protecting me with her body and soul, always staying near to me. I decided not to spend this 20 yuan on myself, whatever might happen. I wanted to keep it for ever, if possible, as a token of my mother's love for me.

However, grave reality shook my determination many times. I hesitated many times over use of this money, fumbling in my pocket. We had faced a number of situations, where money was required.

When we parted with the memorable old man Ma, who saved my company on the heights of Luozigou, I offered this money to him as a token of my gratitude. It was only natural for a man to wish to thank his savior. If I failed to repay his kindness when I had money in my pocket, after consuming the old man's provisions for one year, by staying in his mountain hut for nearly 20 days, heaven would blame me. But this saintly old man declined the offer.

“While fighting to liberate the country you may find yourselves in greater difficulty than now. Use the money in such times. I am nearly dead and money is no good in this remote mountain, so I don't need money. I can make a living by catching wild animals with my noose.

So the 20 yuan, a token of my mother's love for her son, remained in my pocket.

If I dressed the ragged children with this money, my mother, too, would be happy. “Mother, four years have passed since I left you with this money. I have kept it until now to provide against future need, although I have gone through many crises. Now, however, I must spend it; I must provide clothing for children who have no kith and kin in the world.

Although I realize that I may encounter more trying situations in the future, I have made up my mind. I hope you will support my determination. You know that I am very fond of children,” I said to myself, turning to my mother who lay buried alone on the cold slope of the Thqidian valley.

"Go to Fusong county town with this money and buy cloth. Make clothes for the children," I ordered regimental political commissar Kim San Ho.

He was extremely embarrassed and received the money with reluctance. As he had been my companion for years, working for the Anti-Imperialist Youth League since his days in Wujiazi, where he had lost one finger bitten by a straw cutter, while working as a farmhand for a landlord, he knew the details of this 20 yuan better than any other man.

"General, I must obey your order, but I feel my hands trembling. What kind of money is this?" He went to Fusong county town and bought seven or eight rolls of gabardine-like fabrics, which cost ten fen a foot. Although he was a man of great strength he said that his tongue nearly lolled out carrying them on his back. On the way back he was robbed of all the fabrics by the remnants of mountain rebels who had become bandits. The bandits ran away after binding him to a tree, so he was nearly frozen to death, although he was strong as an ox. I sent a small unit to save Kim San Ho and take back the fabrics.

Seven or eight rolls of cloth were not enough to provide all the children with clothing. I wrote to Zhang Wei-hua and sent Kim San Ho again to Fusong with the letter. Kim San Ho obtained a lot of cloth with the help of Zhang. We made clothes for the children and one hundred soldiers enlisted in the new division, after shaking off the stigma of "Mmsaengdan". Now my heavy heart was somewhat lightened.

In fact, 20 yuan was not a large sum. But I felt greatly relieved at the time. Then we left Maanshan.

The children in new clothes were ecstatic and begged us to take them with us. I agreed to take them despite numerous objections. Apart from children who were too young to follow us and the sick, most of them joined us on the arduous southward march. It was quite an adventure for the revolutionary army, which was moving from one place to another to engage in guerrilla warfare, to take the teenagers with it. Although it was unprecedented in the history of guerrilla warfare and went against common knowledge, I was determined to train them in the flames and raise them all into men of iron will.

It was hardest to jump over fallen trees and cross rivers. Consequently we assigned each soldier the task of protecting the children in battle and on the march. Our soldiers protected the children as the apples of their eyes. They brought them up, carrying the children in their arms, when passing fallen trees and taking them on their backs when crossing rivers and protecting them with their bodies from the enemy fire.

The children who followed me to the Mt. Paektu area all joined the revolutionary army and grew up into excellent military and political cadres through fierce battles. Nine-year-old Lee O Song who had stayed in the Dajianchang secret camp for a while, because he was not allowed to follow the army, also served as Sun Chang-xiang's orderly and later came to Changbai and became my orderly. He was scarcely 12 years old in May 1939 when my unit advanced to the Musan area. He could not cross the river by himself because it was too deep, so I carried him in my arms across the river. The children who grew up under our wings now play a pivotal role in our Party, state and army.

I was so indignant and shocked at the sight of ragged children in Maanshan that I resolved to establish a system after the country's liberation, whereby the state would provide children with clothes free of

charge. In the latter half of the 1950s, when we were reconstructing the country, which had been devastated in the war, our state began to supply children with clothes. It was a miraculous success, which could only have been achieved by the Korean communists who had experienced the sorrow in Maanshan. Every year we spend hundreds of millions of won on children's clothing.

Foreign visitors to our country sometimes ask me; "If the state spends so much money on free clothing, surely the state loses out? Everyone can buy cloth in the shop and make his or her own suit. Why should the state provide children with school uniforms? How do you make up for the losses from free clothing?"

I respond by recalling the days when I had met the ragged children in Maanshan. It is only natural that politicians from capitalist countries with no experience of the anti-Japanese war do not understand the historic meaning of the policy of the Government of the Republic and consider it only from the financial point of view. A "loss" incurred by the state for the good of the people is not a loss. The more money it spends on the people's welfare, the greater happiness our Party feels; and the greater the "loss" it incurs for the children's sake, the more our state is satisfied.

I believe that as long as the socialist system exists and the traditions of Mt. Paektu are carried forward in our country, such a communist policy as state provision of clothing for children will continue to be implemented in the future.

As well as all the children of the country, the former Children's Corps members of Maanshan and anti-Japanese war veterans receive every season new clothes, thanks to the benevolent care of Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il.

On my 70th birthday Lee O Song and Son Myong Jik appeared before me, wearing new uniforms which the Secretary gave them as a gift, and recalled the days in Maanshan with deep emotion.

## 12.3. Revolutionary Comrade-in-Arms Zhang Wei-Hua (1)

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As I mentioned in the previous section, shortly after Kim San Ho's return to Maanshan with cloth I sent him back again to the Fusong county town. Cloth worth 20 yuan was not enough to make clothes for all the Children's Corps members. Cloth could be captured from the enemy in battle, but I did not intend to fight in close combat in this county town, which had been associated with me for a long time. The new division we organized gave the revolutionary army a new look. We exploited this success to increase its military and political capabilities.

If we had opened fire before building up our strength, we might have been surrounded by the enemy in Fusong and encountered many obstacles on our way to the Mt. Paektu area.

We could only obtain cloth with help from Zhang Wei-hua. Only Zhang Wei-hua, the son of a rich man, my comrade-in-arms and an active member of the organization who was loyal to the cause of anti-Japanese national salvation, would regard my headache as his own and save me from difficulties at any cost.

Kim San Ho was somewhat astonished when I ordered him to go to Fusong again. His bewilderment was only natural, because he had been told to go, where he had been a short while ago. I wanted to let him relax. However, I inevitably assigned him to another heavy task for the children and the newly-formed unit. He was the right man to deal with Zhang Wei-hua without a hitch. When Zhang Wei-hua was teaching at Samsong School in Wujiazi, under the childhood name of Zhang Yaqing, Kim San Ho worked with the young people there in the branch organization of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. Although they had maintained no personal or business relations, his backgrounds could serve as an identification card.

"I am sorry, Comrade San Ho. Whenever I have a difficult task, I feel obliged to turn to you. I don't know why. Isn't your commander so cruel?"

I said this, when Kim San Ho reported to me to receive a new assignment. He had been taking a rest, after returning to Maanshan together with the small unit, which had rescued him. "Please don't speak in a roundabout way. It's not like you, Commander. Tell me straightforwardly what I should do," he said in a bass voice, after looking at me with bloodshot eyes for a few seconds.

His words comforted me considerably.

"Good, you must leave for Fusong again tomorrow morning. I've decided to send you to Zhang Wei-hua. After all, I think we need his assistance. Do you remember a Chinese young man, who was teaching at a primary school in Wujiazi?"



"Do you mean Mr. Zhang Ya-qing? Of course, I remember. I cannot forget his eyes and how he peered shyly at people over his spectacles. His guitar play sounded good."

"Well, then, I will write a letter of introduction for your visit. Make a round of the town first, reconnoitering it carefully and find Zhang Wancheng's house in Xiaonanmen Street. This Zhang is Zhang Wei-hua's father, one of the richest men in Fusong."

Kim San Ho looked at me, beaming with a smile and throwing out his breast. He smiled happily, as if he were going for a picnic.

This unusually tall man resembled a diligent farmer and was respected by his colleagues. When he had work to do, he was vivacious, whereas when he had nothing to do, he was in low spirits as if suffering from a disease caused by pent-up rage. His looks clearly indicated whether he had something to do or not.

I wrote to Zhang Wei-hua through the early morning hour, which was most precious to me in my daily routine.

Someone made a double-bottomed bean oil can to carry the letter in the bottom space. Kim San Ho left Maanshan, carrying this bean oil can with satisfaction. To pass him off as an oil peddler capable of clearing a search by the military or police, Park Yong Sun found a cloth for him, which was shabbier than a coolie cloth and glistened with oil-stained grime. I waited anxiously for news from Zhang Wei-hua. I was lost in thoughts about Zhang Wei-hua throughout the several sleepless nights I spent waiting for Kim San Ho. Every second passed in my yearning for Zhang.

How good I would have felt to go down into town in the guise of a coolie with a face towel, like a dust cloth hanging from my belt, as Kim San Ho had done, and meet Zhang Wei-hua! How happy it would have been to be able to take a walk with Zhang along Xiaonanmen Street, where my old house was, meet my teachers and old classmates in Fusong Senior Primary School No. 1 and call on my father's grave in Yangdicun!

If I had not had a lot of work to do and had not been surrounded by my comrades-in-arms, who were protecting me with greater concern than they would their own relations, I might have ventured to go to Fusong at any risk. However, so many people knew me in that place, where I was eager to go. As I had lived in Fusong for a long time in my school days, I was widely known as a man who was *persona non grata* to the military and the town police as well.

Fusong was another den of warlords, where I had been arrested by the local authorities and held in custody. But I loved this town as much as ever, because a part of my childhood had been spent there, and my father's grave and dear Chinese friend Zhang Wei-hua were there.

On one side of the crossroad in Fusong, there was a distillery called Dongshaoguo, where I met Zhang

Wei-hua on my way to south Manchuria on an expedition in June 1932. The name of this distillery was changed later, but it had been restored to its original name, when it became known that I met Zhang Wei-Hua on my way to south Manchuria there. On my 80th birthday Zhang Jin-quan (Zhang Weihua's son?Tr.) presented me the famous liquor, Dongshaoguo, produced in this distillery. At that time I felt the warm hearts of the Fusong people again.

I met Zhang Wei-hua many times in this distillery. We exchanged our opinions over the revolution and our future. Zhang told me that his wife was pregnant. She gave birth to Zhang Jin-quan, who is now living in Fusong.

Zhang Wei-hua admired the steady appearance of my men.

"Sung Ju, your men are hale and hearty. You organized a fine army within less than one year after we last met on the train. You have achieved a great deal. You can now accomplish a great cause. Marvelous!"

He praised me profusely, turning up his thumb. His artless compliment nearly perplexed me. "Wei-hua, don't extol me to the skies. We have only started. We are still babies. In giving birth to these babies, the dozens of rifles you gave us produced a great result. You played the role of midwife, by rendering distinguished service to the birth of our army."

"Don't praise me too much. I reproach myself for my inability and lethargy. You still trust me, don't you?"

"Of course I trust you. I trust you very much. My affection for you will not change, even if the River Songhua may flow backwards."

Zhang Wei-hua suddenly grasped my hands and gazed at me eagerly.

"If so, accept me into your unit. I want to take up arms and fight the Japanese. If you don't agree, I won't allow you to leave Fusong."

His point-blank request made me joyful.

"Really, Wei-hua?"

"Yes, of course. Ever since your unit's arrival in Fusong I have only thought about this. My wife agreed

"Then, your father? Will he let you go?"

"It matters little whether he does or not. If I want I can go. As you said on the train, there would be no family without the country. So we must carry out the revolution, regardless of the wishes of our parents. Chen Han-zhang has taken part in the revolution, even though he is a son of a rich man. Therefore, I can

work at least among the Chinese national salvation army units.

"It is a good idea for you to join the guerrilla army. But, Wei-hua, the revolution needs more than just one front: armed struggle. I hope you will stay in Fusong and work underground for the revolution."

"Underground revolutionary work? Do you mean that you cannot admit me into the guerrilla army?"

"No, I don't mean that. I want you to fight on another front. The underground revolutionary struggle, to educate the masses and rally them into an organization, is no less important than armed struggle. Unless the fighters on this front rally the masses closely, the armed struggle will not have a strong foundation. Consequently we decided to build up a strong underground revolutionary front in Fusong. I want you to command this front.

Zhang Wei-hua polished his glasses slowly, dropping his head as if in low spirits. "So you intend to send me to the second front, which cannot be reached by enemy fire. You think I cannot endure hardships because I have lived in luxury in a rich family?"

"Of course, I must admit that I have considered such a matter. Weihua, your physical build is not up to guerrilla warfare, which requires trekking steep mountains. I am frank with you. I do not doubt your mental strength, but I worry about your physical condition. So you should help our work as much as you can by running a photo studio or teaching at school rather than undergo hardships in mountains. Your reputation as a rich man's son is very useful! It can hide your revolutionary activity."

The next day, too, I persuaded Zhang Wei-hua patiently. In the end, he accepted my advice. On the day we left Fusong, Zhang said as he saw me off.

"Frankly speaking, I was determined to join the guerrilla army, because I wanted to be by your side; I had nothing against the underground struggle. My life without Sung Ju is like an orchestra without violins. You may not know how much I have yearned for you. Don't forget me wherever you go. I have no closer and more precious friend than you, Sung Ju. Take care of yourself."

Zhang Wei-hua said farewell in tears. That day I enlisted him in a secret organization of the Young Communist League.

Four years had passed since then. Four years was quite a long time. However, I had been concerned about him and yearned for him all these years.

I waited for Kim San Ho impatiently.

On his arrival in Fusong county town, Kim San Ho peddled about the town for a while and discovered that Zhang was running the Xiongdi Photo Studio. There was only a sign. In actual fact, it constituted the headquarters, which directed underground organizations in Fusong. There Zhang Wei-hua maintained

contacts with organization members, while earning money. When Kim San Ho called the owner and asked, "May I see you, Mr. Zhang?" he showed the guest into the photo development room.

"General Kim Il Sung sent me to you. He is staying in the vicinity of Fusong. He asked me to see how you are living, so I came here on his behalf," said Kim San Ho to Zhang Wei-hua. Zhang recognized him and was glad to see him.

"Oh, Kim Sung Ju! He is near here? Can you guide me to his place?"

"It is difficult to go there right now, because it is quite away from here. We will choose a suitable place nearby and inform you. What about meeting General Kim Il Sung there?" Zhang Wei-hua looked at San Ho dubiously, but, as he read my letter, a broad smile spread over his face.

"All right. I will wait for your message. Please tell Kim Sung Ju that I received his letter with thanks. And also report that I am healthy and have been faithful to our promise."

Kim San Ho came back to the secret camp in high spirits. His report, replete with news, was the greatest gift I received in spring 1936. I could not calm down, as if I were intoxicated by the fragrance of spring and strolled about the secret camp until I was tired. I proposed as our rendezvous a cave near Miaoling, Fusong County. Most comrades agreed. But some of them, knowing that I was going to meet the son of a rich man who owned dozens of hectares of land and many ginseng fields and private soldiers, objected to my trip to Miaoling, feeling uneasy about the venture.

"Comrade Commander, may I take the liberty of suggesting that you'd be wise not to meet the son of a rich man Zhang? You say he is a friend from primary school and organization member for some years, but class nature will not change. Anyhow he is the son of the exploiting class," one of them said.

I brushed him aside.

"Comrades, I thank you for your concern for my safety. But I cannot follow your advice. You now talk nervously about class nature, as if your Commander were falling into a trap. It is an insult to my precious comrade-in-arms, Zhang Wei-hua, as well as an insult to our policy of the united front."

"Comrade Commander, when we worked in local organizations we were told that man's class nature could not change and that we must not compromise with rich men on any account. Since our enlistment in the revolutionary army, many commanding officers have taught us this. So we believe only in the principle of struggle between landlords and peasants and capitalists and workers and are convinced that we must overthrow or liquidate any members of the exploiting class."

They were very stubborn in their objections to my trip to Miaoling. But I did not shout them down, even though they came up with ultra-revolutionary phraseology, which ran contrary to revolutionary principle. In those days many people in our ranks still copied or applied mechanically the propositions of the

classics, instead of approaching them in a creative manner in relation to revolutionary practice. They considered the propositions of Marx or Lenin as absolute law, which they could not deviate from even an inch. To free them from their dogmatic way of thinking, one had to go to unremitting efforts to teach them the principles of revolution.

I responded:

Of course, it is right to fight against the exploiting class. I also agree that landlords and capitalists are the hostile class. But you should bear in mind that we must not tar all landlords and capitalists with the same brush. Some of them even love the country and fight the Japanese. Comrade Kim San Ho, who is present here, knows Wujiazi well. He knows how sincerely landlord Zhao Jia-feng helped us in our revolutionary activity. Zhang's father Zhang Wan-cheng supported us more actively than Zhao Jia-feng. In autumn 1930, when we were preparing for the armed struggle in Wujiazi, Zhang Wei-hua gave me dozens of rifles free of charge, which his private soldiers had used.

You know full well what each of your rifles cost us. Many comrades laid down their lives for a single rifle. However, Zhang Wei-hua gave us 40 rifles, when we had to obtain such rifles at the cost of our lives. Why can't we trust Zhang Weihua?

I won't tell you here how friendly Zhang's family were to me and the great help they accorded my family. But I must state here the losses borne by our revolution, owing to one-sided interpretations of the class spirit and class struggle. You hold that landlord Zhang Wan-cheng must be liquidated, because he belongs to the exploiting class, no matter how much he has benefited the revolution, while an enemy's agent of worker or peasant origin should be welcomed, because he belongs to the basic class of our revolution, regardless of the harm he has done to the revolution. How absurd this all is.

Communists must always be fair to other people. This means that they should appreciate good people as such and their merits as virtues, regardless of their party affiliation, religion or social strata. Communists must always maintain a scientific attitude in appreciating people. This means that they must judge a man correctly from an objective point of view, mainly by his ideas and practice, rather than a ready-made formula. If they regard a man's origin as absolute in judging him, they cannot make a scientific and fair judgment of him.

What will happen, if we judge people in a Leftist manner by asserting exclusively the class spirit and class struggle? It will no doubt throw many people over to the enemy camp. The enemy wants us to become such blind fools, who doubt people thoughtlessly and knock them down recklessly.

Comrades, we have suffered a lot as targets of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle in Jiandao. When you were distrusted by people, who had shared life and death living under the same roof, you wailed beating your breasts. How dare you, despite such bitter experience, suspect an innocent man, just as the cursed ones did?

After persuading them in this manner, I left Maanshan secret camp for Miaoling, accompanied by a few bodyguards.

The apprehension of opponents to my visit to Zhang Wei-hua on the charge that the class nature of rich people would never change, was superfluous. I was displeased by their imprudent remarks, which seemed to discredit the friendship between Zhang and me and the intimate terms between his family and mine. They seemed to fling mud at our ten-year-old, noble and deep-rooted friendship which had been as constant as the stream of the River Songhua. It was a sincere, profound and genuine friendship which could not be defamed on any account. It met the interests of the revolution as a whole and communist humanism and morality.

If all rich people in the world were to be defined indiscriminately as reactionary, on the basis of a single point of view, which charge such people as exploiters, we communists would not need to go through an arduous path of social transformation to make ourselves rich.

Ever since childhood, I had avoided judging people by the standard of their property, going instead by their love for fellow human beings, fellow countrymen and their motherland. I even regarded rich people in a favorable light, if they loved their fellow people and country. I even disregarded poor people, if they lacked human love or love for their country. In a nutshell, I evaluated people mainly by the criterion of ideology.

Kang Yun Bom, whom I have already mentioned as my first childhood comrade, was the son of a well-to-do man. His family even had a small orchard. His family was rich beyond bounds, compared to my family at Mangyongdae. However, I loved and trusted him, as he loved the country and the people more passionately than others.

Paek Son Haeng whom I mentioned in Volume 1 of this book was also a millionaire, but was respected by Pyongyang citizens all her life. In fact, she became rich owing to superhuman hard work and her austere life.

Of course, a number of misers, who have vast tracts of land and are extremely rich, build their wealth by exploiting people inhumanely. There are also wicked rich men, who commit outrages violating human morality and cause all social evils. But not all rich men are wicked.

Paek Son Haeng did all kinds of work. She earned money tirelessly, sparing no time to powder her face even once, selling bean sprout, bean curd and flowers, weaving hemp cloth and cotton cloth, raising pigs and selling even food leftovers. She donated all her money to society - tens of thousands of won, which she had earned with the sweat of her brow for decades, ever since she was widowed at the age of 16.

She made her first contribution to society by building a stone bridge in Songsan-ri, called Solmoe Bridge. Later on, Pyongyang people, who had been moved by her noble deed called her Son Haeng (good deed? Tr.) and renamed Solmoe Bridge as Paekson Bridge after her.

In those days, there was a city public hall for the Japanese in the new Street of Pyongyang. No Koreans were admitted. Indignant at the Japanese. Paek Son Haeng proposed the construction of another public hall exclusively for Koreans and assumed the whole burden of this project, investing tens of thousands of won . The three-storeyed stone building, which was once Pyongyang public hall still stands as it was near Ryongwang Pavilion.

She invested a colossal sum of money in the development of national education. Kwangsong Primary School, Changdok School, Sungui Girls' School and other schools in Pyongyang were financed from the products of tens of hectares of land she contributed. By studying in Changdok School, which owed a great deal to her charitable contributions, I also benefited from her benevolence.

Whenever she met children on her visits to schools she was sponsoring, she used to say: "You are the sons and daughters of Korea who shoulder the future of the country. You must study hard, day and night, without being tempted to play or put aside your books, when you hate studying. The independence of our country depends on how you study."

Once a high-ranking official came from Seoul to convey the commendation of Government-General to her and requested an interview with her, but she declined.

My childhood principle of judging people from their thoughts and deeds had a considerable influence on our communist and national liberation movements in subsequent years. If we had not called on the whole nation to rise as one on this principle, many people would not have rallied themselves behind the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and, now, when national reunification is the supreme task, many people in south Korea and many overseas compatriots would not have shouted "We want reunification", shoulder to shoulder with one another under the banner of great national unity.

If we had been opposed to rich people in general on the basis of social status, without considering his or her ideas and real mind, such intellectuals of the property class as Jong Jun Thaek, Kang Yong Chang, Ro Thae Sok, Lee Ji Chan and Kim Ung Sang would not have appeared on the political stage of our country after liberation and would not have displayed the spirit of total devotion and rendered distinguished services in developing science and technology in our country.

I approached Chinese rich men from the same point of view. If I had not held such a point of view, I would not have made friends with Chen Han-zhang, the son of a great landlord, and admitted Zhang Wei-hua, the son of a man of great wealth, into our revolutionary organization and pledged eternal friendship. As the examples of Chen Han-zhang or Zhang Wei-hua go to show, people from the property class and their sons and daughters number among the outstanding figures who pioneered the communist movement in China.

Zhou En-lai who devoted all his life to the happiness of the Chinese nation, the communist cause and the cause of proletarian internationalism was also the son of a rich government official in the closing years of the Qing dynasty.

I think it was largely thanks to my influence that Zhang Wei-hua devoted all his life to the communist movement regardless of his family origin, joining hands with the communists, who regarded the property class as hostile to them. His father educated him in patriotism, whereas my comrades and I exercised communist influence on him. When I was enrolled in the fifth year class of Fusong Senior Primary School No. 1, he was merely a young patriot. I was also a mere patriotic-minded boy in those days. He began to adopt the communist idea when I organized the DIU and the Young Communist League and expanded their network everywhere.

At that time I organized a secret communist group, which could work as the Party organization in Fusong, arranged around my mother and Park Cha Sok. Zhang Wei-hua maintained relations with this group together with Jong Hak Hae and Chae Ju Son. Ever since then, Zhang fell under communist influence.

Since the first day of enrollment in Fusong Senior Primary School No. 1, thanks to the good offices of Chairman Shi, I studied together with Zhang Wei-hua. It seemed a play of history that Kim Sung Ju, an unlucky boy from a ruined country, and Zhang Wei-hua, the son of a millionaire, studied in the same class. It was strange, indeed, that our Unprecedented friendship sprouted and blossomed from this anomalous link. However, our friendship did not occur only because we studied together. It also originated from the friendship between my father Kim Hyong Jik and Zhang's father Zhang Wan-cheng.

After escaping safely from a den of bandits in Manjiang with the help of Kong Yong and Park Jin Yong, my father stayed for a while in Daying where many Koreans lived. He requested sub-county head Choe, an independence fighter with whom he had been on friendly terms, to help him obtain the approval of the county authorities to reside in Fusong. Choe called on the county government, but the county head did not want Korean revolutionaries to live in the area under his jurisdiction and so rejected his residence request on the reason that he was a refugee.

At this moment my father heard that Zhang Wan-cheng, a millionaire in Fusong, had fallen ill and was looking for an excellent doctor. At the request of Choe, my father treated Zhang. During his treatment Zhang was charmed by my father's calligraphy. Zhang was also a good calligrapher. This occasioned their friendship. My father requested that Zhang Wancheng exercise his influence on the county government to approve his residence request in Fusong.

The sub-county head Choe, too, persuaded Zhang Wan-cheng and negotiated with Chairman Shi, the most influential intellectual in Fusong. Chairman Shi's full name was Shi Chun-tai and he was the principal of a middle school in Fusong. As he worked as chairman of the educational association, in addition to his regular office, the Fusong people called him Chairman Shi. He promised to help my father.

Zhang Wan-cheng went to the county government and persuaded the county head. "There is a Korean exile. I hope you will allow him to settle down in the town and open a surgery. I know you are afraid that the Japs will provoke you, if you approve. But it is only natural that Koreans fight against the Japanese who occupied their country. If you approve it will be good, because you are not a pro-Japanese. What are you worrying about in this place, where there is no Japanese consulate? You have only to deceive the



consulate police and spies coming from Linjiang. You should not refuse Kim Hyong Jik's request to settle down in Fusong." Touched by such words, the county head inevitably approved my father's request.

When my father was bustling about anxiously to obtain approval from the authorities to reopen the closed Paeksan School after its reconstruction, Zhang Wan-cheng, together with other influential persons, also helped my father achieve this aim, by persuading the county authorities in the name of the deputy director of the chamber of commerce and the committee member of the educational association. Whenever my family faced a major problem, which was difficult for us to resolve on our own, he gave us selfless assistance, exerting his efforts when required and giving money if necessary. The help of Zhang's family continued even after my father's death. Zhang Wan-cheng would often send us money and food, worrying about my mother who was going through hardships supporting children as a widow.

When I was studying in Jirin, my uncle Hyong Gwon was arrested and imprisoned by the warlord authorities. As misfortunes always come in pairs, my mother became helpless when my uncle was imprisoned shortly after my father's death. After serious thought, she called on Zhang Wei-hua's father and requested him to persuade the police. Thanks to his negotiations with the police, my uncle was released soon afterwards.

Zhang Wan-cheng was a conscientious nationalist, who advocated national independence and loved his country ardently. Although he was a man of great wealth who could live in comfort, indifferent to changes in the world, he sympathized with my father who was experiencing all sorts of hardships in his attempts to liberate the country and, after my father died of illness, he supported and protected me, showing warm affection for my cause as fighter for national independence.

Zhang Wei-hua knew that I was a communist, but his father regarded me merely as a fighter for national independence.

Fusong was home to stooges of the warlords and spies of the Japanese consulate, as well as many conscientious men of influence and patriots such as Zhang Wan-cheng, Shi Chun-tai, Yuan Meng-zhou and Quan Ya-zhong. Yuan Meng-zhou was Zhang Wei-hua's maternal uncle. When I attended the Senior Primary School No. 1, he taught there, after graduating from Shenyang Normal School and later worked as headmaster of the school. His subjects, sports and organ practice, were the interesting lessons and were the favorites of pupils. Quan Ya-zhong, who belonged to the left wing of Kuomintang had a good ideological tendency. He had a hospital and watch shop, running both of them at the same time, but had progressive ideas. His elder brother Quan Ya-zhe was also a good man.

The friendly relations between my father and Zhang Wei-hua's father naturally exerted a great influence on the friendship between Zhang Weihua and me. When my father went to Zhang's house to treat him or Zhang Wan-cheng came to our house to see my father, I also frequented Zhang's house or Wei-hua came to our house to study together.

Whenever Zhang Wei-hua came to my house, my mother served him Korean foods. He greatly enjoyed

Korean dishes. Zhang's family cooked Chinese dumplings for me. As Zhang liked Korean food, I liked dumplings. The people from Shandong cooked dumplings very well. Zhang Wan-cheng came from Shandong.

In the mid-1920s, Fusong county town was square-shaped, with a gate in the east, a gate in the north, two gates in the west and Xiaonan-men gate and Dananmen gate in the south. Zhang Wan-cheng's shop was situated slightly north of Dananmen. By going straight a little further from the shop and turning a corner, I could find Zhang's house. We went round all the streets of this town and passed all the gates. We had been everywhere and played all games. We frequently played tennis in the yard of our school and went swimming on the River Songhua. We also took part in literary entertainment contests.

Zhang Wei-hua was stout-hearted and enthusiastic, although introspective. He volunteered before anyone else to defend justice without hesitation and never tolerated anybody who was unjust. He was so sharp that he could stand on the edge of a sword, if he was determined.

A policeman once knocked down a teacher of our school in the presence of his pupils, finding faults with him about a trifling matter. The pupils, who regarded teachers as divine, became furious with indignation at this surprising incident. Zhang Wei-hua and I made speeches denouncing the police to stir up the pupils. "For the policeman to beat a teacher is an infringe on the school and a serious insult to teachers and pupils. How outrageous it is for a petty policeman in a county town to beat the teacher! As his pupils, we must demand an apology from the police authorities. We must force the scoundrel to come to school, take off his cap and apologize to the teacher."

We surged to the county government building carrying placards with the inscriptions: "Punish severely the brutal policeman who beat the teacher!" and "Let us defend the rights and interests of the teachers!" and went on a sit-in struggle demanding the punishment of the evil policeman. But the county government would not listen to the just demand of the pupils; it tried to settle the quarrel by coaxing them. The struggle failed.

We resolved to punish that policeman by force. One night I was told that the policeman was going to the theatre. It was a good opportunity to teach him a lesson. But, if we were to escape from the theatre in a short span after beating him, we had to destroy a gas lamp hanging on the ceiling of the stage. Who could blow out this lamp? After debating this matter repeatedly, Zhang Wei-hua assumed this task. That evening over ten pupils went to the theatre and started their planned action. When an interval came, Zhang jumped on stage and destroyed the lamp with a wooden pole. With my shout "Beat him!" the pupils flogged the policeman, until he begged for mercy on his knees and then we vanished.

On the way back home Zhang said:

"I'm satisfied. I have realized for the first time tonight how pleasant it is to punish injustice by force."

"We must not tolerate such a scoundrel. We cannot live with such people under the same sky," I said.

Zhang paused abruptly and asked me seriously, "Sung Ju, which school will you go to after graduating from primary school?"

I had not expected this question. I had never thought seriously about my future after primary school. So I replied casually.

"Well, I would like to go to middle school, if possible. But I don't think I can afford it. What about you, Wei-hua?"

"I want to attend the normal school in Shenyang which my maternal uncle graduated from. My father, too, advised me to do so. If you don't mind I will take you with me to Shenyang. We can go to the same school there. After finishing normal school we will go to university together."

"It's very kind of you to say so. But, is it really possible for me?"

"Why? Because of a school fee? You need not worry about it. I will help you."

"My parents will not allow me to do so. I myself don't wish to study all the time. How can a boy of a ruined nation enjoy the luxury of studying at university?"

"Do you mean that you will join your father in the fight for independence? When you go to join in the revolution, I will follow you."

"What about Shenyang? You said you would go to a normal school."

"Only if we go together. I won't go to Shenyang without you. I want to be with you all my life. If you go to higher school I will too, and if you become a communist so will I."

That was the point Zhang Wei-hua wanted to tell me that night. His words moved me deeply. I grasped his hand and said in a whisper, "Thank you, Ya-qing, but do you know what communism is?"

"Of course. It may be what Li Da-zhao or Chen Du-xiu is doing."

"A communist must be ready to risk imprisonment or his life. Are you ready for that?" "I am not afraid of such things. I don't care about prison or death, as long as I am with you."

His unexpected declaration dumbfounded me. I could not guess what had inspired him to declare like that. But clearly his words that night expressed his ideal and faith, which he had long cherished in his mind. Zhang Wei-hua tried to make my ideal and faith his own. He did not define his doctrine first and then choose a friend who shared the same doctrine, but made a friend first and then shared his friend's doctrine. His way of deciding his future was simple and yet profound. Zhang's such attitude was based on

his unqualified trust and friendship with me. Zhang Wei-hua respected me sincerely and followed me.

It was only natural that when I departed for Whasung Uisuk School, he wanted in tears to follow me. My farewell with Zhang Wei-hua was unbearable. The thought of our parting depressed him so much that I had to spend two sleepless nights sharing the same bed and persuading him. We spent one night in my house and another in Zhang's house consoling each other. When I left for Huadian he came as far as the ferry on the River Songhua to see me off and said farewell in tears.

That day he asked me, "Sung Ju, is the difference in social status as great as the height of Mt. Everest?"

"The difference in social status has nothing to do with this matter. Your father does not permit you to go, because he does not want you to live away from home."

"If my father restricts me, because of difference in social status, I will become a poor man for the sake of our friendship. Anyhow, Song Jo, remember that I will join you someday, wherever you go and do what you are doing."

Zhang Wei-hua kept his resolve. He came to me as I attended Yuwen Middle School in Jirin. He came with a pistol stolen from his father, telling none of his family where he was going.

I was embarrassed by his unexpected appearance.

"Song Jo, I have left my family at last to come to you. You can see, how determined I am." He took out the pistol. He threw his head back amusingly and gazed at the ceiling. "I wonder that your father let go of you."

"He didn't. He ordered me to go to Shenyang right away but I slipped out of the house." "Won't your parents worry about you?"

"There may be an uproar. But I don't care. If they don't find me, one of them will come to Jirin. In all probability, they know that I came to see you."

Zhang was right. Several days after he arrived, his elder brother Zhang Wei-zhong called at Yuwen Middle School, taking private soldiers with him and asked for whereabouts of his brother. Hearing that his brother was staying with me, he sank to the ground.

"Then, he is safe! We thought he had been kidnapped by bandits."

"Brother Wei-zhong, I will take good care of him. Don't worry."

Zhang Wei-zhong said, "Song Jo, I'm relieved. I will leave Wei-hua under your care." He returned to Fosong with his private soldiers without taking back the pistol.

Afterwards I sent Zhang Wei-hua to Wujiazi and Guyushu. He worked as a teacher there for about a year before returning home on my advice that he should finish a higher school as his parents wished and then rejoin our ranks to continue his revolutionary activity. Our friendship deepened day by day and month by month in the constant repetition of such meetings and partings.

Apparently, the cave where I met Zhang Wei-hua still exists in Fusong. This cave in the shape of the letter "L" was 15 metres long. It was concealed so deep in the folds of nature that nobody could imagine a better place for a secret rendezvous.

When he met me, Zhang Wei-hua cried with joy. I also shed tears, holding in my arms his shoulders, which reeked of film solution.

"Sung Ju, why have you come so late? Where have you been all these years? Why have you never appeared in Fusong? You can't imagine how eagerly I have waited for you." This was Zhang's first greeting.

"I have also been anxious to see you. I wanted to come to Fusong. I wanted to see you, Wei-hua."

"You should have written to me, then. I don't know your address, but you know mine." "Wei-hoa, forgive me. There was no post office in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao where I lived."

"No post office? Is there such a place in the world?"

I told him about all the hardships we had suffered during the past four years.

He wiped away his tears with the back of his hand while I was talking.

"Wei-hua, why do you cry all the time? Is there anything wrong with you?" I paused for a while and looked into his face.

Zhang put on a forced smile, as he dried his tears.

I cry, because you experienced such a miserable life. The thought of being away from you, while you went through all these hardships, rends my heart."

"No, that isn't true. You have always been in my mind, encouraging me."

"Thank you, Sung Ju. The mere fact that you have not forgotten me makes me happy. From now on I will call you General or Commander as others do."

When Zhang Wei-hua suddenly broached the fact that other people addressed me "Commander", I waved my hand in haste.

"Please call me Sung Ju, even though others address me commander. I, too, will call you Wei-hua, rather than Mr. Zhang. Sung Ju, Wei-hua! How good these sound! Wei-hua, how have you been getting along all this while?"

He shook his head like an old man and smiled a melancholy smile. "After hearing all your exploits, I don't feel like talking about myself. What could I do in this Fusong which is like a hen-coop? Together with Kang Pyong Son, one of your mates at Whasung Uisuk School, I opened the Xiongdi Bookstore and Xiongdi Photo Studio and guided a YCL organization using them as bases. That is all I have done."

He explained briefly about the activities of the YCL organization and the movement of anti-Japanese organizations in Fusong.

I spoke highly of his success. And I gave him a new assignment to form a Party organization based on the YCL organization.

Zhang Wei-hua was greatly embarrassed by the new assignment.

"Sung Ju, can I carry out such a great task? I have little experience in underground work." "You have directed the YCL organization for four years, providing rich experience. I will send political commissar Kim San Ho to you now and then, to help you."

We talked for more than three hours.

When our conversation passed from the practical sphere to personal life, Zhang took me by the arm tightly and asked me how my family was. I reluctantly told him the news of my mother's passing, Chol Ju's death in battle and Yong Ju's role as a Children's Corps member, eating another's salt. In fact I did not wish to broach these topics as I knew his sympathetic character and was afraid that Zhang would be depressed at this news. Then, I would also feel my heart bleed. I had never wished to mention such tragic events in our first reunion in the four years.

In this way things evolved against my intentions. Hearing the news of our family, Zhang sobbed for a long time, burying his face in his hands.

"Then, you really are an orphan. I pity Yong Ju as well. What can I do for him? Can you give me his address?"

Zhang took out his fountain-pen and pocket-book and looked at me. I shook my head. "Wei-hua, Yong Ju is already a man. At his age he can stand on his own feet. You need not think of helping him."

Zhang did not abandon his intention and waited for his address, holding open the pocket-book. I reluctantly jotted down Kim Jong Ryong's address in Antu. If he had not died a tragic death at such a young age, he would have been of great help to Yong Ju in Antu.

After our meeting in the cave in Miaoling, we met again in the hot spring village of Daying. Our Headquarters, comprising 20 to 30 soldiers, was stationed in the mountain valley in front of Daying: from there I used to go to see Zhang Wei-hua. At that time Zhang stayed in Daying on the pretext of taking hot spring baths. As the enemy shadowed my associates and friends and watched them tenaciously, he was very careful of the safety of our Headquarters.

I had a long talk with Zhang, taking a hot spring bath together with him. I still remember him telling me proudly that he had built a Party organization of hard-core elements, who were trained in the YCL organization, as I had advised. His happy look as bright as morning glow still remains fresh in my memory.

During his stay in Daying we enlisted three YCL members in our unit he had recommended. I will never forget the happy smile, which spread over his face on seeing the young men, whom he had trained with all his care, appear before him dressed in revolutionary army uniforms and with rifles on their shoulders. Secretary Yan, one of the three young men, who was formerly a teacher, wrote many slogans on the trees around the secret camp in the latter days when we were operating in the Mt. Paektu area. Many of his slogans still remain in the sites of secret camps.

I recall now with deep emotion, from the talks we had in Daying hot spring, the last conversation before our leave-taking. At that time Zhang asked, as he took my hand, "Sung Ju, whenever I see you, one thing troubles my conscience."

"What is that?"

As he gazed at me with shame, I also watched him curiously.

"As I married so early before the age of 20, I became a father of one child already four years ago and will be a father of two children in a few months. When you were on arduous south and north expeditions, I enjoyed a luxurious life with my wife bringing up my child. How shameful it is!"

"Don't talk nonsense. What is wrong in your being married and having children? It is a matter for congratulations."

"But you are not married, although you are one year older than I. Tell me. Will you always remain single?"

"Well, I have never thought about marriage. It will take many more years for marriage to become my main concern."

"Then, you'll miss the right time. If you don't mind, I will choose a suitable match in Fusong. If I fail in Fusong, I will go round all cities, Shenyang, Tianjin, Changchun, Jilin and Harbin to find a woman of matchless beauty."

"Say no more. Can such a beauty live in mountains, eating tough whole maize gruel?" "See if I don't choose such a beauty as Yang Kuei-fei for you."

He told me such a joke and shook my hand warmly and left Daying. His smile at that time remains in my memory as an indelible image. This was the last time I saw his smile.

Of course, I knew that he spoke half jokingly and half seriously and that it would be impossible to realize what he said. But I felt real friendship in his words, which only Zhang Wei-hua could cherish towards me. Nobody other than Zhang Wei-hua could make such a promise for me so frankly, purely and enthusiastically.

On his return to Fusong, Zhang gave our unit all his moral and financial support. Large amounts of aid, such as cotton, shoes, socks, underwear, medicines, foods and photographic apparatus, which he had procured of his own accord, flowed ceaselessly into the secret camps of our unit, and provided strong economic support to the activities of the revolutionary army in the Fusong area.

With the 3,000 yuan he sent us, we were able to provide each of Children's Corps members and the main force unit soldiers with a new uniform and obtain other materials.

Tang Zhen-dong, head of the police substation in Daying, was our close acquaintance. I had met him in Fusong, when we went to south Manchuria for cooperation with Yang Se Bong. When we traveled to Daying again, he sent a secret messenger to us requesting that we openly send him a threatening letter: then he would send the required materials, on the pretext of acting under the threat of the revolutionary army.

After receiving the letter, he sent on numerous occasions supplies of pork, wheat flour, bean oil, knitwear and other goods by cart. In those days our guards lived fairly well for about 20 days thanks to the goods sent by him.

In the autumn of that year, Zhang Wei-hua was arrested unexpectedly by the military police and imprisoned. The police had been informed by Jong Hak Hae, who was my classmate in primary school and once worked as chairman of the Fusong county branch organization of the Paeksan Youth League. In his early days he adhered to the revolutionary spirit and then turned his coat, before entering the appeasement squad under the manipulation of the Linjiang military police. The appeasement squad was a synonym for the "submission work corps." As I advanced at the head of my unit to the Fusong area, the enemy dispatched many turn-coats here and there to find us.



One day Jong Hak Hae called on Zhang Wei-hua and said, "I am going to see Kim Il Sung. Surely you know where he is?" Zhang replied with confidence, "I know. A short time ago I met Kim Sung Ju." As Jong had taken part in the youth movement under my guidance, Zhang never suspected him. A few days later Zhang was arrested by the police. As he was used to approaching people in a friendly way, he was too innocent to be vigilant as head of a Party group who shouldered the destiny of underground organizations. He was arrested, owing to his illusions about people and lack of vigilance. The enemy tortured him cruelly in order to learn clues of the whereabouts of our Headquarters and all the underground organizations in the Fusong area and thereby demolish them.

But he faced their torture in silence. He was afraid of revealing my whereabouts and the network of underground organizations against his will, if the enemy torture intensified. He resolved to kill himself and requested that his father help him receive parole for a few days. His father asked the police to parole his son on the pretext of illness, by bribing the police with money and gifts.

On granting his parole, the enemy spies watched his house day and night to learn the network of secret organizations and underground activity of our unit.

Zhang Wei-hua said to his wife, as he faced death.

"I regret and lament that I cannot continue the anti-Japanese struggle together with General Kim Il Sung. I decided to guarantee the safety of my comrades with my death and prove worthy of the trust and friendship of General Kim Il Sung. Don't grieve too much."

He wrote to me: "The enemy sent out spies to discover the Headquarters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. Please move your Headquarters as quickly as possible." He subsequently committed suicide by swallowing a doze of corrosive sublimate used in film development. This grievous event occurred on the 2nd day of the tenth month, 1937, by the lunar calendar. At that time Zhang Wei-hua had not reached 25 years of age.

An internationalist fighter, my close friend and faithful revolutionary comrade-in-arms, left us in this way.

He died a heroic death at an early age for me, for the Headquarters of the Korean revolution and the common cause of the Korean and Chinese peoples, forsaking his dear parents, wife and children, as well as his long-cherished dreams, which were as beautiful as glowing clouds, in the land of China, where the roar of guns rent the air. His son Zhang Jinquan, whom he had loved more than himself, was four years old and his daughter, Zhang Jin-lu, was born just before his death.

Nothing is more grievous for a man than to die before his time. Although imprisoned by mistake, Zhang Wei-hua might have survived, instead of committing suicide. If his family had bribed the military police with more money and gifts, the enemy might have shut their eyes to this "crime" or punished him leniently after beating him on the buttocks. However, he surrendered the next chapter of his life of his

own accord, by committing suicide.

Life is not easy: nor is death. A suicide is the most painful kind of deaths. The suicide of a young man, who has a greater world before him than past requires extraordinarily grim resolve. There were numerous cases of suicide mostly for self-centred reasons. We can hardly find a man, who committed suicide for the sake of others as Zhang Wei-hua did.

I assure you that this was the noblest and most beautiful self-sacrifice of all sacrifices made for fellow people. That is why his death was more heroic and solemn than any other self-sacrifice.

On learning the tragic news of his death, I could not sleep or eat for several days. I felt an aching void and shock in my heart; my soul seemed to tumble into an abyss, as if a part of the world had collapsed near me. In those grievous days the melody of a dirge rang many times in my mind.

I was full of remorse for refusing to accept his request to join the army. I felt that if he had served in the people's revolutionary army, he would have lived longer. This thought made my heart ache.

When he asked to join the army, we should have deliberated his request and enlisted him to our unit. Such an act would have accorded with our principles. It was unnatural that a young man's sincere application was turned down. But I did not act on principle and assigned him to the second line, rather than the first. I declined his enlistment, even in violation of the principles, because I loved him too much. I did not want him to suffer all the trials in mountains, a man who had lived comfortably in a rich family, who had never known what hardships meant. I thought that, even though I could endure such hardships, he would not. This feeling was motivated by my unprincipled love for him. Even if anyone blames me, I have no excuse to make.

As tens of thousands of Korean communists and patriots including Sin Kyu Sik, Park Yong, Yang Lim, Han Wi Gon, Jang Ji Rak, Kim Song Ho, Jong Ryul Song and Han Ak Yon devoted their lives to the Chinese revolution, so a large number of sons and daughters of the Chinese people laid down their priceless lives for the Korean revolution.

Just as love and science have no national boundaries, revolution knows no boundaries, as proved by the examples of Zhang Wei-hua, Novichenko, Che Guevara and Norman Bethune. Zhang Wei-hua and Novichenko are worldwide models of internationalists, and the support of the communists of different countries for the Popular Front movement in Spain and the movement to resist America and aid Korea initiated by the Chinese Volunteers Army, are worldwide examples of internationalism. Zhang Wei-hua's name shines as a great star among these models.

Today Zhang Wei-hua is recognized by the Korean people as a symbol of friendship between Korea and China. Our people, men and women, young and old, remember in reverence the distinguished services he rendered for the Korean revolution.

## 12.4. Revolutionary Comrade-in-Arms Zhang Wei-Hua (2)

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Can a friendship continue between a living person and a dead friend? If it can, how? This question was put to me by Kim Pong Sok shortly after my orderly Kim Jong Dok, his bosom friend, died at the battle of Jiguanlazi. Kim Pong Sok was my orderly in the guerrilla army. He grieved over the death of his friend for a long time.

At that time I replied that a friendship could continue between a living person and his dead friend: the former remembered the latter, while the latter lived on in the memory of the former. By way of illustration I took the example of my friendship with Zhang Wei-hua. It reflected personal experience. Several years had passed since Zhang Wei-hua's death, but I had not forgotten him. He appeared occasionally in my dreams and shared a friendship with me as he had during his lifetime. On such occasions I had a very strange feeling.

Kim Pong Sok asked me again, "Comrade Commander, what can the living do for the dead?" Apparently my orderly wanted profound advice, which could act as a lifelong motto for him. But I was not prepared to give him such an answer. In fact, the matter of friendship between the living and the dead occupied a certain place in my mind, but my view on this matter was as simple and commonplace as that offered by woodcutters in remote mountains.

"In my opinion, first and foremost a living person should strive to remain loyal to the will left behind by his dead friend."

This was the only reply I gave Kim Pong Sok at the time. I believe that other people would also have replied in similar vein if they were in such a situation. My answer was so simple that it could have been given not only by woodcutters, but also by primary schoolchildren, but Kim Pong Sok took it very seriously. Kim Jong Dok's last wish was that Kim Pong Sok attend to his commander with all his care until the liberation of the country. Kim Pong Sok remained true to his last wish, supporting me wholeheartedly until the day of liberation. He also fell in battle.

During the anti-Japanese war, all my comrades-in-arms held the common view that loyalty to the last wishes of the fallen comrades constituted the highest moral toward them. "Let's avenge the enemy of our fallen comrades!" "Remember the company commander's last wish and capture that height!", "Let's liberate the country at any cost, as the fallen comrades had wished!"

Such slogans, declaimed by guerrilla fighters on numerous occasions on battlefields, in camps and on their marches, reflected their aspirations and desire to accomplish the cause, which their fallen comrades had failed to complete. The Korean communists tried to be loyal to their fallen comrades by faithfully carrying out their revolutionary task. I did the same, fighting bloody battles to accomplish their

unfinished cause and prove myself worthy of their deep trust and great expectations from me, expressed during their lifetime. From this point of view, I am still doing my best to carry out the revolutionary task entrusted by the Party and my people.

Can I claim, however, that this is all I can do to fulfill my moral obligations to fallen comrades? When the country was liberated, the concept of such obligations acquired an incomparably rich meaning, in keeping with the requirements and conditions of the new times. People, who had previously believed that the accomplishment of the unfinished cause of their fallen comrades marked all they should do to be Loyal to them, no longer held this view.

They wished to bring to the homeland the remains of their comrades-in-arms which were scattered all over a foreign land, and make their distinguished services, buried in the events of history, known to coming generations. As the country became prosperous, they also wanted to erect bronze statues and name new cities and streets after their fallen comrades.

Their loyalty to fallen comrades was fully demonstrated by their love for the children of the martyrs. As soon as we returned to the homeland, we sent officials to bring home the bereaved children of revolutionaries scattered in foreign lands. We discovered them one by one, as if picking up tiny treasures on sand fields and enrolled them in the Mangyongdae School for the Bereaved Families of Revolutionaries. We also enrolled the children of the martyrs, who had fought in the homeland in this school and transformed them into able builders of the new Korea.

In the 1970s we built the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on the Jujak Peak of Mt. Taesong, in a bid to pass on the images of our comrades-in-arms to posterity. We also built the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery, or the second revolutionary martyrs cemetery, on a hill in Sinmi-n, Hyongjesan District.

All these policies and measures represented an expression of the noble comradeship and unchanging purity of the Korean communists in their efforts to fulfill their moral obligations to the revolutionary martyrs as best as possible. Throughout more than half a century of revolutionary practice, the Korean communists set an example in their relations with their fallen comrades-in-arms, to say nothing of their living comrades. This example deserves universal praise.

The unprecedented history of human relations and comradeship, created by the Korean revolutionaries, indicates that friendship can continue between the living and dead. One need only recall my friendship with Zhang Wei-hua, to prove my case.

It would not be correct to think that my friendship with Zhang Weihua ended with his death. If a man's friendship ends with his friend's death, can such a bond be considered a sign of real friendship? If a living man remembers his dead friend, the friendship remains alive and vibrant.

My friendship with Zhang Wei-hua has continued even after his death. Zhang passed away, but I have never forgotten him even for one moment. The fragrance of his personality penetrated my mind more

deeply as the days went by. When the anti-Japanese war ended in the victory of the Korean and Chinese communists, Zhang Wei-hua was the first man I recalled from countless Chinese comrades and benefactors. In the liberated homeland, I recollected with deep emotion each of my Chinese benefactors, who helped me and my family and supported the Korean revolution with all their hearts. When good times arrived, I missed them all the more.

Whenever I recalled Zhang Wei-hua, I always remembered his bereaved family. I recalled his family, in particular when the democratic reforms were under way, centering on the agrarian revolution in northeast China, following the unconditional surrender of Japan, when the whole of Manchuria was subjected to the civil war between the Kuomintang army of Chiang Kaisek and the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The liquidation of the evil landlords and comprador capitalists and the overthrow of pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation everywhere led me to worry about Zhang's family, who might have been regarded as a target of dictatorship and unfairly punished. Whenever the neighboring country launched a campaign of social upheaval or movement to destroy some aspect, I worried about the fate of Zhang's bereaved family.

Although Zhang Wei-hua was a martyr, who had rendered distinguished services for the revolution, he had worked mostly underground, so I wondered if the masses would recognize him, a rich man's son, as a communist, not as a reactionary or traitor to the nation. I eagerly waited for a chance to meet his family. However, the complicated process of building a new country, the great war against the Americans and the work carried out to lay the foundations of socialism led me to postpone many plans. I wanted to find and meet many people, but resisted such temptations and concentrated on state affairs.

The first news of Zhang's family reached me in 1959. That year a visitors' group from our country had been to old anti-Japanese battlefields in Manchuria.

Prior to their departure, I met the group and told Park Yong Sun, the head of the group: "Comrade Park, do you remember Zhang Wei-hua, the owner of the Xiongdi Photo Studio, who supplied cloth and money to us when the children were suffering from illness and shivering with cold in the secret camp in Maanshan? Over twenty years has passed since he died, but I have not even sent my regards to his family. When you drop in at Fusong, remember me to his bereaved family and give my best regards to them on my behalf."

"I will keep your words in mind. I also thought that I am under moral obligation to see his family when we arrive in Fusong. We owed a great deal to him"

Park Yong Sun wiped his tearful eyes, apparently wet from deep emotion.

"Zhang Wei-hua was Chinese, but he was virtually Korean or a Korean revolutionary. His distinguished services occupy an honorable place both in the history of the Chinese communist movement and in the annals of the anti-Japanese revolution of our country. Even if his family moved to another place from Fusong, you must discover where they are, with the aid of the Chinese public security organs."

"Yes, I will find them, even if I have to search all over China."

After the visitors' group left for China, I waited anxiously for news from Fusong. As war wounds healed and the cities and countryside were transformed along socialist lines, I could afford to devote my mental efforts to my fallen comrades-in-arms and their bereaved families.

A few months after leaving the homeland, Park Yong Sun sent me a telegram with the news about Fusong I had been awaiting so eagerly. The telegram said:

"Today I met Zhang's family in Fusong. I conveyed your greetings to them as you, Premier, so desired. Zhang's wife expressed many thanks in tears. She gave us a photograph. We are doing our best to collect materials about the joint struggle of you Premier and Zhang Wei-hua. I will report all the details when we are back home."

Later Park Yong Sun reported to me that Zhang Wan-cheng died in 1954 and that after his death, Zhang Wei-hua's wife lived a frugal life in the old house in Fusong with her son Zhang Jin-quan and daughter Zhang Jin-lu.

When Park Yong Sun conveyed my greetings to her, Zhang's wife was deeply touched and overcome with emotion.

"There is a saying that the sky changes every hour and a man changes throughout his life, but General Kim Il Sung's friendship has always been constant. Twenty years have passed since my husband's death, but the General still remembers him. I can't find words to express all my thanks to him."

As a token of courtesy, she offered a photograph she had kept for several decades and requested that Park deliver it to me. This was the picture, where Zhang Wei-hua and my brother Chol Ju posed together.

This photo was displayed in the then museum of national liberation struggle with other materials collected by the visitors' group in autumn that year. Ever since then Zhang Wei-hua's face has become known to our people. When I visited the museum I paused for a long time before his picture. It touched me so deeply that I felt that Zhang, who I last saw at Daying twenty years previously, had come to Pyongyang alive.

In those days few of our people knew about Zhang Wei-hua. The flunkies at important propaganda posts had failed to publicize the revolutionary history and revolutionary traditions of our Party, consequently only a few people knew about Zhang's aid to me and the distinguished services he had performed for the Korean revolution. Only a few anti-Japanese veterans knew of my relations with him. I wanted to tell my entourage proudly what a good man, excellent revolutionary and faithful internationalist he was. My affection for him and pent-up feelings over his death, which I had quelled for 20 long years, gushed out:

"Comrades, this is Zhang Wei-hua, my classmate in Fusong Senior Primary School No. I. He was my friend and faithful revolutionary comrade-in-arms. His comrades-in-arms included many Korean communists. Zhang Wei-hua was a great internationalist fighter who understood Korea through us, sympathized with and supported the anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean people through our friendly relations. He could have lived in luxury by forsaking the revolution; he instead volunteered for the struggle. He dedicated his life to this cause and protected me. This picture strengthens my yearning for him. The happier we become, the more we must remember such benefactors as Zhang Wei-hua and other Chinese friends who helped us in our revolutionary cause with their blood."

Since then, our publications have given wide publicity to Zhang's merits. Zhang Wei-hua, along with Luo Sheng-jiao and Huang Ji-guang, is now well known to all our people as a famous internationalist martyr. Our younger generation remember Zhang Wei-hua with boundless affection and reverence, as they recall Kim Jin and Ma Tong Hui.

The day after our visitors' group arrived in Fusong, Zhang's wife said to her children: "General Kim Il Sung and your father were on intimate terms like real brothers since the days of primary school. They were so friendly towards each other that all their schoolmates in Fusong envied them. Thanks to the influence and guidance of General Kim Il Sung, your father fought resolutely against the Japanese imperialists. That was why your grandmother used to say that you should call him uncle. The General always keeps your father and our family in mind. Jin-quan, you must write to your uncle, thanking him and wishing him good health."

Excited by his mother's reminiscences, Zhang Jin-quan, a vivacious young man in his twenties, passed a sleepless night. In 1959, Zhang Jinquan was a handsome young man, who was two years older than his father at the time of his suicide. He sent me a long letter on behalf of his family.

After receiving his letter, I spent several sleepless nights recalling Zhang Wei-hua. My friendship with Zhang Wei-hua surfaced in my mind again, owing to my greetings to his family and Zhang Jin-quan's letter to me.

We can say that a living man's friendship with his dead comrade continues, thanks to the former's love for and concern about the latter's children. My friendship with Zhang Wei-hua was deepened and developed in a new way, thanks to my frequent meetings with his children.

After receiving the letter from Zhang Jin-quan, I became deeply concerned about this young man, whose face or character I had never known. His handwriting closely resembled his father's. I deeply hoped that he would resemble his father, and even thought that it would be wonderful to see him in person, rather than his photograph.

However, it was a mere dream. To realize this dream, I had to overcome various difficulties: it required unflagging enthusiasm and patience on my part. There is a stiff barrier, a border, between Zhang's bereaved family and me. The border is very strict with everyone; it does not understand old friends or

their loyalty.

In May 1984, twenty years after receiving the letter from Zhang Jinquail, I was lucky enough to pass through northeast China by train on my way to visit the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in east Europe. In the mountains and fields of northeast China I had experienced all kinds of hardships during the anti-Japanese armed struggle, living there for over 20 years. This place, which remained as dear to me as my own home town, was full of events, which stirred up my emotions in recollection. This was the land I had yearned so strongly to see again in my lifetime that I had trodden it in my dreams until my ankles ached. Probably for this reason, Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il chose the route to the Soviet Union via Tumen, Mudanjiang, Harbin, Qiqihar and Manzhouli.

Familiar mountain ridges caught my eyes for a long time. How many people fell in this land shedding blood! I could not turn away from the carriage window, seeing in my mind's eye, after decades, the vivid images of my old comrades-in-arms who used to snatch a light sleep together by campfires, share grass gruel and would during battles get covered in powder fumes together.

When our special train made for Dunhua after leaving Tumen, my memory of Zhang Wei-hua's wife and children in Fusong evoked the desire to call my entourage to me. I said to them:

"This is the place I have yearned to visit for a long time. If time permits, I want to call on my old comrades-in-arms in the days of the guerrilla army and other friends and acquaintances, visit the old battlefield, where fallen comrades lie buried. It's such a shame that I can't! Zhang Wei-hua's family are said to be still living in Fusong, which is only a hundred miles from here. I want to send them a gift as a token of my best wishes." A few days later the Chinese officials concerned conveyed my gift to Zhang's family.

On returning home from my visit to Europe, I received a second letter from Zhang Jin-quan and invited him to Pyongyang. I requested General Secretary Hu Yao-bang to help Zhang Jin-quan's visit to our country.

In April 1985 Zhang finally paid a historic visit to Korea, together with his sister Zhang Jin-lu and his eldest son Zhang Qi. On a spring day, when all trees and plants were shooting and blooming, I received the distinguished guests from Fusong at the Hungbu Guest House.

As soon as I caught sight of Zhang Jin-quan and Zhang uin-lu, leaving the car, I became so excited that I could say nothing for a moment. Zhang Jin-quan resembled his father, Zhang uin-lu was the spitting image of her mother and Zhang Qi had all the good points of his grandparents. The close resemblance to their parents, must have been a joy for them; it also made me happy. I felt as if the late Zhang Wei-hua and his wife had returned and appeared before me. I gazed at them in a bid to find a resemblance to Zhang Wei-hua in their demeanor. And I held them together in my arms, as I had done when I met Zhang Wei-hua in Miaoling and Daying.



"I welcome you!"

I greeted them in Chinese. Although my knowledge of Chinese had been affected by lack of practice for decades, I still said "I welcome you" in fluent Chinese. Some people say that it is a breach of conventions for a Head of State to speak in a foreign language in a diplomatic conversation, but I didn't care. Zhang's party was not on a diplomatic visit, and I hadn't invited them for diplomatic reasons. What was the use of diplomatic conversation or conventions, when I was receiving the children of my comrade-in-arms? Consequently I did not propose a toast at the luncheon given in their honour that afternoon. It was also a breach from convention.

"I need not make such a speech, as we are one family members, aren't we? Let's raise our glasses to the health of the people sitting here and friendship between Korea and China." Zhang Jin-quan was pleased with my words.

Like his father, Zhang Jin-quan did not drink much. I did not offer many glasses to him. Each of us drank three glasses of mild blueberry wine. When President Mitterrand visited our country, I also offered him blueberry wine. It is a famous wine, which only the Japanese Emperor apparently drank during his rule of our country. Three glasses of wine had a profound symbolic meaning. In June 1932 when I bid farewell to Zhang Wei-hua in the Dongshaoguo distillery in the north of the crossroad of Fusong county town, we also drank three glasses of wine.

The luncheon in honor of our precious guests from Fusong lasted three hours. It proceeded in a family atmosphere without any formalities or conventions. After luncheon we talked a lot in the garden.

We focused on the theme of loyalty. I recalled the loyalty shown by Zhang Wan-cheng and Zhang Wei-hua to my family, based on my experience in Fusong. The guests expressed their thanks for my loyalty to their family.

"Your grandfather helped the independence movement of Korea and your father helped the communist movement of Korea." I spoke highly of their distinguished services in this manner.

That day I talked a great deal about the loyalty of Zhang Wan-cheng and Zhang Wei-hua, not only because I wanted to praise them, but also because I hoped Zhang Jin-quan, Zhang Jin-lu, Zhang Qi and all the other descendants of Zhang Wei-hua would become real men and women who would value loyalty and become iron-willed revolutionaries.

Moral obligations exist between sovereign and subject and father and son, as advocated by feudal morality, and also between friends and comrades. I think that the phrase "confidence among friends" carries such a meaning. To encourage morality and loyalty, the old sages said that virtue disarms opposition. They said: where there is virtue, there is man, where there is man, there is land, where there is land there is wealth and where there is wealth there is use. The tenet of this Oriental philosophy, expressed concisely in five words - virtue, man, land, wealth and use? is a profound and valuable

reference for contemporary life.

We do not reject unconditionally "the three fundamental principles and five moral disciplines in human relations". At the same time we do not tolerate a radical view of those who willfully consider this stand against the communist ideal and criticize it as contrary to communist morality. How can it be wrong for a person to serve and support his country? Why should a son's respect for his parents be considered as contrary to law and morality? We oppose the abuse of such morality to rationalize the feudal state and feudal system and preach to the people non-resistance and blind obedience; we do not deny the tenet of "the three principles and five moral disciplines in human relations", which emphasizes the moral foundations of man.

The relation between Zhang Wei-hua and myself was neither a relation between sovereign and subject, nor a relation between father and son. In my opinion, Zhang was not motivated to protect me at the cost of his life by the moral principle of relationship between sovereign and subject. He merely demonstrated the noblest communist loyalty to his revolutionary comrade and the revolution. Zhang Wei-hua's self-sacrifice was so great and valuable owing to its purity and noble character.

At that time Zhang Jin-quan and his company presented me, on behalf of the Fusong people and his family, with a wooden-decorated clock, which bore the inscription, "Two dragons play with a pearl" and Chinese painting "A long life", where a child was holding a basket full of peaches at a farmhouse. Zhang Jin-quan explained that it indicated their wish for my long life and good health.

In return I gave gold watches, bearing an inscription of my name, to Zhang Jin-quan, Zhang Jin-lu and Zhang Qi.

Zhang Jin-quan had a check-up in Pyongyang and had his mined molar teeth replaced by gold false teeth.

I met Zhang Jin-quan and his company again at a guest house in Sinuiju, a frontier city. I gave a luncheon again in their honour on their way back home and talked with them for three hours.

When I gave them each a camera before saying farewell, they were deeply moved. I had chosen these gifts after a great deal of consideration. When he was running the Xiongdi Photo Studio in Fusong, Zhang Wei-hua sent us a camera. The cameras I gave constituted a return gift for Zhang Wei-hua's present, as well as an expression of my wish, that they follow the example of their father, who had devoted his all to the revolution, running a photo studio.

At that time Zhang Jin-quan said that he was also working as a photographer in Fusong. Bidding farewell to them, I said:

"Tomorrow I will leave Sinuiju for Pyongyang. Back home, you must work well and become excellent Communist Party members. Don't covet high positions and don't make mistakes. You grew up as fatherless children. From now on I am your father."

"In 1987 Zhang Jin-quan visited our country again with his wife Wang Feng-lan, second son Zhang Yao and granddaughter Zhang Meng-meng. During their stay in our country I met them seven times. This also marked a breach from convention or standards. Five-year-old Zhang Meng-meng was the youngest of all foreign guests to come to our country to congratulate me on my 75th birthday. She represented the fifth generation of Zhang's family.

On April 13, together with her grandparents, and uncle, Zhang Mengmeng enjoyed the joint performance of artists from different countries, who took part in the April Spring Friendship Art Festival in Ponghwa Art Theatre. That evening I met Zhang Meng-meng for the first time in the theatre. As I made for the seat by the aisle from the lobby, I exchanged greetings with Zhang Jin-quan's couple standing at the first row beside the aisle and embraced Zhang Meng-meng and lifted her high in the air. She smiled brightly, nestling her cheek against mine, without displaying the slightest shyness.

At that moment the audience of thousands applauded us in unison. The foreign guests who had not known of our relations also clapped their hands for a long time, experiencing the joy of witnessing this happy scene.

At the moment of thunderous applause I thought,

"Meng-meng, I am the elder brother of your great-grandfather. Holding you in my arms, I feel a lump in my throat as I yearn for your great-grandfather. He greatly loved children. If he were alive, how much he would love you! But he sacrificed himself for my sake, before he had reached the age of thirty. I don't know how I should repay him. You are the fifth generation flower of the friendship between Korea and China. Your great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather, my father and I devoted all their lives for this friendship. You are a flower, which has thrived on the blood they shed and efforts they made. For the sake of the friendship between Korea and China, you must bloom beautifully, so that the world may see you.

I held Zhang Meng-meng tightly in my arms. The small heart of the young girl throbbed rapidly close against my heart. I considered the moment when her vigorous heartbeat reached my heart, a meaningful moment, when my friendship with Zhang Wei-hua was linked to the fifth generation - from Zhang Wan-cheng, through Zhang Wei-hua, Zhang Jin-quan and Zhang Qi to Zhang Meng-meng.... Despite the flow of stormy years, the friendship of our two families continued right up to the fifth generation, crossing long rivers and streams. This is the friendship between our two families, as well as two peoples and two countries? Korea and China. Consequently Zhang Jin-quan subsequently named our friendship the "Traditional Friendship".

On seeing Zhang Meng-meng in my embrace, the people became convinced that the friendship between Korea and China would last through generations.

That day I wrote my name on the picture of Zhang Wei-hua and my brother Chol Ju and presented it to

Jin-quan as a souvenir. He said that he would keep it as a family treasure. During his company's sojourn in our country, we provided them with a plane for their exclusive use and a special train, as well as many attendants. They were provided with the hospitality accorded to state guests as Zhang Wei-hua's descendants.

In April 1992 Zhang Wei-hua's children came to our country again to congratulate me on my 80th birthday. It was their third visit to our country. Zhang Jin-quan and his wife, Zhang Qi and his wife, Zhang Yao, Zhang Meng-meng, Zhang Jin-lu and her husband Yue Yu-bin who were living in Beijing, their daughter Yue Zhi-yun and their son Yue Zhixiang and so on - a company of twelve gathered in Pyongyang. The more frequent their visits became, the deeper and warmer the friendship between Zhang Wei-hua's descendants and me grew. In memory of his third visit, Zhang Jin-quan presented me with his long memoir the Traditional Friendship.

This book was written in a simple style, bereft of exaggeration or artistic touches, about the friendship of our two families, which originated from my father and Zhang Wan-cheng. For all its simplicity, every line of his writing was fluent and vibrant with the unsophisticated feelings of friendship. This book touched me deeply. When I praised his writing, he blushed like a child and said that he was afraid that he might not have described truthfully my benevolence to them.

In return I presented them with the Chinese edition of my reminiscences With the Century, Volumes 1 and 2.

"Two foreigners, Zhang Wei-hua and Novichenko, protected me with their lives. Novichenko is still alive, but he would not have displayed such a self-sacrificial spirit, unless he had been ready to risk his life. It is not easy to make such sacrifice, when there is no time to think."

I made this comment on their third visit to our country.

Zhang Jin-quan and Zhang Jin-lu replied sincerely, "In a sense Novichenko's exploit is several times greater than our father's. What might have happened without him?"

"During my life I have met many people who helped me. Many benefactors saved me from the death which shadowed me, including the late Reverend Son Jung Doh, the father of Son Won Thae, one of your fellow visitors. Consequently I sometimes think that Heaven looks after a patriot and that a savior always appears to rescue him. This is not merely wishful thinking. Everywhere the people help individuals who are ready to dedicate their lives for the people. This is a truth and dialectic."

I said earnestly that they should serve as an excellent son and daughter of the nation, serving the people and dedicating all their lives for the people just as their father had done.

Zhang Jin-lu presented me with a dark-red woolen sweater she had herself made. She said that she had crafted a gift which I could wear. Feeling that I would not use any other present, which would end up on

display in the International Friendship Exhibition, she knitted a sweater I could wear every day. She had thought deeply. Consequently I accepted her present with gratitude and put it on before them as they wanted and posed for a photograph.

When I talked to them, Zhang Jin-quan said that they planned to set up a new tombstone on the 55th anniversary of his father's death and requested that I write an epitaph for the tombstone. I was grateful to him for the suggestion. This proved that they sincerely regarded me as their uncle and were following me wholeheartedly.

"Fifty-fifth anniversary already! I believe that your father passed away in the tenth month by the lunar calendar..."

I recalled solemnly the dreary autumn day of 1937.

"Yes, uncle. It was the second day of the tenth month of 1937 by the lunar calendar. It is October 27 this year by the solar calendar."

"Well, let me erect a monument in my own name rather than write a monumental inscription. What do you think?"

Surprised by my unexpected suggestion, Zhang Jin-quan and Zhang Jin-lu looked at each other without uttering a reply. They had not requested that much from me. They had merely expressed unabashedly their opinion, regarding me as head of their family. Consequently they were apparently embarrassed at my own suggestion for the monument.

Zhang Jin-quan said in a hurry, "I am afraid that is too much. I should not lay such a burden on you, uncle. Please draft the epitaph and we will have it inscribed on the tombstone."

"That may be good. But as the saying goes, all things being equal, choose the better one. I will prepare an inscribed monument, replete with epitaph and send it by my people. You merely need to be prepared to receive and erect it. What time would suit you?"

"I am awfully grateful. But I am sorry to have burdened you with an additional worry when you are so busy. I feel I have been impertinent to make such a request. They were perplexed.

"It will not take long to prepare a monument. As we have decided to erect it, it would be a good idea to hold the function on the anniversary of your father's death."

Zhang Jin-quan and his party accepted my proposal with pleasure. He said that on their return to Fusong they would prepare for the occasion and report thereon to the Chinese authorities concerned.

Consequently we agreed to erect the monument on the grave of my old revolutionary comrade-in-arms

Zhang Wei-hua on my own behalf.

The workers of the Party History Institute in our country transported the monument from Pyongyang to Fusong. The Chinese Party and Government sent their people as far as the head of the Linjiang Bridge to greet our representatives warmly and organized a grand unveiling ceremony on Zhang Wei-hua's grave in Fusong on October 27. China's mass media attached great importance to the function and widely reported the occasion.

The revolutionary exploits of the martyr Zhang Wei-hua constitute a bright symbol of the friendship between the Korean and Chinese peoples. His noble revolutionary spirit and services to the revolution will live on for ever in the people's minds.

Kim Il Sung October 27, 1992

This is the epitaph I wrote for the monument.

On our representatives' return to Pyongyang, I saw the video recording of the unveiling ceremony and admired the grandeur of the function. It represented a vivid picture of friendship and loyalty, which could be only created by the Korean and Chinese peoples and the Korean and Chinese fighters.

Can a friendship continue between a living man and his dead friend? Whenever confronted by such a question, I replied that it could. I still give the same answer. My friendship with the third, fourth and fifth generations of Zhang's family, as well as the unveiling ceremony of Zhang Wei-hua's monument held in Fusong, suffice to prove the validity of my reply.

A living man must not forget the dead. Only then can their friendship be lasting, true and immortal. If the former forgets the latter, such friendship will die out there and then. Frequent remembrance of dead friends, wide publicity of their distinguished services, good care of their children and loyalty to their last wishes: these are the moral obligations of living men to their predecessors, martyrs and deceased revolutionary comrades. Without this loyalty, there would be no true continuation of history and traditions.

My mind was somewhat lightened, on sending the monument. But how can I fulfill all my obligations to Zhang Wei-hua, who sacrificed his life for me, by setting up even thousands of monuments to him?

His grandson Zhang Yao and granddaughter Yue Zhi-yun now study in Pyongyang University of International Affairs, as their parents wished.

Whenever I miss Zhang Wei-hua, I visit their lodging house. It is not easy to fit in free time for foreign students, owing to the tight daily schedule of the President, who has to split seconds. But my assistants are liberal in arranging the President's hours for Zhang Wei-hua's descendants. I do not grudge any time to meet them.

When Zhang Yao and Yue Zhi-yun greeted me in Korean on New Year's Day, I was extremely satisfied. They spoke fluent Korean. I hope that they will have a better command of Korean and become accustomed to Korean food and become familiar with the Korean people as soon as possible.

The political situation in the world, which is about to see in the 21st century, is very grave and complicated, but the old friendship between Zhang Wei-hua's family and me remains unchanged.

I have expressed for a long time now my wish to visit Fusong. This wish remains. I want to visit Zhang Wei-hua's grave in Nandianzi, Fusong, but I am afraid that it may remain a mere desire. If I fail to accomplish this desire, I hope that I manage to visit him in my dreams.

## 12.5. The Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland

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Thanks to the new division, which consolidated and enhanced the main units of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, we had the opportunity to make, in greater breadth and depth, the anti-Japanese national united front movement and the requisite organizational and ideological preparations for the founding of the Party.

The new division served as a powerful driving force, supporting militarily and politically, attempts by the Korean communists to expand the armed struggle deep into the homeland and bring together patriotic forces from all walks of life; it opened up broad opportunities to bring about a turning-point in the united front movement, which we had continued indefatigably ever since the Kalun meeting.

Since the Nanhutou meeting, our united front movement concentrated on activities to organize a nationwide united front. The establishment of a permanent united front organization and unification of wide sections of the anti-Japanese patriotic forces constituted urgent tasks, which brooked no further delay, in the light of our revolutionary progress and domestic and international requirements.

Ever since the early years of our activity we had maintained that the surest way to our independence and sovereignty involved a mass resistance campaign based on great national unity, and that great national unity was the key to achieving independence solely by our own efforts. The united front constituted, together with the establishment of Juche, one of the most important ideals we had adhered to, since the early days of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

On the basis of the ideal of great national unity and a united front, we had made tireless efforts to achieve the coalition with various nationalist forces and anti-Japanese patriotic forces; we also intensively developed our joint struggle with wide sections of the Chinese anti-Japanese forces and communists, as we were fighting in China. The remarkable successes and experiences we had achieved during this struggle marked a valuable foundation for the large-scale development of the united front movement. We created a postulate for continuing the united front movement on a nationwide scale on the basis of these successes and experiences and also made every possible effort to train as quickly as possible the nucleus and form our own forces, who would be able to take charge in future. Attempts to rally together all the forces of the nation were also made before the 1930s.

In Korea's modern history, the unity of the nation, transcending ideas and doctrines, began to be debated for the first time after the mid- 1920s. In those days, our national liberation struggle was marked by two forces representing nationalism and communism. The greater the tyranny and expropriation of the Japanese imperialists, the greater the far-sighted leaders of the national liberation movement felt the need for the solidarity of patriotic forces and great national unity. Proceeding from this necessity, the communists of the early days sought to engineer a coalition with the nationalists, while the nationalists



attempted to cooperate with the communist camp.

Thanks to the joint efforts of the leaders of both camps, who were equally interested in national liberation and the restoration of national sovereignty, the Singan Association, the first united front organization in our country's history, was founded in Seoul in February 1927. The expectations and trust of the popular masses in this organization were so great that the patriotic figures and historians of those days called the Singan Association the single national party. The masses, demoralized by the antagonism and opposition of the two forces of communism and nationalism, shouted with joy at the formation of the Singan Association.

It was a great happy event, meeting the desire of the popular masses and the demands of the time, when the champions of the communist and nationalist movements, who had been estranged from one another owing to a difference of ideas and doctrines, realized, albeit belatedly, the need for unity and solidarity and established a united front organization.

The Singan Association, which could be termed the first creation of the national cooperative front in our country, was patriotic and anti-Japanese in its goals and aims.

Following the realization of the common front of the two great forces, which could be said to represent the nation, the Singan Association became after its inauguration a nationwide single organization, representing all the people. The purport of the inauguration of this organization is mirrored in the name of the Singan Association itself, provided by its sponsors in the meaning of "Komok Singan". "Komok Singan" implies that a new trunk grows from an old tree. As the name indicates, the Singan Association aspired to the general assembly of national forces on a new basis.

The movement of the Singan Association, which was sponsored, promoted and managed by such progressive patriots as Lee Sang Jae, Hong Myong Hui and Ho Hon, who enjoyed a high reputation among the popular masses, was innovative and revolutionary in terms of the content of its programme. It aimed to accelerate the political and economic revival of the nation, consolidate national unity and deny all forms of opportunism; the professional composition of its members was also diverse and wide-ranging. The Singan Association was joined by more than 37,000 people from all sorts of profession, such as workers, peasants, hotel managers, photographers, journalists, traders, doctors, company employees, teachers, scribes, stock-farmers, printing workers, fishermen, transport workers, weavers, tailors, students, lawyers, writers, bank clerks and religious workers.

The Singan Association ended its existence in May 1931, despite its excellent goals and aims to unite all the nation's efforts through the collaboration of the right and left groups.

Various rumours have circulated about the reasons behind the dissolution of the Singan Association. The champions of the communist movement blamed its collapse on the nationalists, while the nationalists attempted to shift the responsibility to the communists. At one time some historians attempted to negate the patriotic character of the Singan Association and its significance for the nation's history, trying to seek the main cause of the dissolution of this organization in the dissension and reformist tendencies of the

people at the top.

I cannot accept such a nihilistic view. It is good to analyze the cause of its dissolution scientifically and learn a lesson from it, but one should not shift responsibility onto others. We should not deny the Singan Association or belittle its significance to the nation's history, because there were some reformists in the upper strata of this organization.

The dissolution of the Singan Association was above all caused by divisive attempts by the Japanese imperialists, who feared a merger of the anti-Japanese resistance forces of the Korean nation. The imperialists drove a wedge between them and bribed the reformist upper strata. The Singan Association also collapsed, owing to lack of a pivotal leading force, which could have frustrated the sabotage and destructive operations of the enemy and skillfully managed and led this association.

On learning a severe lesson from the disintegration of the Singan Association, we raised the problem of the anti-Japanese national united front as an important policy, displaying firm resolve and determination to seize the initiative and unify the patriotic national forces, and made tireless efforts to join all the forces of the nation, under the banner of the cause of anti-Japanese national salvation. During this process, we trained a nucleus capable of leading this movement on their own initiative and also accumulated useful experience.

The Nanhutou meeting constituted a new historic turning-point in the united front movement of our country, as it had adopted decisions on the inauguration of a national united front. It was a time when a popular front movement also came to the fore on the international scene to check imperialist aggression and confronted fascism.

Greatly stimulated by the seizure of power by the Nazis in Germany, the French working class keenly felt the need to form an anti-fascist united front, aware of the increasing threat of fascism in their own country. In response to the passionate wishes of the masses for unity, the Socialist Party accepted the proposals of the French Communist Party and signed an agreement for concerted action against war and fascism in July 1934. The trade unions, formerly divided by the two parties, also merged. This wave led to the creation of the "popular front for labor, freedom and peace". The trend required an expansion and development of this front right up to unity with the middle class.

The participation of the Radical Socialist Party, a petty-bourgeois party, in the coalition of Socialist and Communist Parties at the end of June 1935 led to the creation of the so-called "popular assembly". A grand demonstration of the popular front was held in Paris on July 14, involving hundreds of thousands of people. Maurice Thorez, Leon Blum and Edouard Daladier, the leaders of the three parties, stood in the vanguard of the demonstration shoulder to shoulder. In January 1936, the popular front programme based on the unity of progressive groups, who had stood up in the anti-war, anti-fascist struggle centering around the three parties, was formally announced, and the popular front won a landslide victory in the general elections of the Chamber of Deputies, held in April and May of the same year.

Consequently, the Sarraut Cabinet resigned en masse and the popular front Cabinet, headed by Leon Blum was born. In actual fact, the popular front government tried to overcome the crisis by increasing the purchasing power of the masses, but failed to do so, although it supported the Spanish popular front government, it could not offer active assistance, as it pursued a so-called non-interventionist policy. In the end, the popular front also disintegrated. However, it checked the establishment of an overt fascist regime in France and served as a useful experience in the international communist movement and the anti-fascist struggle.

Influenced by the development of the popular front movement in France, the Comintern set the formation of a popular front as an important goal for communists all over the world. The international communist movement consequently set itself the immediate task of acting as the advocate of peace and democracy and opponent of war and fascism, rather than instigator of a world revolution aimed at immediately overthrowing capitalism. This could be considered a new political line in the international communist movement. Although many political parties at the Second International refused the Comintern's proposal for a united front, the popular movement in France, Spain and Latin America made considerable progress.

The appearance of the Azana Popular Front Government in Spain in February 1936 is a typical example.

The Spanish popular front was placed in a difficult position, confronted as it was by the revolt of Franco and the military intervention of Germany and Italy.

The so-called non-interventionist policy, promoted by the United States, Britain and France, proved fatal to the Spanish popular front. The unfair non-interventionist policy which advocated strict neutrality and an embargo on weapons' exports and imports, in the end merely helped the rebel army. The Soviet Union also adopted a non-interventionist stance at first. However, when it became clear that such a stance was unfavorable to the popular front government, it changed its attitude and dispatched planes, tanks and the like to the government.

The difficulties experienced by the Spanish popular front aroused the sympathy of the intellectuals and working masses in many countries. Numerous volunteers rushed to Spain from various countries. Consequently Spain became the international field of hostilities between the fascist and progressive forces supporting the popular front. The hostilities were reminiscent of a small-scale world war. This was exactly the situation of the international anti-fascist movement at the time when we founded the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in Donggang. We were also greatly encouraged by the heroic resistance war efforts of the Ethiopian patriots, who rose up against the Italian aggressors.

The Comintern quickly grasped the rapidly changing world situation and set as an immediate strategic task the unification of the working class and other toiling people of various countries behind the anti-war, anti-fascist struggle to prevent war, defend peace, oppose fascism and maintain democracy. It thereby fulfilled the role befitting of its duty as the leading organ of the world revolution. It can also be said that this constituted the basis of the historic exploits of the Comintern, regarding the anti-fascist popular front movement.

Fascism was not a new enemy for us. The object of our revolution and its character did not change because international fascism had reared its head. Prior to the Comintern advance of the line of anti-fascist popular front movement, we put forward our own line of the anti-Japanese national united front and vigorously advanced our revolution on the basis of this line.

The foundation work of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland as a nationwide united front body began after the Nanhutou meeting. Until then I had on the whole been trying on my own to mature my meditation as regards the foundation of this association. Now and then Kim San Ho, Choe Hyon, Park Yong Sun and some others provided the necessary advice, but generally they adopted an attitude of "Do as you please, Comrade Commander". I once met an elderly scholar in a mountainous village in the neighborhood of Yushuichuan in the Dunhua area. He became a good adviser and match I could discuss matters with.

In that village there were two houses of Koreans. I was staying at one of them. At that time a small unit operating in the Helong area came to see us. On seeing me, they reported that they had brought a strange man with them. They said that they had met him in a remote village in Helong and that he had followed, insisting on a meeting with General Kim Il Sung, on learning that the small unit was coming to the Headquarters. Feeling that they should not bring an unidentified individual to the Headquarters, the members of the small unit repeatedly advised him to return home.

However, the man merely replied, "You go yourselves, I'll go myself. Don't worry about me. Let's not interfere in each other's affairs." He then calmly followed the small unit at a certain distance.

This individual, who attracted my curiosity before I had even met him, behaved strangely at our first meeting. Some comrades from the small unit introduced me to him as the Commander. However, the strange guest did not listen and requested that he be introduced to the real General Kim Il Sung, taking into consideration his age and earnestness. I received him, chopping firewood for the master of the house; apparently my clothes did not satisfy him. He scrutinized me for some time, asserting that General Kim could not be so young and that a general could not chop firewood and wear rough clothes like a farmhand.

Once when we were bivouacking in the neighborhood of Guandi, north Manchuria, my trousers burnt because the new orderly standing guard at the campfire dozed off. In actual fact, my padded clothes inevitably appeared poor quality, as they were old and also were patched up. He was a strange fellow. His goatee resembled Ho Chi Minh's. Although he was no more than forty-four or forty-five, he looked older than fifty.

He said that he had heard many rumors about me and had come to see the kind of man I was, as there were too many rumors about me. When I told him, "Much ado about nothing," he shook his head and said that he could guess my pains merely from my clothes.

Despite the great age difference, we somehow immediately found a common language and mind. His introduction was very strange and daring. He said:

"I'm an opportunist who has not accomplished anything in life. I have only wavered, currying favor with different parties."

I have met thousands and tens of thousands of people in all my life: I now saw for the first time a man, who unhesitatingly introduced himself as an opportunist.

Only an infinitely conscientious man is infinitely honest. Honesty is the mirror of our conscience, which is as pure as white snow; it resembles a beacon which cannot be concealed. He immediately fascinated me with the few words he had uttered owing to their frankness, which amazed us all. I could see his moral height in the unaffected manner he used to personally belittle himself.

We could not stay any longer in that village, as we had to go to Mihunzhen shortly. I consequently decided to part with him as soon as I had conversed sufficiently to ensure that he did not leave upset.

However, when we started on our way, he indicated his intention to follow us rather than return home. He said that after meeting General Kim, he did not feel like parting so soon and requested that he be allowed to follow us for some hours at least and exchange conversation with us. For some reason I also did not feel like parting from him. So we started on our way, taking him with us.

I did not find the march tiresome, as I talked to him all the time. I was so engrossed in our talk that at times I continued on the march oblivious to my men's need to rest as they pleased.

In these cases Kim San Ho approached us and hinted that we should take a rest.

This individual was Lee Tong Baek, the old man "tobacco pipe", recorded in the history of our Party as sponsor of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. "Tobacco pipe" was Lee Tong Baek's nickname.

In my opinion, many people know that Tanchon of South Harugyong Province is the home of Lee Tong Hui, a chamryong (field grade officer) at the close of the Lee dynasty, a famous leader of the Righteous Volunteers' Army and an advocate of the communist movement. Few people, however, know that it is the native town of Lee Tong Baek.

During our talk on the march, we discovered that Lee Tong Hui had exerted a considerable influence on Lee Tong Baek, who studied the Chinese classics. We learned that Lee Tong Hui had persuaded the old man "tobacco pipe" to join the independence movement. He belonged to the War Fund-Raising Association, located in the Changbai area.

As the topic of our conversation concerned the War Fund-Raising Association and Kang Jin Gon, it became more animated. Lee Tong Baek knew about Kang Jin Gon as well as I. He said that he had frequented Badaogou and Linjiang and had on each visit there maintained close contacts with Kang Jin Gon. He worked in the association as correspondence director. However, when the great "clean-up" in the

year of Kyongsin (1920? Tr.) reached Changbai, the awe-inspiring War Fund-Raising Association rapidly dispersed. A disappointed Lee Tong Baek went to Russia in search of Lee Tong Hui.

He met RI Tong Hui in Chita and soon joined the Koryo Communist Party. The erstwhile independence fighter rapidly became a champion of the communist movement. Consequently he was soon involved in factional strife.

As Lee Tong Baek mentioned the Koryo Communist Party, I asked him whether he knew Pyon Tae U; I recalled that I had once seen the so-called membership card of this party in my Wujiazi days. He replied that Pyon Tae U and he had been intimate friends since their early years.

When I told him that I had once seen the membership card of the Koryo Communist Party from Pyon Tae U in Wujiazi, Lee Tong Baek asked me whether I had also seen the potato stamp certificate of one delegation. When I said that this was news to me, he recounted the following story.

In November 1922 a conference of the Shanghai and Irkutsk groups was due to be held in Verkhne-Udinsk, in the east central part of Russia. Believing that they would only be able to control the party after the merger if they enjoyed a majority at the conference, each group waged a fierce undercover struggle to increase the number of its own delegates.

The Irkutsk group issued a lot of false delegate certificates, even forging a potato stamp and sent sham delegates to the conference. The Shanghai group also engaged in similar fraudulent practices. In the end the conference disintegrated into chaos owing to the wrangling. Disillusioned, Pyon Tae U went to Linjiang, intending to return to the nationalist movement, while Lee Tong Baek was dispatched by Lee Tong Hui to Hunchun.

The old man "tobacco pipe" had been teaching in Hunchun before his journey to Seoul in spring 1925. He attended an inaugural meeting of the Communist Party of Korea under a pseudonym, and also participated in the June Tenth Independence Movement, held in the following year.

Lee Tong Baek's stay in Seoul, the rendezvous of the factions, led to his involuntary involvement in the whirlwind of new factional strife. He spent busy, boisterous days playing the role of two or three individuals, dragged into the Tuesday group first and then plunging into the M-L group.

The despicable undercover struggle of various groups to seize control of the party involved disgraceful behaviors: a member of the central committee was put in a sack and clubbed; his head was knocked with a wooden pillow; sometimes such a deplorable tragicomedy was also staged to inform the police of opponents so that they were arrested and detained. If he had stayed on in Seoul, he would not have known when and where he would have been secretly handcuffed or had his head clubbed. Consequently Lee Tong Baek returned to Jiandao.

Lee Tong Baek was like a wrecked ship without a sail, helm or oar; he had been running in confusion

depending on the wind and the waves, spat at factional strife and steadfastly remained on land. He worked as a newspaper reporter in Longjing, rejecting both the movement of the Independence Army and the communist movement.

However, the anti-Japanese movement of the 1930s, flaring up in Jiandao, stimulated Lee Tong Baek to become involved in the storm once more. Drawn to a confused party belonging to the Tuesday group, Lee Tong Baek worked as secretary of district No. 3 of the Helong County for some time; after a narrow escape from death during the great "clean-up" in Jiandao he went to a remote place in Helong with his family, determined to turn his back on the world for ever. He said that he had led a quiet life there for the past several years, teaching at a private village school.

"So, what else am I if not an opportunist? I am an out-and-out opportunist, involved in all the factions excluding the Seoul-Shanghai group."

Lee Tong Baek put the tobacco in his pipe bowl as if he was ending his topsy-turvy past. He was a heavy smoker. Sometimes he put his pipe into his mouth even when he was riding on horseback and would be rebuked by young orderlies. Instead of taking offence, he muttered as if in excuse, "Oh, I'm so forgetful. Smoking on the march may even invite far-off running dogs." He put his pipe in the pouch of his extra coat. He never rolled tobacco on paper. He only smoked a pipe. This led to his nickname - "tobacco pipe".

"Thank you for your frankness. But I don't regard you as an opportunist. You have merely peeped here and there in order to seek out the right path to be followed by the Korean society. Participation in various groups in the search for truth does not mark you out as an opportunist."

Lee Tong Baek was greatly surprised by my reply.

"You mean I am not an opportunist to have been involved in so many factions?"

"No - this much is clear from the fact that after living the life of a recluse in the remote mountain area of Helong for several years, you disregarded your decision and made a long journey to see us, although you are no longer that young. Can this really be regarded as the realization of an opportunist's original intention?"

"Now that you have seen into the bottom of my heart so thoroughly. I'll gladly agree. I also left home owing to my insistent ambition to find, prior to my death and at all costs, the 'treasure' I have not found for many years.

"I am extremely delighted to meet someone who is seeking truth with a righteous intention. I think that there used to be many investigators of truth like yourself and champions of righteous movements in our country; however, some have been arrested and imprisoned, some have turned renegade and others have suffered various losses so that they are very rare nowadays. It is very fortunate that you are still alive."

My highly interesting talk with the "tobacco pipe" continued until we reached Mihunzhen. During that time I became attached to Lee Tong Back.

Lee Tong Back also grew close to us. One saying goes: "Meet in haste, part in haste." It was not easy to say goodbye. However, we could not allow an elderly man to go any further along the long and dangerous march, which was likely to involve continuous battles with the enemy.

Before leaving Mihunzhen, I advised Lee Tong Back again to go back home. Instead of replying, he rummaged the inside of his coat before taking out a sheet of paper folded into four and handed it to me. It was an application for his enrollment written in a mixture of Korean and Chinese.

Even the sudden rising of the sun in the west could not have surprised us as much as that time.

"How on earth can you follow us at your age?"

"Don't worry about that. Under the command of Ulji Mun Dok and Lee Sun Sin, there were a number of soldiers who were one and a half times older than me. So you have no reason to reject my request because of my age.

"Who'll take care of your wife and children, who no doubt impatiently await you in the backwoods of Helong?"

"According to one saying, You feel sorry if you cannot go into scheduled exile. Furthermore, you are now telling me to go back home, when I have already left it owing to my desire to devote myself to the great cause of national salvation. General, you have embarked on the liberation struggle for the country: no one else could take care of your ailing mother and your younger brothers, could they?"

Whatever I said, I could not persuade the "tobacco pipe". I yielded. To commemorate his enlistment, I gave him the pistol I had treasured for two years.

When we had decided to enlist him, Lee Tong Baek excitedly explained what had made him decide to remain by our side instead of going back home.

"Do you know what held me by your side, General?"

"In actual fact, first of all your ennobling cause. Secondly your patched trousers and the cry of all those suffering from fever in Mihunzhen.... I thought a lot when I saw you visit without a moment's hesitation the isolated feverish victims and take care of them. It is not as easy as it seems to take care of one's subordinates and shoulder responsibility for their destiny, regardless of one's own danger. I have met all the eminent bigwigs, but they pale in comparison with you.

"On the whole I decided to remain here, because I have discovered the true master of the Korean



revolution, the genuine master and leader who shoulders all the responsibility for Korea's destiny. You General keep clear of armchair arguments and empty theories and talks. For this merit alone, you managed to persuade a rural scholar like me."

"Is your decision motivated by a third reason?"

"Why not! Of course. Your creative and practical way of thinking and your firm belief in the victory of the revolution."

One day, during a break on the march, "tobacco pipe" and I exchanged our views on the national united front. He expressed his opinion that, although France, Spain and China could form a popular front by merging political parties and organizations thanks to parties like the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Nationalist Party as well as labor movement organizations, our country could not do the same, because we had virtually no political parties or lawful organizations.

I gave him two snowballs and told him to roll them into one; I myself rolled a small snowball on the snow and made it as large as the snowball he had merged.

I said: "Well now, look. You made one ball by merging two political parties; I have made one larger than yours by rolling a small ball. Will you claim even now that the organization of a united front is only possible when there are political parties?"

Gazing fixedly at the snowball in my hand, as if he were looking into a magic glass, Lee Tong Baek muttered to himself:

"Really that is a profound principle. However, a snowball is a snowball and a political party is a political party, isn't it?"

"To our great surprise, however, many natural phenomena we have experienced conform to social phenomena, as far as principles are concerned."

I told him in detail about the united front policy we had consistently adhered to since our days in Jirin and about the experience accumulated by new generation young communists in rallying anti-Japanese patriotic forces from all areas of society. I said:

"A united front is not only formed by merging political parties and organizations. If the theory of political parties and organizations becomes absolute, it resembles dogma. We can easily form a united front, if we are backed by the masses and leadership nucleus. I believed in this case that we should rally people, be they ten or a hundred, using the identity of their purposes and aspirations as the criterion. With this aim in mind, we have been promoting the united front movement for a long time now.

Beating his nape, Lee Tong Baek said, "Dogma really is a problem," and laughed loudly.

After explaining why he remained by our side, "tobacco pipe" added:

"By your side, General, I have found a task to dedicate the concluding years of my life to. In the final analysis, I have discovered the worth of my existence. It can be said that one is happy when one feels useful in this world. Now I am such a happy man."

“What kind of task have you found to make you feel happy?”

"My task resembles the one performed by Louis David who followed Napoleon. I am going to transfer to my diary what David transferred to his pictures. Not the historic achievements of Napoleon's army, but rather those of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army."

Lee Tong Baek kept his diary every day as he had planned. There was not a single day when he did not keep his diary, although there were occasions when he skipped his meals once or twice or sometimes for several days. Until his very last moments, he carried out his mission as narrator of the history of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

After his enlistment, he worked at the secretariat of the Headquarters and later on as the chief editor of the Monthly Samil , an organ of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, and was also in charge of the printing office. He had collected so many documents and photographs that whenever the secretariat moved somewhere, several combatants had to be assigned, in order to move ten knapsacks containing documents, as well as mimeographing implements.

One day Kim Ju Hyon advised him to arrange the packages in order, so that they could be halved, but was severely reproached by him.

'Well, do you think these documents are like those of the 'Minsaengdan'? Although you are a commander, you do not enjoy a sweeping judgment. These packages constitute a treasure, which cannot be exchanged even for the lives of ten or one hundred people like me. Although you are a regimental commander by rank, you are tantamount to a private before these packages. Do you know how the national treasure is formed?’

From then on, the commanders obediently attached a transport party; they did not dare say anything superfluous, no matter how many pack-ages "tobacco pipe" held.

If the many documents, diaries and photos he had recorded, collected and kept had not been lost, they would indeed now be eternal national treasures just as “tobacco pipe” had asserted.

On one occasion Lee Tong Baek accidentally fired his gun. As Napoleon was frequently on his lips, a bodyguard nicknamed him once “old worshiper of Napoleon". At that time Lee Tong Baek was holding in his hand a pistol, which he had just finished disassembling and assembling and cleaning.

"You stupid fool. This pistol will tell you whom I worship. You listen." With these words Lee Tong Baek held up his pistol with a fully loaded magazine and pulled the trigger towards the empty air.

Owing to that accidental shot, commotion followed at the Laomudingzi bivouac and soldiers rushed out. The other commanders strongly demanded that he should be given a warning and not be allowed to carry a weapon with him for one month. I proposed that he be pardoned just this once, but military discipline was rigorous. The pistol was taken back by Kim San Ho.

The arrival of the wonderful old man "tobacco pipe" at our unit was another stroke of fortune for me. I always had kind friends. It was as if a noble man had descended from the sky and helped us.

When we resolved the problems with over 100 suspects of the "Minsaengdan", organized a new division and improved the living conditions of the Maanshan Children's Corps members. I concentrated all my efforts on the preparatory work for the foundation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. Although this was an arduous task, all sorts of troubles were resolved smoothly just as we had intended; consequently, we made brisk headway.

As well as Kim San Ho, Lee Tong Baek became an irreplaceably honest and prudent assistant. As soon as he was enlisted, we elected him a member of the preparatory committee for the foundation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. In this preparatory committee, Kim San Ho and Lee Tong Baek played the key roles. Kim San Ho chiefly worked outside the unit, as he was in charge of liaison with external organizations; Lee Tong Baek headed the preparatory work within the unit.

Lee Tong Baek also greatly helped me work out the Programme, Rules and Inaugural Declaration of the ARF. At that time I discussed every item with him and advised him to write the draft. However, he declined my proposal, saying that his literary style was old and that he was not confident of his ability to write down my intentions correctly. Consequently I made the draft and he added something, thereby perfecting the inaugural documents one by one.

Our greatest differences emerged over the first item of the programme. The first item defined, in a few words, the ideal, fighting goal and character of the ARF as a political organization. Consequently the debate was very heated.

When I proposed to put down, in accordance with my meditations, as the content of the first item, the overthrow of the colonial rule of the piratical Japanese imperialists via the general mobilization of the 20 million-strong Korean nation and the establishment of a genuinely popular government, Lee Tong Baek shook his head and became engrossed in thought before saying "No".

He added: "It is a pity that there is not a single phrase about the building of a society for the proletariat. If the first item of the programme does not reflect communism at all, will the numerous proponents of communism like it? The words 'a genuinely popular government' are vague in class character and somehow reek of nationalism."

Later on, when I met Park Tal for the first time and talked to him in the secret camp of Mt. Paektu, he replied in a similar manner as Lee Tong Baek on the first item of the Programme of the ARE.

This was a time when pseudo-Marxist views were widespread in our country.

Almost all the so-called communists asserted emphatically that communists would only free the working class and all mankind from exploitation and oppression, when they had got rid of a narrow national ideal and strictly adhered to the class principle and the internationalist stance, as if communism ran counter to the national ideal.

Many proponents of communism insisted on this fact, because they accepted very simply the proposition "The proletariat has no fatherland", made by Marx in The Communist Manifesto.

Marx and Engels lived in a historic period, when the possibility of a socialist revolution in one country had not fully matured. They predicted that a socialist revolution would occur simultaneously in a number of countries, where capitalism was highly developed. In conditions where the bourgeoisie of every country, who were to be overthrown by the working class, posed as defenders of national interests, the revolutionary cause of the proletariat throughout the world might have been spoiled, if the proletariat of all countries had been deceived by the honeyed words of "nationalism" or "patriotism" advocated by the bourgeois class of their own country.

For the proletariat of every country, their homeland under bourgeois rule can never be their fatherland; therefore, the proletariat had to back unfailingly internationalism and socialism in the choice between chauvinism and internationalism and nationalism and socialism. Proceeding from this point of view, the classics of Marxism warned the working class against so-called patriotic illusions and instructed them to discard at all times the nationalist bias between patriotism and socialism and defend socialism.

Analyzing the causes behind the failure of the Paris Commune, Marx asserted that the participants of the Commune had not attacked Versailles, the den of reactionaries, as they thought mistakenly that the launch of a civil war would constitute an anti-patriotic act, when the foreign enemy, the Prussian army, was encircling Paris. Lenin branded it a treachery to the socialist cause that, following the outbreak of the World War I, the revisionists of the Second International abandoned the revolutionary principle of the working class and sided with the bourgeoisie of their own country, under the slogan of "defense of the fatherland".

To help, under the pretext of "defense of the fatherland", the bourgeoisie obtain colonies, who madly display a readiness to increase their own wealth at the cost of their whole nation, constitutes a betrayal of one's own nation and, at the same time, of socialism. Therefore, if the proletariat of an imperialist country are loyal to the socialist cause, they should not hold up the sign of "defence of the fatherland" but instead should hoist the banner of "opposing war" and launch a campaign to boycott war.

However, the situation is completely different in colonial and dependent countries. For the communists of

these countries, raising the banner of national liberation and patriotism is tantamount to opposing the bourgeoisie in the suzerain states; by doing so, they make an equal contribution to the national and class revolution, as well as to the international revolutionary cause.

Pseudo-communists and would-be Marxists made a theoretical and practical mistake: failing to understand this plain truth, they regarded patriotism and nationalism as the enemy of communism and rejected them unconditionally, absolutizing the proposition "The proletariat has no fatherland".

In the new historical situation in which the socialist revolution takes place with the nation-state as a unit, there can be said to be no major difference between genuine nationalism and genuine communism in colonies. The former lays a little more stress on the national character, the latter on the class character. Their patriotic stands should be regarded as the same in that they both champion the nation's interests against foreign forces.

My invariable belief is that a true communist is a true patriot and that a true nationalist, too, is a true patriot.

Therefore, we consistently attached great importance to cooperation with true, patriotic nationalists and devoted all our efforts to strengthening our alliance with them.

We had to devote a considerable amount of time and energy to make people understand that the Korean communists had a national right to fight for the liberation of their country and convince them that it did not run counter to proletarian internationalism. Moreover, our own thorough patriotism and practical struggle for national liberation demonstrated to the whole nation that communists were patriots, who truly loved their country and fellow people; in the end we came to proudly be in the vanguard of the national liberation struggle.

The inauguration of the ARF will be the fruitful result of this protracted self-sacrificing struggle we waged.

Therefore, we should openly use the name "The Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland", and also make clear in the first item of its programme that we intend to liberate the country thanks to the efforts of all the members of our nation and establish a genuinely popular government like the one, which was set up at one time in the guerrilla base in east Manchuria.

Lee Tong Baek, who had been listening to me attentively, slapped his knee and shouted in joy;

"That's right! I have been a blind fool. Now I can get rid of my deformity following my discussion with you, General. I fully agree with you." We agreed on all the other items of the programme.

In the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF we established that a resolution to the power problem constituted the primary task of the Korean nation, and also put forward various political tasks, such as the provision

of the people with democratic freedom and rights, the democratic development of society and protection of the national rights of overseas compatriots.

This programme also set the task of building a revolutionary army and elucidated the economic tasks to be solved at the stage of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, such as confiscation of land from the Japanese imperialists and treacherous pro-Japanese landlords, expropriation of all enterprises, railways, banks, vessels, farms, irrigation facilities owned by the Japanese state and Japanese individuals and all the properties of the treacherous pro-Japanese elements, support for the poor, the natural development of national industry, agriculture and commerce and the construction of a national economy.

The natural development of national industry, agriculture and commerce and the construction of a national economy were based on our consistent line and policy to rally national capitalists in the anti-Japanese united front by strictly distinguishing between national capital and comprador capital and encouraging patriotic national capitalists and actively defending and supporting them.

This marked the difference between pseudo-communists, who asserted that all capitalists, including even anti-Japanese national capitalists, should be tarred with the same brush, and genuine communists who regarded all national capitalists as the motive force of the revolution. These capitalists, though branded as bourgeoisie, were patriotic in their aspirations and anti-Japanese in practice.

The Ten-Point Programme of the ARF also set social and cultural tasks as well as other ones concerning external activities.

I anticipated some friction on the religionists or national capitalists and patriotic landowners. However, Lee Tong Baek, who came to share the same world outlook as me through the argument on the first item of the programme, surprisingly shared my view straight away. On the contrary, such people as Kim San Ho and O Paek Ryong were narrow-minded on this question.

While I was making drafts of the programme, rules and inaugural declaration, the others were preparing letters and propaganda materials in the name of the preparatory committee for the inauguration of the association. Indeed, that spring we were so busy that we worked every minute and second.

The programme, rules and inaugural declaration were submitted for final discussion of the preparatory committee in the house of Ho Rak Yo, head of Manjiang village.

"Tobacco pipe" deplored that in the past the factionalists, who had been engaged in the so-called communist movement, had been engrossed only in a scramble for power with bloodshot eyes, despite the fact that they could not put together a good programme, but was extremely delighted that we now had a new beacon-light, which would light up more brightly the path ahead of the Korean revolution, which had been gloomy.

After finishing all the preparations at the end of April, we decided to hold the inaugural meeting in the forests of Donggang and moved there. Almost all the delegates who had received letters of invitation gathered there in one way or another; however, Lee Tong Gwang and Jon Kwang (O Song Ryun) from south Manchuria, who had even sent us reply letters, saying that they would take part in the meeting without fail, for some reason did not come until the meeting was over. As delegates from the homeland, a delegate of Chondoists and a peasant delegate came from Pyoktong backed by Kang Je Ha's organization, and one teachers' delegate and one workers' delegate came from the Party organization of the Onsong area.

The historic inaugural meeting of the ARF was held on May 1. Although the flowers were not yet in full bloom, the whole mountain was in the thick of spring.

As the meeting lay ahead, the hearts of all the delegates throbbed with strong emotion and excitement.

The Donggang meeting lasted for 15 days.

First Lee Tong Baek read out messages of congratulations sent to the meeting, and then I delivered the report.

In my report I referred to the need to rally the entire nation as one political force under the banner of national liberation and establish in the border area a new base which the Korean People's Revolutionary Army could rely on, in order to conduct the anti-Japanese national united front movement dynamically and further expand and develop the anti-Japanese armed struggle by advancing into the border area and the homeland. Subsequently this report was published in book form under the title, Let Us Further Expand and Develop the Anti-Japanese National United Front Movement and Take the Korean Revolution as a Whole to a New Upsurge.

I also submitted the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF and its Inaugural Declaration to the meeting for consideration.

In the ten-point programme we defined the character and task of the Korean revolution, as well as its strategic and tactical principles, on the basis of a correct analysis of the revolutionary situation in the 1930s, the socio-economic conditions of our country and mutual relations between different classes, and also elucidated the prospects of the Korean revolution, taking into strict consideration the interests of the workers, peasants and other working masses, as well as the common interests of the patriotic people of all walks of life.

The participants of the meeting expressed full support and approval for the programme and expressed their joy that they could now advance confidently for the victory of the Korean revolution with a clear fighting goal; they also firmly resolved to work hard to implement the tasks set forth in the programme.

The discussion about the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF also stirred the hearts of the delegates.

The paragraphs of the inaugural declaration gripped their hearts from the start. In particular, the participants of the meeting were greatly taken by the part of the declaration, which expressed confidence that Korea's independence would succeed if the whole nation's 20 million people were rallied into one, each contributing his or her all; money, provisions, skill and wisdom; and took part in the anti-Japanese national liberation front. They were taken by the earnest appeal to everyone to fight, encompassed in the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

After the adoption of the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF, we discussed the name it should be published under.

All the participants in the meeting suggested that it should be published in my name. They said that this problem admitted no room for debate and that, as a matter of course, the declaration should be published in my name, as I had been the first to propose the establishment of the ARF and had been in charge of the work of the preparatory committee for its formation and also as I had worked out its programme and inaugural declaration.

However, I held a different opinion. The ARF had to assume a national form in order to rally all the anti-Japanese forces of the entire Korean people. Consequently I thought it correct to use as sponsor a well-known elderly patriot, who had taken an active part in the Korean independence movement since the Righteous Volunteers' Army movement and the March First Movement.

I thought that our existence was not generally known to wide sections of the people at home, because until then the Korean People's Revolutionary Army had mainly fought with the Manchurian area as the scene of operations. Following the establishment of new secret bases in Mt. Paektu and the expansion of the armed struggle deep into the homeland, my name became widely known to the people at home. I think that probably one of the issues of the Maeil Sinbo (Daily News - Tr.) for September 1936 was the first newspaper at home to report on the movement and the struggle of our main unit. At the time this newspaper noted artfully: A unit consisting of 150-160 soldiers has advanced to Changbai County, and "the head of the unit is said to be Kim Il Sung". Using this as a start, home publications frequently published our activities.

I said to the delegates at the meeting straightforwardly: All of you insist that the inaugural declaration should be published in the name of a certain man, because he was the first to initiate the inauguration of the association, was in charge of the preparatory committee for its inauguration and also worked out its programme and rules. There is no real point in offering prominence to one man, to me, only taking this fact into consideration.

It will be much more effective to appeal to the people to join the ARF, by using the names of people who are known to all our 20 million compatriots. It will be sufficient if you regard me as a son of our people and suppose that I have suffered greatly for the masses. Then I appealed to them to make as co-sponsors of the inaugural declaration elderly and well-reputed patriots, referring to the need to give up small matters in view of the great cause, and proposed the publication of the inaugural declaration with Lee



Tong Baek and Yo Wun Hyung as co-sponsors.

Lee Tong Baek was the first to oppose my proposal. He said that such things as age and former reputations were irrelevant and that there was only one leader, representing the entire nation and guiding the great cause of national liberation: General Kim known at home and abroad. Therefore, he added, a man like him could not be sponsor, despite this stark fact, and persisted that, as a matter of course, General Kim should be both president of the ARF and its sponsor. Taking my suggestion into consideration, he proposed that Yo Wun Hyung be made co-sponsor along with me.

After heated discussion I agreed to become one of the sponsors on condition that the alias Kim Tong Myong was used. When he obtained my concession, Lee Tong Baek also consented to be sponsor.

Thus, the names of three people - Kim Tong Myong, Lee Tong Baek and Yo Wun Hyung - were put down as co-sponsors in the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF published on May 5.

Lee Tong Baek supplied me with the alias of Kim Tong Myong. When I said that I would agree to become sponsor, only on condition that an alias be used, he could not insist on his own suggestion any more and became engrossed in his thoughts for some time, before adding that it would be a good idea to keep Kim as it was as the surname of my alias and name me Tong Myong, Tong meaning the east and Myong implying brightness.

He said that if the name "Kim Tong Myong" was used for me, it would constitute a significant name in various aspects, in the sense of representing the nation. Everyone expressed their approval with warm applause. Thus, the alias "Kim Tong Myong", like the name "Kim Il Sung", was provided by other people.

The declaration of the ARF published by us was subsequently sent to various places at home and abroad. In some places it was reprinted and made public, with the names of the sponsors replaced by those of influential figures and famous people in their own area. We allowed them free rein depending on their own situation.

The ARF itself was called the East Manchurian Koreans' Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in east Manchuria and in south Manchuria it was named the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland of the Koreans Residing in Manchuria. For this reason the names of such people as O Song Ryun, Gu Su Myong, Lee Sang Jun (Lee Tong Gwang) and An Kwang Hun appear in some declarations of the ARF discovered by the Party History Institute.

In accordance with the unanimous will of the participants, I took office as president of the ARF at its inaugural meeting.

This is how a standing anti-Japanese national united front body, the first of its kind in the history of the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle in our country, came to be born.

The founding of the ARF as the first anti-Japanese national united front body in our country, constituted a milestone, strengthening the mass foundation of the revolution. Following the founding of the ARE, the anti-Japanese national united front movement developed rapidly in a more organized and systematic way on a nationwide scale, closely combined with the anti-Japanese armed struggle; it was able to dynamically organize and mobilize all the anti-Japanese forces to the struggle for national liberation.

Unification of all the efforts of the nation for the liberation front marked the supreme task we had set ourselves since we started out on our struggle. We had spent many years to ensure that we achieved this aim.

The foundation of the ARF represented the fruit of the active efforts of our young communists, who had tirelessly trained our revolutionary forces. It marked a historic moment, when our people again solemnly declared their will to fight more dauntlessly against the Japanese imperialists with their own efforts: it also marked a turning-point in taking the general Korean revolution, with the anti-Japanese armed struggle as the keystone, to a new upsurge.

The foundation of the ARE enjoyed active backing at home and abroad, as it met the requirements of the development of the Korean revolution itself and the currents of the time. In various parts of the homeland and abroad loud voices were raised in its support. The units of the Independence Army responded first.

Immediately after the proclamation of the foundation of the ARE, Yun Il Pha, chief of staff of the government of the Korean Revolutionary Army, sent us a letter congratulating us on the foundation of the association and expressing his hope that he would be able to maintain close ties with us on the anti-Japanese front in future. Moreover, Park, a nationalist fighter who was active in Shanghai, made a long journey to Manchuria and met the south Manchurian delegates of the ARE. He had exercised a considerable influence on nationalist fighters as a patriot who had been engaged in the independence movement for many years in China proper such as in Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin. Park promised to carry out extensive work for the ARE, embracing the homeland and abroad; he also discussed ways of forming the "Revolutionary Army for Independence" as nationwide armed forces.

As Lee Tong Baek wrote in his article entitled "Mr. X, a leader of the Chondoist religion, personally visits the delegate of our restoration association" in the first issue of the Monthly Samil, Park In Jin, who was a patriarch of the Chondoist religion, also visited the secret camp in Mt. Paektu to see us on learning the happy news of the foundation of the ARE. He promised to persuade the one million members of the Chondogyo Youth Party to join the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

Lee Chang Son, Lee Je Sun, Park Tal and many others came to see us successively and made an active contribution to the expansion of the organizations of the ARE. It will probably be difficult to contain even in several thick volumes the history of the development of the ARE, which expanded in a short space of time, into a nationwide organization, embracing hundreds of thousands of members.

The birth of the ARF at the northern foot of Mt. Paektu in May 1936 constituted a historic event, which

ensured a new turning-point in the development of the Korean revolution and heralded the dawn of national liberation. Thus, the new brighter era of the Korean revolution began to dawn at the foot of Mt. Paektu.

## 13.1. We Struck Commander Wang and Won Over Wan Shun

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Spring 1936 was an unusual season for us. We had planned to do a lot of things that spring. The creation of a new division, formation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, preparations for the building of the Paektusan Base ... as well as the outbreak of important events at Maanshan and other places in the Fusong area, led to the surfacing of many new tasks we had not anticipated.

To deal with these pressing tasks, we needed time to concentrate on them. Developments in the area around us in those days, however, did not give us breathing space. Two forces, which had been operating in Fusong area, were interfering with us and placing obstacles in our way.

One was Commander Wang's "punitive" force of the puppet Manchukuo police, the other was Wan Shun's mountain rebels (an anti-Japanese unit). Wang's title "Commander" carried the connotation that he was the king of the "punitive" forces.

Since the days of his service in the army of warlord Zhang Zuo-lin, Wang had been an expert in "mopping up bandits". He had operated for some time against the Japanese in the self-defense army organized by Tang Ju-wu after the September 18 incident<sup>1</sup>. Consequently we had maintained fairly good terms with him during our expedition to southern Manchuria. However, he surrendered to the Japanese army and became the commander of the police force of puppet Manchukuo, soon after the break-up of the self-defense army, following Tang Ju-wu's retreat to China proper. As a faithful running dog of the Japanese imperialists he had fully displayed his ability in "punitive" operations.

He had never returned empty-handed from his "punitive" operations. He had always destroyed his enemy, cut off the heads or ears of victims and submitted them to his masters. The Japanese used to praise him highly and give him bonuses. He had been especially enthusiastic about the pursuit of Wan Shun's unit, and harassed him in every possible way. Soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist forces operating in Fusong area, trembled even at the glimpse of Wang's shadow. These soldiers called him "Lee To Son of Fusong". Lee To Son, in neighboring Antu County, was a notorious human butcher, whose tenacity, wickedness and brutality was famous throughout Jiandao. Commander Wang was a running dog, who was no less loyal to the Japanese than Lee To Son.

This man, Commander Wang, became our major enemy, a major obstacle in our way, that spring. Wan Shun of the national salvation army also hindered our activities nearly as much as Commander Wang. When we came to Fusong, we intended to make his unit our major ally.

However, his men treated us as their enemy. On the way back from the procurement of clothing supplies for the Children's Corps members at Maanshan, Kim San Ho had been robbed of supplies by mountain rebels. My men had become so indignant, that they had retaliated too severely against the mountain

rebels, who had turned into bandits, although they should have refrained from punishing them. This caused us a bit of trouble and constituted an unexpected headache.

"The 'Koryo Red Army' is too innocent to forgive anyone, who touches poor people's property. They think nothing of our hardships. They are a different tribe and cannot understand us." This rumor spread among the mountain rebels. They even tried to provoke or harm individual soldiers of my unit, whenever they met them. This was the attitude of Wan Shun's unit we need to form a common front with. It was a big headache.

We found ourselves in an analogous situation to the one we had been in, when we had founded the guerrilla army in Jiandao (April 25, 1932). However, our circumstances differed from those in our incipient days in that we were now much stronger, and our military authority had been recognized by the public, so that we were feared by both Commander Wang, who belonged to the enemy camp and Commander Wan Shun, who should have been our ally.

What could be done to remove the obstacles they had set and win a period of quiet time? After much thought I decided to try and maintain peace with Commander Wang, refrain from attacking him, and adopt other measures to form a common front with Commander Wan Shun. I wrote to Commander Wang in the following vein:

We are not strangers to each other. You know me well, and I know you well. So let me state frankly: The Japanese are our major enemy. We do not plan to fight the Manchukuo army and police, as long as they do not harm us. If you agree to our terms, I assure you that we will not attack the police force under your command and the police substations under their jurisdiction, and I propose peace....

The first paragraph of my letter was followed by the terms we proposed, i.e., that he cease "punitive" operations against the mountain rebels, allow free access to the walled town and villages and staying there for the political operatives of the People's Revolutionary Army, stop repressing patriots who supported and assisted the People's Revolution in Fusong County, as long as Commander Wang accepted these terms.

A few days later I received a reply from him, where he said that he fully agreed to our proposal and would accept all the terms we had advanced.

Thus a secret peace agreement was reached between both sides. The agreement was implemented faithfully for some time, and no conflicts arose.

Commander Wang refrained from "mopping up" the mountain rebels, connived at ensuring free access for our operatives or liaison men to the walled towns and concentration villages under his control, and mitigated the repression and arrest of Korean patriots.

We ceased attacking units under his command and refrained from disturbing peace in the garrison area.

When sending out my men to obtain weapons, after burning the bundles of "Minsaengdan" files (April, 1936), I ordered them to fight and capture weapons in the area outside the walled town of Fusong and refrain from disturbing peace in that county.

Wang was not stupid; he was too clever and sensitive. He was well aware of our activities in Jiandao and northern Manchuria, and knew full well how strong we were. This may be the reason why he did not provoke us from the outset.

I learned that, after receiving the information of our appearance in Fusong, he had warned his men, saying:

"Avoid engagement with the 'Koryo Red Army'. If you are careless enough to provoke them, you won't save your skins. Don't attack them at random, as they are a small force. The best thing to do is avoid offending them. Don't provoke a fight you have no chance of winning."

Whenever he saw my men in khaki, Commander Wang used to sneak away, pretending not to have seen them. Whenever he saw mountain rebels in dark uniform, he always attacked them. The unit under my personal command was not a large force, compared to Wan Shun's unit, which was more than a thousand strong. Wan Shun's mountain rebels rather than my unit suffered casualties from attacks by Commander Wang.

The protective clause I had included in the peace terms for the security of Wan Shun's unit was intended to preserve and strengthen the anti-Japanese forces.

In the latter half of the 1930s, the activities of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units were on the wane.

The units of Wang De-lin, Tang Ju-wu, Li Du, Su Bing-wen and others, which were the main force of the national salvation army, had already retreated to China proper via Shanhaiguan or via the Soviet Union. The stalwart anti-Japanese forces, such as Wang Dian-yang and Dian Chen units, had been destroyed by the enemy in repeated bloody battles to save the country from fighting to the last man.

The units commanded by Ding Chao, Wang Yu-zhen and some other units had surrendered to the enemy.

More and more soldiers of the many small units, commanded by Wan Shun and their sister units, operating on the border of Fusong and Linjiang Counties, also surrendered. In autumn 1935, the enemy even held a ceremony at Chushuitan to welcome 90 men, who had surrendered from Ma Xing-shan unit.

The rest of the national salvation army dispersed into small groups, offering passive resistance in deep mountains. Some of them became bandits.

In these circumstances, some communists began to slight the united front with the anti-Japanese units and even regard it as unnecessary. If this state of affairs had continued, our allied front against the Japanese would have lacked consistency.

After the peace agreement with Commander Wang, we began approaching Wan Shun to seek a common front with his unit.

My unit included an elderly man from a unit of mountain rebels.

I sent him to Wan Shun with my letter, which ran as follows:

Your name is widely known to our revolutionary army. We planned to meet you on our arrival in Fusong and discuss with you measures for the joint struggle against the puppet Manchukuo army and the Japanese. However, we could not achieve this goal, because an undesirable clash occurred between us, even before we had exchanged greetings. We regret this fact.

Our political commissar interrogated the mountain rebels, who had been wounded while robbing the revolutionary army of its supplies. The interrogation proved that these rebels had defected from your unit a few months ago and degenerated into bandits.

Nevertheless, rumor has it that my men harmed your men on active duty. This is the sinister work of the enemy, which disapproves of friendly relations between us.

I eagerly hope that both armies will dispel all misunderstanding and distrust, discard ill feelings and enmity, and become comrades-in-arms and brothers and fight on a common front against the Japanese.

Wan Shun ignored our proposal; he did not reply. His silence obviously meant that he felt he could manage without us. The developments in Fusong area had encouraged him to take such an attitude. Commander Wang had, in accordance with the peace agreement, relaxed his attack on Wan Shun's unit and all other anti-Japanese forces. Wang pretended to continue his "punitive" operations, but in fact refrained from hostile action. Wan Shun's small units of mountain rebels were now able to get along without any backing. This situation encouraged their sporadic obstructive moves. However, they gradually ceased to harm us as we provided warnings on more than one occasion.

Although we failed to achieve a common front, we gained stability. Neither Wang's unit nor Wan Shun's unit disturbed us any longer. We were now able to concentrate on our own affairs.

While at Manjiang and Daying, we held peace negotiations with the local military and police forces of the puppet Manchukuo and succeeded in obtaining their promise of non-interference.

We arrived at Manjiang towards the end of April 1936.

Approximately 30 policemen were stationed there. It would have been easy to destroy such a small force. But we did not resort to armed action; we sent our representative and held negotiations with the police force.

We said: We will not touch you; will you allow us to stay in the village? Surely you can leave us alone, as if you had not seen us, and answer, if you were accused by your superiors, that you could not resist, because the guerrilla army was too strong. The police force readily complied with our request. They were even grateful that the guerrillas had come to negotiate rather than attack them.

Lee Tong Hak placed a machine-gun near a house, not far from the defense corps and posted the machine-gunners in civilian clothes to stand guard round the clock.

Meanwhile, at Manjiang I prepared most of the documents to be submitted to the meeting at Tongjiang, related to the foundation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. As there was no danger of attack from the enemy, I was able to continue my work smoothly and quickly.

We were generous and lenient towards the enemy, which was reluctant to fight us. This was our policy towards the enemy, a policy we People's Revolutionary Army throughout the whole anti-Japanese armed struggle.

We did not take up arms to kill others, but rather to save ourselves.

The rescue of our motherland and fellow countrymen: this was the aim and mission of our struggle. Our weapons were only used when it proved necessary to punish the enemy, who were stifling our nation and harming our people's lives and property during their occupation of our country.

The sword of justice in the hands of our army provided benevolent protection to those who deserved to be kept alive, whereas it meted out determined and merciless punishment to those who did not deserve to live, who were wicked and resistant.

Commander Wang, who remained quiet during the spring, resumed for some reason his "punitive" operations against the Chinese anti-Japanese units at the beginning of the summer. He had probably been pressured by the Japanese garrison force and military police stationed in the Fusong county town. The cut heads of soldiers of Chinese anti-Japanese units began to be hung again on telegraph posts in the streets of Fusong, and soldiers of many units under Wan Shun's command began to desert again.

The revived expression of the real nature of mountain rebels as selfish, short-sighted and lukewarm towards the idea of anti-Japanese national salvation, irritated us, as we were working hard to rally anti-Japanese forces. If we had failed to check Wang's "punitive" operations, Wan Shun's unit would have been unable to avoid collapsing.

I wrote to Commander Wang for a second time. I said:



We have received unpleasant information to the effect that the police force under your command have resumed "punitive" operations against the mountain rebels. If this is true, then you have broken our agreement.

I advise you to give the matter prudent thought, lest you stain your honor because of the broken promise.

Bear in mind that our generosity will not apply to an enemy, who is obstinately provocative and resistant....

I received no reply from Commander Wang to the letter of warning though one week passed. The "punitive" attacks on Wan Shun's unit continued. He seemed to be saying: I will not be intimidated by your warnings. I am not a coward. I am ready to accept your challenge. Reinforcements of hundreds of "punitive" troops from Kwangtung Army came to vantage points in Fusong County. Wang became more arrogant than ever.

Early in July I warned Wang again for the last time.

Four or five days after the last letter, I received the news that Wang's unit had surprised a camp of Wan Shun's troops near Dajianchang instead of replying to my letter. At that time we were in a forest in the border area between Fusong and Linjiang Counties.

Wang's action angered me and my comrades-in-arms. It was impossible to expect a commander of the puppet Manchukuo police force, which was under the control of its Japanese masters, to keep his promise with the communists faithfully to the last minute.

However, we did not deny that they were also Chinese and that they had reasons of their own. Trust in that reason underlay our psychological warfare on the puppet Manchukuo army. Our success in persuading Wang and concluding a non-interference agreement resulted from that trust.

Most of the middle and low-ranking officers of the hostile force we had shown our trust in remained loyal to their promise. Such officers included the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army, whom I came to know by chance in Emu, and the battalion commander of the same army, who supplied us regularly with copies of the magazine, Tiejun, from Dapuchaihe.

But Wang, an old acquaintance of mine, discarded his promise, as he would do with a pair of worn-out shoes. A man without faith in his cause will end in perfidy. I believe that Wang was not confident about the victory of the Korean and Chinese peoples over the Japanese. We could not forgive Wang for his treachery. We were enraged at his shooting, in reply to our patience and goodwill.

I summoned Kim San Ho and told him to select approximately 30 elite soldiers and then join the 10th regiment in an action to punish Commander Wang.

Meanwhile we secretly moved the main force to Zuizishan near Xinancha.

Xinancha, although not a large concentration village, was an important base of the enemy's "punitive" operations. Here a police substation and force of the Self-Defense Corps were also located.

During the battle of Xinancha we planned to teach Commander Wang a lesson for breaking the agreement and contain the enemy militarily. We also aimed to capture the weapons needed for our new division.

The new division had been involved in major battles near the River Toudao-Songhua and at Laoling. If the battle of Laoling had been successful, we could have obtained a lot of weapons. The battle had been planned down to the last detail, but an accident occurred, and our plan failed. An enemy scout had happened to sneak in the area of our ambush to relieve himself. Finding the ambush, he had got carried away and opened fire. My man did the same in bewilderment. We killed or wounded dozens of enemy troops and captured some weapons, but the battle was not fought as neatly as we had planned.

We would make up at Xinancha for the failure to destroy all the enemy at Laoling.

At that time we had a Chinese man in our unit who, disgruntled with the chief of the police substation for his wrong doings, had deserted the police force of puppet Manchukuo at Xinancha. He said that the substation chief was a scoundrel hated by the local people. He was a tyrant to the people in the concentration village and the policemen. The Chinese man said angrily that he had joined the guerrilla army to kill Yang, the substation chief, before fighting to liberate China. He knew the village situation well. This knowledge contributed to our decision to fight at Xinancha after Laoling.

The attack on Xinancha would be launched during daylight. Between noon and one o'clock in the afternoon, the policemen were supposed to have their lunch and clean their rifles. By attacking the village when the rifles of the policemen were disassembled for cleaning, we would be able to overwhelm the enemy without facing strong resistance.

The guerrillas, disguised in peasant straw hats and clothes and carrying farm implements with them, approached the mud wall and quickly passed through the gate, and then broke into the police barracks like a thunderbolt. The policemen and substation chief were taken prisoner without much resistance. The Self-Defense Corps members were also all captured. When the battle was over, we improvised an open-air stage in front of the police substation building and provided a theatrical performance, before setting fire to the police building and withdrawing towards Xigang.

We gave the captured policemen political education and traveling money and told them to return to their hometowns. One of the prisoners asked quietly how we guerrillas had broken through the gate. My man said in jest that we had flown in. The captive said that even the devil would be dumbfounded at our methods. He wondered what the guards were doing.

The raid on the police substation caused Wang a strong psychological shock which we had intended.

Wang had to conduct "punitive" operations more aggressively in order to save face.

Kim San Ho disguised the selected 30 men in mountain rebel uniform, and then appeared with them near Fusong county town, in a bid to lure Wang. Kim San Ho himself was, of course, wearing the uniform of mountain rebel platoon leader. We knew well that black was the best decoy for Wang.

Kim San Ho's small unit appeared in a village near the county town at night, dragged out articles from the peasants' houses in imitation of the behavior of mountain rebels, and then proceeded to the village of Huangnihezi, where they disturbed the villagers in the same way, before withdrawing quietly through the valley to the hill behind the village. On receiving the reports of the appearance of "mountain rebels" in the village and their subsequent disappearance, Wang hurried his unit in fury towards Huangnihezi early next morning.

"Don't worry," he said confidently to the villagers. "Prepare a good lunch and wait for me. I'll be back after destroying the bandits. I'll arrive with their heads cut off by that time. Lawless bandits!"

Wang took his unit to pursue the decoy and began climbing the hill, following the traces of its passage.

Half way along the slope of the hill the soldiers of the 10th regiment lay in ambush. By dawn Kim San Ho's small unit had joined the regiment.

Dummies had been set up by our men there to deceive Wang. The men hiding between the dummies opened fire first.

Wang and his men dashed fiercely at the dark dummies in the forest, calling on to surrender. The tenacious resistance of the "mountain rebels" who refused to surrender, run away or fall down, added fuel to Wang's anger. Wang shot with a pistol in each of his hands, but was killed by our men.

We did not know what lessons Wang learned at the last moment of his life. It would be fortunate if he realized, albeit belatedly, what lay in store for him for betraying cause of justice. Even if he had realized, it would have been too late.

At the news of the death of Commander Wang, commanders of the Chinese anti-Japanese units came to see Kim San Ho from many places and asked him to sell Wang's head to them. They said they would hang Wang's head high on the gate of the wail of Fusong so that the whole world could see it and thereby take vengeance upon him for his brutal beheading of many officers and men of the anti-Japanese units, and hanging of their heads on telegraph posts. I told Kim San Ho to make sure that Wang's body was brought to the police in Fusong County, without touching even a thread of his hair.

Later we heard that Commander Wang's funeral ceremony was held in a grand manner. The funeral also helped spread news of our army. The news spread widely among the enemy soldiers, who said that they would gain nothing but death by fighting our revolutionary army.

The battle of Xinancha and the battle of Huangnihezi, where Wang was punished, are described in detail in the novel, History, by Han Sol Ya.

After eliminating Wang, we planned to overwhelm the Japanese troops and thereby keep Fusong County completely under our control. We sent out reconnaissance scouts and collected information from all directions, learning that approximately 60 Japanese troops would move by boat from Fusong towards Linjiang, as luck would have it. I immediately arranged an ambush. This battle also gave us great satisfaction. Most of the enemy soldiers were drowned, and only a dozen narrowly escaped by damaged boat.

During repeated battles of this kind, Fusong area came under our sway.

During the summer we spent some time at Daying. We pitched a tent by the hot spring, and did various work - setting up subordinate organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, arranging a printing shop, tailor's shop, weapons repair shop, hospital and building other secret camps in the forests of Fusong and Linjiang.

An enemy post was located beyond a small hill from our camp. On our arrival at Daying, we notified the enemy in writing that we were staying at the hot spring for some time and that they should therefore refrain from appearing before us or running off anywhere, but should stay where they were, sending the supplies we needed, adding that if they did so, we would guarantee them security.

Although they were within hailing distance, the enemy dared not provoke us or run away. They obeyed our demand for supplies. When we demanded canvas shoes, they brought canvas shoes; when we demanded flour, they brought flour by carts.

Around this time Wan Shun sent a messenger to us with greetings and congratulations on the destruction of Commander Wang. Later, the old man himself came to the hot spring to pay us a visit. He came of his own accord, although he had not even replied to our proposal to form a common front, a proposal we had made by letter and by sending a messenger. The old man's visit came as a surprise. Previously, we had paid visits to Commander Yu and Wu Yi-cheng to form a common front. After removing Commander Wang, famous Wan Shun came to visit us in person.

I found at a glance that Wan Shun was much older than fifty. His eyes were dim, probably because of the poisonous effect of opium.

At our meeting, he said: "All the soldiers of my anti-Japanese unit regard you, Commander Kim, as the greatest benefactor, who has done away with Wang. I have come to thank you, Commander Kim, and tell you that I wish to seal brotherhood with you. Please forget the displeasure caused by my foolish conduct of dotage in the past, and form jiajiali with me, keeping a generous understanding of me, as I have come a long way to see you."

Wan Shun's request embarrassed me for a while. When I proposed the same terms I had offered Commanders Yu and Wu Yi-cheng, when realizing the common front, I said I would consider the matter of jiajiali, if he accepted these terms. According to these terms, his anti-Japanese unit should establish friendly relations with us and remain a friendly force, should on no account surrender to the Japanese imperialists or rob the people of their property, protect our operatives and liaison men and exchange information regularly with us.

To my surprise, Wan Shun agreed to all these conditions with pleasure. As I explained each of the terms, he nodded, exclaiming, "Excellent opinion!" or "Excellent interpretation!" Consequently we formed a common front within a few hours and the two armies became friendly.

Since then Wan Shun never betrayed the agreement. Our campaign to strike Commander Wang and win over Wan Shun marked a significant step in the struggle of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army after the Nanhutou meeting. The event was significant, as we demonstrated the might of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, by displaying military supremacy over the enemy, and as our tireless efforts in the Fusong area laid solid stepping stones used to advance to Mt. Paektu area. These efforts left an indelible impression on the road to realizing a common front between the peoples and patriotic forces of Korea and China.

## 13.2. In the Dear Walled Town

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Wan Shun pinned great hopes on jiajiali or sworn brotherhood. He made this proposal in order to establish good-neighbourly relations with the People's Revolutionary Army and thereby maintain military supremacy over the enemy. Wu Yi-cheng, too, had once proposed the establishment of jiajiali with us. It was a common trend among Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units to enter into alliances with the People's Revolutionary Army by jiajiali and keep the communists bound in the alliance.

But establishing jiajiali or sworn brotherhood did not imply the automatic formation of a common front against the Japanese or its development into a durable alliance.

Solid comradeship can only develop through battle, and its real worth can only be proved by repeated trials. In the new situation governing our advance to Mt. Paektu, a joint military operation to contain the enemy could constitute the best opportunity to make anti-Japanese units loyal allies of the People's Revolutionary Army and establish a durable alliance with them.

The battle of Fusong county town in August 1936 was typical, with special significance in establishing a solid common front with anti-Japanese units.

"Now that we have established a common front, what about attacking a big walled town?" I suggested.

"let's go ahead," he agreed without giving second thoughts to the matter. "With your unit, Commander Kim, I can attack any enemy, can't I? I now feel as if I command the whole world. Let's attack a big walled town."

The mountain rebel commander's answer was surprisingly confident, for he had the habit of turning tail even without attempting to fight, when encountering the Japanese. He might have been bragging in the excitement caused by the effect of opiate smoking.

Wan Shun constantly puffed opiate even in our presence. This expressed his special confidence in us. Usually Chinese opium addicts never smoked opiate in the presence of strangers. Wan Shun's unceremonious attitude was a good sign. He had never smoked opiate, before commanding the anti-Japanese unit. When still young he had been an excellent fighter. He had distinguished himself in every battle and had soon taken command of a large unit.

Once his unit was threatened by total destruction, surrounded by the Japanese. Breaking through the encirclement, it suffered heavy casualties. Wan Shun himself narrowly escaped. This crisis made him a pessimist. The Japanese, who used to fall upon his unit, yelling like wolves hunting in packs, were too strong an enemy for the undisciplined, poorly-equipped soldiers of the anti-Japanese unit. To make matters worse, Commander Wang had been pursuing them and sapping their strength.

Wan Shun had withdrawn into a deep mountain, entrenched his unit in a mud wall and only maintained the existence of his unit by robbing the people of their property, instead of fighting the enemy.

Living at the expense of the people, he had become more and more of a bandit. The old "bandit commander", who had retired into a mountain, had taken to opiate smoking in grief and anger.

Many of his men, tired of such a life in the rebel army, had discarded their guns and returned to their hometowns. Some of them had become bandits, while some of them under a white flag had gone to the barracks of the puppet Manchukuo army. Commanding officers had spent their time on gambling, not even caring how the times were changing. The despotic habit of officers, who beat and swore at their men at the slightest offence, had reduced their relationship to deplorable levels.

Wan Shun's unit was on the brink of total collapse.

They could only be saved from ruin, via an alliance, which would inspire them with confidence in victory through practical joint operations against the enemy. Consequently I proposed an attack on a big walled town, after success in alignment with Wan Shun's unit. Things went smoothly, as he gladly agreed to my proposal.

"All my officers and men are filled with admiration at the way you, Commander Kim, destroyed Commander Wang. The attack on a town, in cooperation with your unit, will be very welcome to them. Please plan the operation immediately," Wan Shun said.

He was very envious of our success in the battles of Laoling, Xinancha, Xigang, Daying and other places. He found our tactics in these battles very mysterious.

He said that famous Chinese generals in the ancient warring age defeated their enemies by resourceful strategy, and that the Japanese fought bravely. He asked me what tactics I used to achieve victory in every battle.

I replied with a smile that the art of war was important, but that the soldiers' mental state was even more vital.

He said he could see with one glance that my men were all courageous and strong. He heaved a deep sigh, complaining that his men were all so stupid that he could hardly trust them. "Don't worry, Commander," I said. "If we jointly fight the Japanese successfully, they will also become courageous without any shadow of a doubt. Please, choose the town we should attack."

Wan Shun waved his hand, asking me to select the target.

We exchanged views about the objective of the attack, but did not reach agreement that day. He seemed to want to attack Fusong county town, but did not insist upon it. That was fortunate for me. Fusong like

Jirin was dear and familiar to me and would never be forgotten in my life.

Fusong was an ordinary county town, which could be found in many parts of Manchuria. When I was a primary schoolboy there, the town had no two-story or higher building or electric lighting.

Most of the hundreds of houses in the town were straw-thatched houses or cottages. There were brick buildings, tile-roofed houses and square wooden houses, but there were so few of them that they could be counted on fingers.

These poverty-stricken thatched houses and cottages were nevertheless as dear to me as part of myself, and Xiaonanmen and the River Songhua I had frequented remained dear to my memory wherever I went and were as dear to me as the memory of the scenery of my home village.

This was the town where I had received my father's will, which served as my compass throughout my life. Ten years had already passed since I, bearing his will in mind, had plodded behind his coffin to the graveyard at Yangdicun. One saying has it that rivers and mountains change over ten years. I wondered if the scenery surrounding the graveyard had changed.

Containment of the enemy in Fusong was extremely significant from various angles in the implementation of our strategic plan to advance to Mt. Paektu. I knew this better than anyone else, but could not easily bring myself to decide to attack Fusong.

After Wan Shun's departure, we began a wide range of reconnaissance work in real earnest to determine a suitable objective of attack while at the same time guiding subordinate organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

While we were busy making preparations for the joint operation with Wan Shun's unit, Li Hong-bin, the commander of the first detachment of Wu Yi-cheng's unit, came to me with his detachment without prior notice. His face was puffy from sweat and his clothes were blotched with crusts of salt and dust, after a long forced march in the sweltering mid-summer heat.

His detachment was the strongest of Wu Yi-cheng's unit. He himself was Wu Yi-cheng's right hand. Able and loyal to his commander, he was held in great affection by him. He was on joking terms with us.

We had met Wu Yi-cheng's unit for a short time at Qinggouzi in northern Manchuria. How come this detachment had traveled as far as Fusong in the wake of the People's Revolutionary Army which was advancing southwards?

"Commander Wu has sent me to you, Commander Kim." The detachment commander enthusiastically conveyed Wu's best regards for me, despite the fatigue of the long march. "The old man told me to fight in cooperation with your unit, as he knew it would be marching southward towards Mt. Paektu. I was really at a loss what to do, when I was told to find your unit.



When I asked how on earth I would find your unit on this vast land of Manchuria, which appears from nowhere and disappears into nowhere, he roared, 'You fool! Why do you worry so much? You may crawl like a crab or on all fours, but don't miss the place where the gunshot is the loudest. There you'll find Commander Kim.' He was right. In Fusong gun cracking were the loudest in the whole of Manchuria."

"Certainly. Our unit makes gunshots almost every day. We soon plan to attack a large town in cooperation with Wan Shun's unit. If you don't mind, I would like your detachment to take part in this operation. What do you say?"

"Why should I mind such a good offer, when Commander Wu sent me over here for cooperation? The old man said that he would also come to join us immediately after dealing with some unsettled affairs."

His arrival at the time of our successful alliance with Wan Shun's unit was a double blessing.

I was thrilled to the heart. Had he come thousands of miles really to help the People's Revolutionary Army? When we met at Qinggouzi, Wu Yi-cheng had been extremely depressed, because Zhou Bao-zhong had not recognized him as forward commander of the anti-Japanese forces, an event which troubled him.

At that time Wu Yi-cheng had not talked a lot about cooperation with us.

The very fact that the man, who had been speaking of grievances against Zhou Bao-zhong, sent Li Hong-bin to us, saying that he would fight on the united front with Kim Il Sung's Communist Party till the last moment of his life, reflected his invariable support and trust in us. He hesitated for some time after Wang De-lin's retreat to China proper via the Soviet Union, but always sought cooperation with us. Without betraying the cause of the united front. This was, indeed, worthy of our respect.

Fortunately, Wan Shun was visiting us at that time; consequently Li Hong-bin joined in the discussion of the joint operation even without taking time off to untie his shoestrings. We discussed the objective of our attack again.

I suggested Mengjiang as the target of our attack. I had stayed at Mengjiang for about a month, recruiting reinforcements and rehabilitating an underground organization, in summer 1932 on my return from my visit to Yang Se Bong's unit at Tonghua. We were familiar with the place and had a foothold there. Consequently I was convinced that I could achieve our objective without difficulty if we fought there.

Wan Shun was not keen on the town, insisting that it was too far away. He insisted that, even if the attack was successful, we might fall into the enemy's encirclement on our way back. He had in mind Fusong county town.

"Commander Kim, let's attack Fusong," Li Hong-bin echoed with clenched fists in excitement. He had

ample reason to speak in favor of Fusong. When leaving Emu, he had sent a company commander of his detachment, Mou Zhen-xing by name, on a reconnaissance mission to learn my whereabouts. However, the company commander had been captured by the gendarmerie in Fusong during his mission. The enemy had pressed him to explain the aim of his entry into the town and the man he planned to meet. He had maintained his silence. The gendarmes had tortured him, pouring boiling water into his mouth. His mouth had been scalded and lips blistered. But the strong-willed company commander had resisted in silence, refusing to stain his honor.

The enemy had dragged out the man to the northern outskirts of the town, along with patriotic peasants in Fusong area, who had been detained on the charge of being "in contact with bandits", and shot him and the peasants. But he was only wounded, and had pretended to be dead. A kind-hearted man had carried him away and treated him, before sending him back to his unit. This undying company commander had brought to light the atrocities of the Japanese gendarmerie in Fusong.

Li Hong-bin gave me a brief recount of the atrocities witnessed by the company commander. After the death of Commander Wang, the Japanese army and police blocked the wall gates and issued permits to the inhabitants, who were supposed to pass through the gates, in order to "arrest all people in touch with bandits". People who went through the gates without a pass or holding an outdated pass were all tortured; any one who resisted was murdered in secret. The brutality of their murder was unprecedented throughout history.

The enemy took the people arrested at the gates, to a hotel near Ximen bridge, locked them up in the hotel, before dragging them at dawn to the brink of the marsh on River Toudao-Songhua and beheaded them. The Japanese soldiers were encouraged to cut off the victims' heads with their swords and see the gushing blood to train their mettle. It was a fiendish act which even the devil would shudder at.

The beheaded bodies were thrown into the marsh. Naturally in later days the people of Fusong called the marsh the harbor for the murdered. The enemy sought out immediately people, who let out the beheading secret and killed them in the same brutal manner. Their bodies were also thrown into the harbor for the murdered.

The blood in my heart boiled with rage. My mind was gripped with the pang of remorse, as I realized that the thoughts of refraining from upsetting my precious memory of Fusong with a gunshot or clouding it with powder fumes, constituted naive feelings of compassion.

Of the many walled towns around Mt. Paektu, Fusong was one of the strategic points, including Linjiang and Changbai, which the enemy attached special importance to. Regarding Fusong as one of the central bases for "suppressing the disturbance of public peace in the eastern frontier region", the Japanese imperialists stationed in that town large forces from Kwangtung Army, puppet Manchukuo army and the police.

Takahashi's crack unit known to have been toughened in battle, was entrenched in the town. It was

therefore very important to put Fusong under our military control and thereby occupy the area round Mt. Paektu.

"Destroy the fiendish enemy entrenched in Fusong county town to wreak the people's vengeance upon him!" and "Save innocent prisoners, who are being beheaded in the walled town like hell!" These continual, hot-blooded outcries seemed to stir me up in my imagination. I must attack Fusong first. In that town, which fills me with tears, guiltless people are murdered at the mercy of the sword of Japanese samurais every day. Why should I go to Mengjiang, knowing that such a tragedy is taking place within a hailing distance?

If I attack Fusong, I shall thereby gain revenge upon the people's enemy, strengthen the united front with the Chinese anti-Japanese units, and occupy Mt. Paektu area without difficulty. Consequently I must fight there without a moment's delay.

I thought that an attack on the town of Fusong would constitute the most sympathetic greetings to the townsfolk, as well as an expression of the warmest and truest love I could ever offer them.

Therefore I decided to attack Fusong and open up a decisive phase in occupying the northwestern area of Mt. Paektu.

After agreeing upon the target of attack, we sent out scouts to reconnoiter the town again. Studying the reconnaissance report, I had the premonition that we had to fight against heavy odds. The town's defenses were far stronger than we had predicted. Like all other walled towns in Manchuria, Fusong was surrounded by a solid mud wall reinforced with gun emplacements.

The only thing in our favor was that a company of the puppet Manchukuo army on guard duty at the wall gates was under our influence and I knew the town's streets well. The company included an organization of the Anti-Japanese Association, which had been formed by political operatives from our unit. The deputy company commander Wang, head of the organization, promised that he would post reliable members of his organization as guards at the wall gates at the attack hour and let them open all the gates at the same time.

We held a briefing, which specified the combat mission of each unit. My unit would occupy the battery on the eastern hill and then destroy the enemy in the town by attacking in the direction of Dananmen and Xiaonanmen. The Chinese anti-Japanese units would attack in the direction of Dongmen and Beimen. We also planned the People's Revolutionary Army's small-unit attacks on Songshuzhen and Wanlianghe (Wanliangxiang) the day before the main attack, in order to divert the attention of the enemy, which was intent on defending the town.

I could add that our battle preparations were satisfactory. We were confident that the battle would end in our victory.

Contrary to our expectations, however, we faced serious difficulties at the outset. This difficulty was caused by the anti-Japanese units, which failed to keep the time of assembly or acted arbitrarily.

From excessive enthusiasm, Li Hong-bin's detachment advanced directly to Dongmen, instead of coming to the designated spot of the assembly area at Jianchanggou, while Wan Shun's unit did not arrive at the appointed hour of assembly. All this irritated me almost beyond endurance. I sent out my orderly to discover what had happened to them and waited for more than an hour, but Wan Shun's men failed to show up at Jianchanggou.

The date and hour of the attack was not an arbitrary decision. The attack had been timed after a full discussion with Wan Shun and all the other anti-Japanese unit commanders about good and bad omens.

The commanders of the anti-Japanese units had been restrained in timing by superstitious considerations. The detachment commander was preoccupied with numbers representing the date and hour of attack.

He insisted that, according to the theory of Yin and Yang, an even number stood for Yin and odd number for Yang and that therefore, to be lucky, important events should be so timed for odd numbers such as 1, 3, 5, 7 and so on to make up the date and hour of attack. We had not taken the theory of Yin and Yang into consideration, when we decided to attack the town at 1 hour on the 17th, which coincided with the 1st of the 7th month by the lunar calendar to Li Hong-bin's satisfaction.

Wan Shun, who had arrived at Jianchanggou earlier with some of his unit, was greatly embarrassed and in the end, made all his men face the eastern sky and chant something like a spell with hands clasped. He must have been wishing for divine help. The other unit commanders reproached the old man for his unit's treachery. Wan Shun was sweating heavily.

I felt pity for the old commander, who was at a loss about what to do, attracting the critical eyes of his colleagues. Strange to say, I wished I could speak in his defense rather than call him to account. Nobody was more enthusiastic about the arrangement of the joint operation than him. Nobody had offered more creative opinions than he had. He had reiterated to his men the importance of keeping the time of operations and observing operational discipline. This provided strong support and encouragement to us, as we attached such great importance to a common front with the anti-Japanese units.

The awkward discrepancy, which obliged me to feel sympathetic with him, lay between his unstinted efforts to effect an alliance with the People's Revolutionary Army and his practical inefficiency, which obstructed the development of the operation.

Nevertheless, I was in no position to sympathize with or pity anybody. As time passed, my heart contracted, for I was in command of the whole operation. I had fought hundreds of battles, but had never been so irritated and embarrassed as I was.

I regretted that I had not given stronger emphasis at the briefing to the need to keep time. I had laid

special emphasis on refraining from harming people's lives and property and damaging our relations with the people. I had not wished to see the recurrence in Fusong of the misconduct, committed by the men of the anti-Japanese units in the battle of Dongning county town and would not tolerate it.

I had not been particularly concerned about the potential delay in the arrival of Wan Shun's unit. The neglected matter caused me the greater shock.

The shocking accident which might reverse the tide of the battle, drove us into a critical situation, which placed us between two alternatives - adopt flexible measures or abandon the battle itself. It was impossible to discard the operation, which had been prepared with such great effort. Any cancellation of the attempted attack would dampen the morale of the soldiers of the anti-Japanese units and the People's Revolutionary Army, a morale which had soared in anticipation of the joint operation.

Lack of opiate for Wan Shun's officers and men had caused their delayed move. Many of them were opium addicts. Without smoking opium, they could not march at the required speed. To make the joint operation succeed, we had to send opium to Wan Shun's unit, which was on the march.

If we had not taken such emergency measures, the unit would have spent the whole day on their way.

After the battle of Emu county town, Wang Run-cheng had told me that the anti-Japanese units had acquitted themselves comparatively well in the joint operation, thanks to opium. At that time I had accepted his words as a mere joke. Learning that the delay of Wan Shun's unit was caused by a lack of opium, I understood that Wang had told me the truth.

Wan Shun's unit arrived much later than the fixed time. The regimental commander of the main force was the last person to arrive, gasping for breath, and report to his commander of the arrival.

Wan Shun drew his Mauser from his holster and threatened to shoot the regimental commander.

I had never felt the harm of opiate more keenly than at that moment. This painful experience led us to enforce later on awful regulations on shooting opium addicts in the guerrilla army.

Allegedly opium heralded the downfall of the Qing dynasty, which was several hundred years old. Qing fought two Opium Wars against Britain which had smuggled opium into Qing. The opium grown in India flowed into Qing and turned millions of people into opium addicts. In return a tremendous amount of silver flowed out from Qing. Britain made fabulous profits from opium dealing.

Lin Ze-xu and other progressives of Qing roused the people to resist opium smuggling, against the British aggressors. The resistance was fierce, but Qing had to yield Hong Kong, a part of its territory, to Britain, owing to the treachery of her ruling class.

After all, we can truly say that opium swallowed up China. Opium was the cause of the greatest disgrace

and pain the Qing dynasty left to the Chinese nation in the 19th and 20th centuries. Even in the 1930s secret opium dealing was widespread in Manchuria. Many of the people who led hand-to-mouth existence, to say nothing of the rich and government officials, smoked opium. Whenever I saw opium addicts looking vacantly at the world with dim eyes and sniveling noses, I could not help recollecting the long bleeding history of our neighbor and feeling pity for her people.

All the assembled units marched at gasping speed, but in vain. The members of the Anti-Japanese Association from the company of the puppet Manchukuo army, who had been standing sentry at the wall gates, waiting for the promised signal, poured sand into the breeches of their machine-guns at the hour of relief and withdrew from their guard posts. Our plan of passing through the gates by stealth to destroy at a stroke the enemy in the walled town failed to work from the very start.

Frankly speaking, at the time I thought we should give up fighting. In that situation it might be wiser to put off the battle to a later date.

However, our hatred for the enemy was too strong, and our expectations from that battle in our plan to occupy Mt. Paektu area were too great for us to abstain from attacking Fusong, which was drenched in blood and close in our sights.

If our 1,800-strong force retreated even without attempting to attack, what would become of us? The public would despise us as a rabble. The great cause of the common front against the Japanese would fizzle out. The gunshots we planned to sound on Mt. Paektu might have no effect.

I called upon the commanding officers of the People's Revolutionary Army to stand in the van in difficult situations and lead the battle, which had been prepared with such great efforts, to victory at the risk of their lives.

The battle began after all that complexity.

On my attack order, the men of the People's Revolutionary Army seized the battery on the eastern hill in one go and charged in the direction of Xiaonanmen. The soldiers of the anti-Japanese units also advanced towards Beimen and Dongmen. A hand-to-hand fight occurred in the street in front of Xiaonanmen. An enemy machine-gun spat fire at our men, who were closing in at the gate. At my command post near Xiaonanmen, I was almost deafened by the cracking of a machine-gun.

The units of the People's Revolutionary Army broke through the gate into the town with fire support from their machine-gun company.

The breakthrough was made by the self-sacrificing efforts of my men. I received a report that Wan Shun's unit, which had been attacking Beimen, was retreating, frightened off by the roar of enemy gunfire. I ordered company commander Lee Tong Hak to take his company to Beimen at once to help Wan Shun's unit.

A little later, Li Hong-bin's men, who had been attacking Dongmen, began retreating, frustrated by the enemy's counterattack, so that the enemy force, which had come out of Dongmen, was swarming towards Xiaonanmen.

To make matters worse, the report that Jon Kwang's small unit had returned without raiding Wanlianghe distressed me. The River Toudao Songhua had been flooded, and therefore it was impossible to cross. The fear of roaring enemy gunfire was not the only reason for the retreat of Wan Shun's unit from Beimen. They mistook the small unit returning from its raiding mission for an enemy reinforcement and were afraid that they might be attacked from front and behind.

Wan Shun's disarrayed attacking formation badly affected Li Hong-bin's unit on his flank, and the latter broke up. Jon Kwang's belated report of his failure to perform the raiding mission had such a destructive effect on combat as a whole.

The confused battle situation had not calmed down, when the day was already breaking. The situation was becoming more and more unfavorable as the minutes passed. Li Hong-bin came running to me.

"General," he said, "it seems hopeless. If we waste any more time, we will be totally destroyed."

He implied an immediate general retreat.

"Ah, it's all over for me!" he cried, looking up helplessly at the gray of the morning sky. I gripped him by the shoulder and shouted at him, "Detachment commander, don't be discouraged too much. We must brace up in a situation like this and turn the misfortune into a blessing. Do you recall the saying that woe lurks in good luck, and blessing lurks in misfortune?"

I did not say this because I had any bright idea to turn the misfortune into a blessing. I was merely reaffirming my decision to take the battle initiative by employing luring tactics as the anti-Japanese units had begun retreating.

Luring the enemy out of a walled town into a valley in an unfavorable situation to encircle it and thereby destroy it constituted a tactical principle of guerrilla warfare. I had this alternative in mind when planning the battle. However, this kind of tactics could only be effective when applied at night.

We were poised between two choices: withdraw from the engagement before daylight or launch a frontal charge, unafraid of death.

Even after deciding to employ luring tactics, I hesitated about ordering a retreat for fear of possible casualties, when a miracle happened. A thick fog suddenly covered the town and the surrounding area and made it impossible to see an inch ahead.

I ordered all the unit commanders to gather the scattered soldiers and withdraw onto the eastern hill and the ridge of Xiaomalugou.

The enemy pursued in haste our retreating forces.

When we started climbing the eastern hill, I heard a gunshot from the col under the hill. I halted with apprehension, for I remembered I had left seven or eight women soldiers in the col to let them prepare the morning meal after the battle. The enemy believed our main force had retreated to that hill and seemed to be attempting to forestall us, by occupying the col and then striking my C.P. and the main force from both sides.

The rifle cracklings at the col grew louder. Evidently the women soldiers were exchanging heavy fire with a large enemy force.

I sent out my orderly to ascertain what was happening at the col. The orderly returned with the answer that Comrades Kim Hwak Sil and Kim Jong Suk were determined to hold out at any cost to ensure the security of Headquarters. I should say that my C.P. was saved by the heroic efforts of the women soldiers, who checked the enemy at the col that day. If they had failed to contain the enemy, we would have been unable to climb the hill to forestall the enemy. The women and fourth company of the 7th regiment defended the eastern hill, braving death.

While fierce fighting took place for the col, the main force of the 7th regiment occupied the heights, south of the eastern hill and lay waiting in ambush in a long line. The anti-Japanese units also secured the opposite ridge with the valley in between. Only then did the company, which had been covering the retreat of the main force, withdraw through the foggy valley, luring the enemy. The company also reached the shoulder of the hill and lay in ambush.

Takahashi's unit which had been notorious for beheading fell into a trap, which provided no escape. The outcome of the battle was now as good as decided.

The cracklings of fire engagement between our soldiers on the hill and the enemy down in the valley reverberated for some time. Takahashi's men bravely attacked in waves as Wan Shun had said, but each of the attacking waves was repulsed, causing many deaths. Realizing that their charges had no effect, the enemy ceased fire and lay flat at the foot of the hill awaiting the arrival of reinforcements.

I ordered a counterattack.

At the melodious bugle signal, my men dashed at the enemy, mowing them down. Kim Myong Ju, a squad leader of the 7th regiment, who was nicknamed "Yanji Prison", led the men in hand-to-hand combat.

Kim Myong Ju had been arrested in the May 30 revolt and imprisoned in Yanji prison. He had tried to



escape with other members of the underground organization in the prison on six occasions in five years. He had killed the chief warder with an ax and succeeded in the last attempt. He earned this nickname from his comrades-in-arms in honor of the success.

He had another nickname: Chilsongja, which meant a pistol loaded with seven cartridges at a time. He had distinguished himself in seven big battles before he was wounded. His comrades coined the nickname to remember the events. He was a lion of our unit, who did not fear death. Ryo Yong Jun, a company commander of the 8th regiment, who had given Kim Myong Ju self-sacrificing assistance in the struggle to escape from Yanji prison, fought no less courageously than Chilsongja. They became bosom friends in the struggle.



*Photo: Kim Hwak Sil, the 'woman general'.*

Kim Hwak Sil, nicknamed "Woman General" of the guerrilla army, shot her machine-gun with both eyes wide open all the time. When asked why she did not close one eye, she answered that she wanted to look squarely at the ugly faces of the Japanese. She mowed down the screaming enemy with her machine-gun. She also joined in the bayonet charge that day.

The battle of Fusong also produced an anecdote about Kim Jong Suk who, with a Mauser in each of her hands, killed more than a dozen enemy soldiers by firing shots as if shooting a machine-gun.

Wan Shun's regimental commander, who had been threatened with a Mauser because of opium, stood on a rock, commanding his unit in the rain of enemy fire. All the anti-Japanese units fully displayed their real strength that day.

Takahashi's "crack unit" was totally destroyed in the valley. The tragic event was reported to the Kwangtung Army headquarters on the morning of the same day. As I learned later from reading the Tong-A Ilbo and Joson Ilbo, enemy bombers with full loads of ammunition took off from the airfield in Xinjing on a mission to support the troops in Fusong, and enemy reinforcements left Tonghua, Huanren and Sipingjie in great haste. The garrison force in Junggangjin was also sent to Fusong on an emergency mission.

Takahashi had probably sent a very exaggerated report to Kwangtung Army headquarters, just as battalion commander Wen at Luozigou had done. Otherwise, why would they have sent such large reinforcements to Fusong and make such a great commotion? Enemy forces also surged from Linjiang, Changbai, Mengjiang and other neighboring counties towards Fusong to rescue Takahashi. But even these frantic efforts made at great speed were unable to rescue Takahashi from the trap. When some of these reinforcements arrived at Fusong on the afternoon of August 17th, the outcome of the battle had already been decided.

As we withdrew deep into the forest after the search of the battlefield, the enemy bombers from Xinjing blindly dropped bombs over the gun emplacement on the eastern hill, which had been destroyed at our hands, and over the people's houses around the town.

"Commander Kim, weren't these aircraft caught by your hypnotism?" Wan Shun said, looking up gloatingly at the madly diving bombers.

That single comment was enough to convince me that the aim of the battle had been achieved to my satisfaction.

In front of Wan Shun all the hundreds of his men, with full loads of booty on their backs, marched triumphantly, led by the regimental commander. Who would believe that these light-gaited, bright-faced men had once failed to keep the assembly hour and had thrown the operation into chaos for lack of opium? Sounds of laughter rose continually from their marching column.

"If we continue fighting in this manner, these men may give up smoking opiate," I said to Wan Shun confidently, pointing at the men. "Won't you forgive the regimental commander, please?"

At these words, Wan Shun's eyes became moist.

"Thank you, Commander Kim. That was what I should have asked you. Your advice has forgiven us all, I believe. Now I think my men can do their bit. I will remain loyal to the united front with you, Commander Kim, like Wu Yi-cheng until the last moment of my life."

The battle of Fusong county town, as in Dongning county town and Luozigou was doubtlessly a momentous event, which paved the way to transforming the ideology of the officers and men of the anti-Japanese units. They realized the taste of a united front in this battle.

Practice will always give people more tangible and stronger belief than a theory. The validity of our idea and theory of a united front with the anti-Japanese units was proved again in the battle of Fusong county town.

This battle taught us many serious tactical lessons. I had fought many battles, but had never experienced such a changeable situation. A battle situation usually changes with the movement of the enemy. However, in the battle of Fusong an abnormal situation occurred because of our own carelessness, and resulted in temporary confusion.

When an unexpected change occurs in a battle and an obstacle results, owing to the change, the commander must cope with the situation by adopting flexible measures with an iron will, audacity and sober judgment and break through the difficulty with composure. I think this is an inevitable requirement for the battle against the enemy, to safeguard state interests and in the efforts to harness nature and transform society. To meet the changing situation skillfully and make a prompt decision in accordance

with the occasion are the major qualities, which all commanding officers must possess.

I consider the results of the battle of Fusong county town to be very satisfactory. To be frank, we attached greater importance to the political impact of the victory than to the military and technical significance.

It was politically significant because we strengthened the common front with the anti-Japanese units and brought the northwestern area of Mt. Paektu definitely under our control. The number of destroyed enemy troops and the amount of booty are dim in my memory. But I do not regret it in the least.

## 13.3. Premiere of The Sea of Blood

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Considerable studies have been devoted to the literature and arts created during the revolution against the Japanese. Most of the original pieces have been discovered and work on adapting them to modern aesthetic tastes has on the whole been finished. The literature and arts, which were created in the flames of war against the Japanese, now constitute our Party's tradition of literature and arts. These treasures hold a special place in the history of our literature and arts.

I do not plan to deal with the theory of anti-Japanese revolutionary literature and arts as professionals do. I merely want to talk about the performance of our unit at Manjiang in order to help people understand the whole picture of literature and arts during the anti-Japanese revolution.

I was fully aware that creating a complete piece of art required no less difficult and complex mental efforts than an attack on a walled town. But we spared no time and efforts on artistic activities and did not hesitate to do anything, if it helped these activities. If our guerrilla army had contained a writer or artist, it would have been unnecessary for me to rack my own brains for literary creation and production. Unfortunately, however, none of our unit had been a professional writer or artist.

Naturally, some men of literature, encouraged by the battle results of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and our high reputation, attempted to join the army.

If they had succeeded in joining the army, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army could have had a staff of historians to keep records of its activities, as well as a staff of talented editors, writers and artists to publish army publications and produce works of art for effective propaganda and agitation.

However, there was not even a trained historian. Consequently historical records were kept by non-professionals. Lee Tong Baek and Lim Chun Chu did most of this work. They tried to compile as much material as possible, but most of them were lost or buried by overlapping events of history.

Our scholars set about studying the history of the anti-Japanese revolution after liberation, virtually without any written materials. Most historical materials were compiled on the basis of reminiscences by veterans of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. Reference was made to available enemy documents, but some of them were distorted, exaggerated or understated.

This caused no small difficulty in the compilation of a systematic and authentic description of the history. To make matters worse, the counterrevolutionary factionalists, who occupied important posts of the propaganda sector, hindered this work or were indifferent so that a full-scale collection of historical materials about the anti-Japanese revolution only started towards the end of the 1950s.

These particular circumstances should be considered responsible for minor discrepancies in the dates and

places of events in different books dealing with the history of the anti-Japanese revolution.

The veterans of the anti-Japanese revolution fought to make history, rather than leave their names in history. When we fought in the mountains, we broke through all difficulties, without caring if we were remembered or not by coming generations. If we had taken up arms to leave our names in history, we would have been unable to achieve a great historical success, now known as the history of the anti-Japanese revolution by the present generation.

As we had to fight guerrilla warfare, moving constantly from place to place to counter the encircling and pursuing enemy, we were in no position to keep safely even a single sheet of secret papers. We used to destroy even a slip of information from the enemy-held area for the sake of security, as soon as we read it. Documents and photographs considered to be of historical value were packed and sent to the Comintern.

In 1939, for instance, we sent several knapsacks of documents to the Comintern. However, they did not reach the addressee. Much of the information lost at that time appeared in police documents of the Japanese imperialists and publications. This is no doubt why the messengers were killed by the enemy on their way. If we ever brought anything with us when we returned home in triumph, it was not a historical record or a document about the organizations, but rather a pocketbook, which contained revolutionary songs or a memo of our comrades' names and other personal data.

The absence of materials was the greatest difficulty for our scholars in their studies of the history of the anti-Japanese revolution.

Lackeys of imperialism, hack writers and scholars on the bourgeois pay-roll, ignorant of the special circumstances and complexities of our revolution, try in every possible way, by garbling some figures and facts from a few sheets of papers, to belittle the history of the anti-Japanese revolution, a history made at the cost of the lives and blood by the sons and daughters of Korea, who were unfailingly loyal to their motherland and the revolutionary cause.

It is not surprising or novel that people who reject our ideas and social system hurl all sorts of abuse to belittle the revolutionary history of our Party. History cannot be tarred with a brush, burnt up or slashed away with a sword. Whatever they say, our history will remain as it is.

I think it was immediately after the meeting at Donggang that we conceived the idea of *The Sea of Blood* and began working on the script. Our motive for creating this drama came, I should say, mainly from the Song of "Punitive" Operation in Jiandao.

I learnt the song in my childhood from my father. My father used to tell me and my friends about the "punitive" actions in Jiandao. When I went to eastern Manchuria in command of the guerrilla army organized in Antu, I discovered that the local people suffered an indescribable tragedy, owing to the "punitive" operations of the Japanese army and police. Jiandao was literally a sea of blood; dozens and

even hundreds of people were massacred every day by the swords and bayonets of the "punitive" troops.

Whenever I saw a sea of blood I was reminded of the Song of "Punitive" Operation in Jiandao, and whenever I remembered the song, I was enraged at the sufferings of our nation. To my surprise, however, the overwhelming majority of the Koreans living in Jiandao continued their courageous resistance, armed with rifles and clubs, rather than yielding to their tragic fate. This all-out resistance even involved the women, who had been bound by three bonds and five moral rules and three principles of obedience preached by Confucianism, and their children, who used to grumble over their food on their mothers' laps. I was deeply moved by them.

The women's ability to leave the bounds of their homes and plunge into a movement for a social change represented a revolution. I felt boundless respect and affection for the heroes and heroines of the revolution. As I provided support to them and sympathized with them, the images of a woman and her children, who followed in the footsteps of their fallen revolutionary husband and father formed and developed in my mind.

I sincerely wanted to produce a work dealing with the principal character of such a woman. During our stay in Fusong for many days, we staged artistic performances at many places to educate the people. After each battle we gave a performance there and then or, if the situation did not permit it, made a speech to stir up the people before the unit's withdrawal. The audience warmly applauded the simple sketches performed by the men of the revolutionary army.

Once my comrades sang the Song of "Punitive" Operation in Jiandao at an entertainment after the battle. All the audience, men and women, young and old, cursed the Japanese imperialists and resolved in tears to fight the Japanese. Seeing how all people were moved to tears by the song at the entertainment, something I had not expected, I could not repress an impulse to stage a real dramatic performance to enlighten the people more zealously. But the pressure of time did not permit my dream to come true.

When the meeting at Donggang was over, however, RI Tong Baek unexpectedly kindled my dormant desire. He obtained a newly published literary magazine at a village and showed it to me. The magazine carried a story dealing with the wife of a champion of a social movement serving a prison term, a woman who was married to another man, leaving her child in the care of others after the imprisonment of her former husband.

I asked RI Tong Baek how he liked the story.

"It makes me sad," he answered with a sad smile on his lips. "To think that life can be like that. But can I help it?"

"Then, do you mean to say that the story is true?"

"It contains some of the truth. I am sorry to say, but the wife of my old acquaintance, a champion of a

social movement, fell in love with a loafer and deserted her husband and child."

"How can we say that such a rare accident represents the truth? Most of the women I have seen in Korea and Manchuria were loyal to their husbands and children and to their neighbors and country. When their husbands were jailed, they themselves took up the cause of their husbands and devoted all their energies to the revolution, carrying bombs and bundles of leaflets with them! When their husbands fell in revolutionary battle, they dressed themselves in army uniform and took up arms to destroy the enemy by standing in the ranks, where their husbands had stood! When their children went hungry, they experienced all manner of hardships to feed their kids, even if they had to beg! That is what Korean women are.

"What if one overlooks this true character of theirs and profanes the wife of a revolutionary, just as Lee Kwang Su did? One may become the target of a barrage of women's washing clubs, just as Lee Kwang Su was showered with beer bottles in the streets of Seoul, when he published a 'theory of national reform'. Our mothers' or sisters' washing clubs are not only used when they seize weapons from the enemy. This is the truth. What do you think, Mr. Lee?"

Lee Tong Baek cast a significant glance at me, abruptly changed his attitude and agreed, saying, "You are right. That is the truth."

I knew that the basic aim of literature was to describe the truth. Only when it represents the truth can literature lead the reader to a beautiful and noble world. The genuine mission of art and literature is to reflect the truth and guide the popular masses to a beautiful and noble world.

That day we talked for a long time about fine women fighters, women workers, whom we knew and could put forward as exemplary in terms of morality and chastity.

"General, could you produce a drama dealing with the fate of a woman revolutionary?" he asked me abruptly at the close of the talk.

"How did the idea of dramatic production come to you? Aren't you looking back upon the dramatic activities, you conducted at a school in Jiandao where you taught?" "I thought we should teach a lesson to the people, who write a cheap novel like this," he said, fingering the magazine.

"The idea of describing a woman revolutionary is good," I agreed. "But you need a subject matter for the drama, don't you? Tell me if you have one in mind."

"It is about the genuine woman of Korea. I mean that we should show the true character of Korean women. The sufferings of the Korean nation inevitably involved even women in the revolutionary struggle, as struggle is the only means of survival. This is what I have in mind. What do you think, General?"

I was surprised by his words. The subject was similar to what I had been seeking in Jiandao, when designing a play about a woman.

"Since you have the subject, why don't you write it yourself?" I said.

"I am a critic, not a creative man," he remarked in surprise. "You will write it, General. If you do, I will direct its staging."

I did not provide a definite reply. However, the image of a simple woman I had conceived, a woman who recovers from her grief over the loss of her husband and child in a sea of blood to take up the path of struggle, had grown clearer and clearer in my mind, since I received Lee's request. The fascinating image of the heroine excited me. I began writing. By the time my unit had arrived at Manjiang, just over half my work on the script had been done.

Dramatic creation was not a totally new experience to me. We had performed plays in Fusong and particularly in Jirin and Wujiazi. However, since I started the armed struggle, we had not staged many plays. During the first half of the 1930s, some of us were enthusiastic about dramatic activity in the guerrilla base, but we were not as active as we had been in our days in Jirin. Plays required so much time and effort that even those keen on art in the guerrilla zone were unable to devote much effort to this venture.

Why did we undertake the task of dramatic creation and make such painstaking efforts on the difficult march down to Mt. Paektu?

We were greatly encouraged by the extremely attractive power and effectiveness of dramatic art to inspire the masses with a revolutionary consciousness. In those days hardly any artistic genre could grip the hearts of the masses as strongly as a drama did. Until silent motion picture became talkies, and the latter was popularized throughout the world, no form of art was drama's equal in educative influence.

I had been one of the many drama fans of my classmates in my Changdok School days. Whenever a renowned travelling dramatic company came to play in Pyongyang, I went to the town with Kang Yun Bom to see the performance.

Drama is a popular art suited to the masses. Anyone in the audience can comment, "Good!" "Bad!" or "Acceptable!" on the spot.

The 1920s and 1930s were a period of dramatic efflorescence, a dramatic heyday. By the time I had entered Changdok School, the decadent drama had given way to a new dramatic school, which won the audience's admiration.

Progressive writers and artists devoted their energies to the dramatic movement of the proletariat. They formed drama troupes and gave performances for workers and peasants, by traveling from place to place.



Such troupes frequented Pyongyang.

Hwang Chol, Sim Yong and their colleagues, renowned in the dramatic circle of our country after liberation, had committed themselves to the dramatic movement since the 1920s and 1930s.

In those days drama was fashionable. Even a rural school, with an enrollment of about 50 pupils, would advertise dramatic performances of its own production. Stimulated by the trend of the times, we were also involved in the dramatic movement in the initial period of our revolutionary activities.

Writing the script of *The Sea of Blood* was a process of collective wisdom. My comrades gave me valuable advice on the composition of the play and also single details and a few words of dialogue.

After the joint meeting at Donggang with commanding officers of the anti-Japanese units to review the victorious battle of Fusong county town, I moved to Manjiang west of Mt. Paektu in command of the main force.

Manjiang is a village on a wide plateau immediately below Mt. Paektu. It is located on the southern tip of Fusong County. Changbai is located to the south across Duogu Pass, and Linjiang is located to the southwest beyond Laoling Pass.

In 1936 Manjiang was a small sprawling village of about 80 houses. This slash-and-burners' village was one of the few Korean settlements in the Fusong area, such as Nandianzi, Yangdicun, Wanlihe, Tunzidong, etc. Unlike Antu, not many Koreans lived in Fusong. Manjiang was an out-of-the-way mountain village far from the county town.

Sparsely populated and unfrequented by travellers, the place seemed secluded from the other part of the human world. When there were some travellers, they were peddlers selling combs, dye or salt. Even social figures in Fusong seldom visited Manjiang. I suppose the area controller Choe Jin Yong had been to the place a few times, and Yon Pyong Jun, his successor, five or six times.

Incidentally I would like to say a few words about Yon Pyong Jun. He was a unit commander in Hong Bom Do's Independence Army. After the Independence Army moved to Maritime Province, he came to Fusong for some unknown reason and assumed the office of area controller, a local administrative officer of the Jongui-bu, and worked for some time, enjoying a high reputation among the people.

He subsequently retired from the office and practised acupuncture at Dapuchaihe, a village located on a highland between Antu and Dunhua. Once Kim San Ho, who had been to the village, spoke very highly of his medical skills and advised me to be treated by him. I went to the doctor and he felt my pulse, before adding that I was clearly exhausted. He asked if I could obtain an antler or wild ginseng(ginseng). He said that he would write a prescription for me, if I could get them. I took medicine according to his prescription and managed to recover.

One year, long after my return to the homeland after liberation, an official suffered from infirmity. Recollecting the prescription I advised the official to apply the remedy. A few months later, he told me that the remedy was surprisingly effective. I reminded him that the prescription was not my own, but one obtained from a doctor, Yon Pyong Jun, in Manchuria many decades earlier.

The doctor was familiar with Manjiang for some reason I didn't know.

Manjiang was noted for potatoes, a special product of the place. Some of the potatoes were as large as a baby's pillow like those produced from Naitoushan. The River Manjiang teemed with yomugo (*Brachymystax lenox*).

Villagers of Manjiang used containers and tableware, made by gouging out wood or warping birch bark. Even their spoons and jars for keeping bean paste and kimchi were made of wood. When our marching column arrived at the spot, where two birch trees stood at the outskirts to the village, as if they were a natural gate, the village head Ho Rak Yo and other villagers, who had somehow known that we were coming, were waiting for us, with wooden jars and wooden vessels, filled with cool home-made alcoholic drinks.

The village head said that news of the battle of Fusong county town had been brought by a peasant, who had been to the town to buy salt, and that since then he had begun to watch the enemy's movement. On the occasions when he had seen Japanese aircraft flying over Manjiang, he had believed that the revolutionary army was coming to his village.

"I am afraid you will be punished for welcoming us openly like this," I said to the village head, after gulping down a wooden cup of undistilled home-made liquor.

"Don't worry. Since the revolutionary army was over here in spring, the policemen in Manjiang even grovel before us. Moreover, on hearing of Commander Wang's death and the defeat of the Japanese in county town, they tremble with fear."

"Soldiers of the revolutionary army, will you dance this time, too?" A peasant asked in a loud voice from the bridge over River Manjiang at that moment.

During an art performance at Manjiang in the spring, several guerrillas from the Hunchun unit had mounted the stage and danced a Russian dance. The guerrillas from Hunchun, a town in the area bordering the Soviet Union, were very good at imitating Russian songs and dances. Seeing the dance, the villagers had become wide-eyed and exclaimed, "What a novel dance! To dance stamping their feet like that! We knew that a dance could be performed by waving arms and heaving shoulders. But that dance was spectacular."

"Yes, yes, not only a dance, but a far more splendid show," Lee Tong Baek replied. He meant a dramatic performance.

My Headquarters was billeted on the village head. His house had been closely associated with my father. When saved by Kong Yong from the hands of mounted bandits ten years earlier, my father had stayed first in that house, and had then been escorted to Fusong by Kong Yong and the village head.

In this house I resumed my work on the script of *The Sea of Blood*. As Jon Kuk Jin was dead and Kim Yong Guk, who edited the People's Revolutionary Army paper *Sogwang* and contributed a few stories of his own composition to it in later days, had not yet joined the army, I also had to work on the script on my own at Manjiang.

To help me out, Lee Tong Baek collected various kinds of newspapers, magazines and pamphlets, which had been published in the homeland.

These publications provided me with detailed information on political events, social and economic situations and developments in the literary and art circles in the homeland. The general trend of progressive literature and art movement in its form and content in those days was patriotic in the sense that it tried to protect what was national from the Japanese imperialist policy of obliterating national culture, and develop them.

The progressive literature of our country during Japanese imperialist rule played a leading role in instilling patriotic spirit and the idea of independence in the people, and indicating the direction of the development of drama, cinema, music, fine arts, dance and all other forms of art, as well as their contents.

The literature movement of progressive writers, known as literature of a new trend, gave birth to the KAPF (Korea Artista Proleta Federacio) in 1925. Since the birth of the KAPF, the progressive literature of Korea had contributed to the development of proletarian art and literature, which represented and championed the interests of the working class, peasantry and other working people. By the efforts of Lee Ki Yong, Han Sol Ya, Song Yong, Park Se Yong, Jo Myong Hui and other celebrated writers of the KAPF, *My Home Town*, *Twilight*, *Refuse Any Interview!*, *A Mountain Swallow*, *The River Raktong* and many other excellent works were produced and became popular among the people.

Some writers produced excellent works, which served the people as their mental pabulum and guide, even if they were forced to eke out their livelihood by selling red-bean porridge in Jongno Street, Seoul. Each of the works resembled an explosive, which threatened the vicious colonial rule of the Japanese imperialists.

The voice of KAPF writers was always shadowed by the Japanese army and police, as well as their detectives, who were bent on thought repression. The louder their voices grew, the more repressive the enemy became. Two round-ups put a tragic end to the existence of the KAPF in 1935, which marked the tenth anniversary of its foundation.

Even when faced by two alternatives - to accept "national literature" or converted literature forced upon them by the Japanese imperialists or break their pens and give up writing - most of KAPF writers preserved their conscience as progressive men of letters. Lee Ki Yong went to the deep mountain of Inner Kumgang and took up slash-and-burn farming, remaining an honest intellectual and ardently patriotic writer. Han Sol Ya and Song Yong also upheld their honor, although they had to lead a hand-to-mouth existence.

The Japanese imperialists managed to disband the KAPF, but failed to break the unflagging spirit of resistance of Korean literature and its lifeblood, which germinated and thrived on the soil of patriotism.

As KAPF writers were dragged into prison or fled into mountains, the intellectuals in the ranks of the anti-Japanese revolution, writers in the northern border area and Korean writers in exile in the Red area of China proper and the socialist Soviet Union created a new militant revolutionary literature, which made an active contribution to the Korean communist movement and the cause of national liberation.

These writers held in high repute the anti-Japanese revolutionaries, who were fighting ceaseless bloody battles on the rugged Paektu mountains and in the wilderness of Manchuria for many years as the heroes of the nation, praised and loved them and continually sympathized with them.

Kang Kyong Ae, a woman novelist, who gained renown later for her authorship of the Human Question, wrote a novel, Salt, in Longjing. In this work she described the Jiandao people assisting the revolutionary army.

The poets, Lee Chan and Kim Ram In, carried on their creative activities in the border area: and their efforts attracted our attention. When we were in west Jiandao, Lee Chan worked in Samsu and Hyesanjin on the other side of the River Yalu. In those days he wrote the Snowing Night in Posong, an excellent lyric expressing his boundless adoration for the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

In November of the year when we founded the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland at Donggang, Kim Ram In, who was working in Junggangjin on the opposite riverside of Linjiang, founded Development of Poetry, a literary coterie magazine, whose front cover was inscribed with a red flag. He composed and published many revolutionary poems, which praised the anti-Japanese armed struggle and advocated Korea's independence. He secretly printed 2,000 copies of the Ten-point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in his printing shop and sent them to us.

Some writers, encouraged by the battle results of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, attempted to join the army. Novelist Kim Sa Yang, determined to join the army, traveled about the wilderness of Manchuria, but failed to find our unit. He went to Yanan, where he wrote a long travelogue, A Jade Covers Thousands of Miles.

It is not surprising that Mt. Paektu, Thunder, Korea Fights, Steel-like Youth Unit and other successful works were produced in our literary circles during the construction of a new country and the great war

against the United States by writers, who had been affiliated with revolutionary organizations or desired to join the army before liberation.

We owe our ability to quickly develop a new culture, which catered to the tastes of the Korean people in a short period after liberation, to those writers who, although not directly in the armed ranks, wielded their pens in the spirit of armed soldiers, and thereby made an active contribution to the enlightenment of the nation.

Patriotic artists and progressive figures in our country also pioneered the domain of film art, despite all hardships, determined to serve the people through film production, resolved not to lag behind Japan and other developed countries, and also aimed to demonstrate to the world our ability to stand on our own feet in the cinema as well. Ra Un Gyu and other conscientious artists produced Arirang and other films rich in national tastes and demonstrated their real fibre.

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed a determined struggle in the field of literature and art to preserve the national spirit and develop national products, in defiance of the murky stream of Japanese ways and fashion.

During this period Choe Sung Hui succeeded in her attempts to modernize the Korean dance. She conducted a close study of the folk dance, Buddhist dance, sorceress dance, court dance, kisaeng dance and so on, and selected gracious dance movements of strong national mood. In this way she helped lay the foundations for the development of modern Korean dance.

Previously, our national dance had failed to reach the level of stage presentation. Music pieces, vocal, instrumental and narrative works, but not dances, had enjoyed their place on stage. The refinement of dance movements by Choe Sung Hui and resultant choreographic productions, which catered to modern tastes, altered the situation. Dances claimed a legitimate place in stage presentation, along with their sister arts.

Choe Sung Hui's dances were warmly acclaimed at home and also in France, Germany and other civilized countries.

During our advance on west Jiandao, the news of a shocking event, referred to as obliteration of the flag of the Rising Sun, reached the foot-hills of Mt. Paektu from the homeland.

The incident was triggered off, when Tong-A Ilbo erased the Japanese national flag from the breast of Son Ki Jong, when carrying an article and photograph of the marathon first prize winner in the Summer Olympic Games in Berlin in August 1936.

The infuriated government-general authorities outlawed the newspaper and arrested the persons involved in the incident. On hearing the news, we gave a public lecture about Son Ki Jong's success in the Olympic Games and the incident of the Japanese flag obliteration. All the men of our unit, who heard the

lecture, expressed warm support and solidarity with the newspaper's editorial staff, which had adopted a patriotic stand and taken courageous action.

When I finished the script of *The Sea of Blood*, I showed it to old man "Tobacco Pipe". He read it through and said that it was acceptable, and then went out, waving the manuscript.

Some episodic reminiscences about the dramatic performances at Manjiang and similar accounts of people on an expedition to the place have already been published. Some inaccuracies were revealed due to memory lapses while other facts were totally forgotten. It is especially regrettable that nothing has been mentioned about Lee Tong Baek's efforts.

The old man, who had volunteered to act as stage director, first encountered difficulties in casting. Nobody wanted to play the part of the "commander of the punitive force". After repeated discussions, the part was imposed on the open-hearted company commander Lee Tong Hak. The role of Ul Nam's mother was assigned to Jang Chol Gu and then transferred to Kim Hwak Sil.

Kap Sun's part was given to Kim Hye Sun. The selection of the part of Ul Nam, Kap Sun's brother, troubled the old man no less than the choice of the "punitive force commander". Nobody in our unit was suitable for the part of the boy aged ten. So we used a boy from the village of Manjiang for the part.

The old man also had a lot of trouble directing. He worried most of all about directing the boy, who was to play Ul Nam's part. However, the mountain boy was the quickest to understand the director's intentions.

Instead, the director was annoyed by the adults' poor acting. Nearly all the actors and actresses looked awkward, as they did not know how to pose on stage.

Once on stage, even Kim Hye Sun, who was very sensible and responsive, became stiff about her eyes and spoke strangely. In one scene where she was meant to weep, she simply shut her mouth. The director did everything he could to make her cry by coaxing her, encouraging her, even flying off the handle, but all in vain.

No one knew why she acted so crudely despite all the training by the director. Born into a poor family she had enjoyed no access to schooling. She had learned to write and sing by hearing and watching others beyond the school fences.

I reminded her of her experiences in the homeland and Jiandao and told her that the play was about the lives of people like her. I said, "Just imagine that Ul Nam, who was shot by the Japanese, is your brother. The brother, who was calling you 'sister, sister' a short while ago, is now lying dead. Why shouldn't his sister moan over his tragic death?"

Her acting suddenly improved.

I gave Lee Tong Hak a good dressing down, as he had declared to the director that he would rather go and take a few “punitive force commanders” prisoner than foul his mouth by imitating such scoundrels. I instructed him that skilful acting was his combat mission, and insisted that he had no right to complain about the part again.

The villagers were surprised to see that we guerrillas, who had arrived with nothing other than rifles and knapsacks on our shoulders, had improvised a stage to give a dramatic performance, which provided them with a new experience.

As their life experience unfolded on stage, the audience was drawn, with bated breath, into the world of drama and finally wept with Kap Sun and cried with the mother. An old man forgot that he was watching a play and jumped onto the stage, striking the forehead of Lee Tong Hak with his long smoking pipe, who was playing the part of the Japanese "punitive force commander", who had shot dead Ul Nam.

The villagers, who saw the premiere of *The Sea of Blood*, could not sleep all night. The simple people of a mountain village sat up by their oil lamps, talking about their impressions of the play. Loud voices and the laughter of many people from some houses could be heard.

I took a long walk in night dew up and down the village. The murmur, laughter and breathing of the village, which was rejoicing over the experience of the show, kept me from going to bed.

I marveled at the great effect of art. From today's point of view, the play at Manjiang was too simple to be worthy of the name. To my surprise, however, the audience cried, laughed, tore at their breasts, clapped and stamped their feet.

Walking along the lane of Manjiang, I wondered what the people would be doing now if we had not given the performance. As the village head said, they would have lulled themselves to sleep or would have been dreaming in darkness, after putting out their lights since early evening. However, their lights were still burning. We brought light to the village so to speak. Could we create such great excitement in their minds, if we brought them a hundred sacks of rice?

The play we performed at Manjiang enlightened the ignorant mountain people, young and old, educated them to become active participants in the anti-Japanese revolution and its supporters. Many young villagers mounted the stage and volunteered to join the army.

Manjiang became a large source of our recruits, as well as a reliable supply base.

The strong impression left by the play on the villagers can be judged by the mere fact that they recalled the event by naming the venue of the performance and the characters, vividly relating the details of the story and even some dialogues to the members of an expedition to the old revolutionary battlefield, who were visiting the village more than 20 years after the event.

The ideas and emotions of the revolutionary army flowed, like the stream of Manjiang, into the brains, hearts and lungs of the people through the performance of The Sea of Blood. I can say, in short, that the art of the period of the anti-Japanese revolution acted as a light, which dispelled darkness as well as drum beats, rousing people to fight. We called our art activity a "drum gun"; the name is justifiable from any angle.

I believe that modern arts have exactly the same mission. The basic mission of today's arts is to accord people true thoughts, true morality and the true culture needed for their independent, worthwhile lives.

Our men were talented. I should say, in the final analysis, that art is ennobling, but is on no account a mysterious undertaking. The people not only enjoy art, they also create it in the true sense of the word.

The performance of The Sea of Blood made a great contribution, by giving the guerrillas better ideological, cultural and emotional training.

Recollecting art activity at Manjiang in detail, I said to the writers, who were on a visit to my home immediately after liberation, "When we fought in the mountain, we were very sorry we had no professional writers and artists by our side. We ourselves had to compose music, write scripts, and direct plays. But now you are the masters. I hope you will produce good works and encourage the people, who have turned out to build a new Korea."

Through the literature and arts of the period of the anti-Japanese revolution we realized that an excellent poem, play or story could stir up thousands of hearts and that a revolutionary song could pierce the enemy's heart which was beyond the reach of a bayonet. I can say that awakening the people to revolutionary awareness is a process, where you win their sympathy for revolutionary ideas and move them. The literature and arts are one of the most effective means of moving them.

I once said to Odaka Yoshiko (Li Xiang-lan), a renowned Japanese vocalist and ex-member of the House of Councilors, that there were songs and dances in life. There should be life where there are people, and there should be arts where there is life. How can a world without art be called a human world, and how can life without art be called human life?

Consequently I always tell people that they should love literature and arts, and that all the nation should know how to enjoy them and create them.

We have built a world-famous kingdom of art, where everyone dances and sings. This constituted the earnest desire and dream we cherished when we performed The Sea of Blood on an improvised stage in the light of burning pine-knots and kerosene lamps at Manjiang. We have now built theatres, cinemas and houses of culture capable of accommodating thousands of people in all parts of the country. You can find an art university in each province. I hope that our younger generation will sing all the songs their previous generation could not sing and that they will continue to create arts, fragrant with the spirit of



Mt. Paektu.

We now call the play Phibada in our mother tongue; the original name was Hyolhae . Apparently some of the audience and people who took part in the performance continued to stage the play in different places under the title "Hyolhaega" or "Hyolhaejichang". During this time, the plot and names of the characters underwent a slight change, and in some places episodes were replaced by others, which were more familiar to the local people.

The performance of The Sea of Blood was followed by the staging of The Fate of a Self-Defense Corps Man, where guerrillas other than those who had taken part in The Sea of Blood vied with one another to participate.

After liberation our writers and artists discovered all the works, which had been performed at Manjiang.

Comrade Kim Jong Il defined the works we created during the anti-Japanese revolution as parent works, as the genesis of our revolutionary drama and revolutionary opera and provided energetic guidance to their adaptation into films, novels, operas and dramas.

During this time, revolutionary films, revolutionary novels, the Sea-of-Blood-style revolutionary operas and Songhwangdang-style dramas were evolved on the basis of the originals, and an anti-Japanese guerrilla mode of art activity was established.

The premiere of the film version of The Sea of Blood reminded me of the kerosene lamps, which hung on the improvised stage and the audience laughing and crying in excitement, sitting on straw mats at Manjiang.

I wish I could see again the unforgettable faces of the people, who warmly acclaimed our success in the performance. During a lapse of more than half a century, the people who were old then must have passed away, but some other people my age and younger individuals may still live at Manjiang. The boy who played Ul Nam's part will now be an old man in his sixties if he is still alive.

## 13.4. The Women's Brigade

Koreans once called Lee Kwan Rin, the only woman soldier of the Independence Army, a "red flower in luxuriant green". But the thriving ranks of the revolutionary force, with the anti-Japanese guerrilla army at its core, included hundreds and even thousands of beautiful red flowers of our nation.

The mothers and daughters of this land, enthused with intense love for their country, dedicated their youth, homes and lives to the sacred war to drive out the Japanese invaders from this land, without yielding to adversity on the path of revolution, despite untold physical stress and mental strain, overtaxing even the strength of the male sex.



*Photo: Kim Il Sung's women guerrillas*

Whenever I remember the laudable women fighters, I recollect a women's company, which was formed in spring 1936, around the time when the main division of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was organized.

The formation of the separate women's company, as well as the division, on our way to Mt. Paektu after the meeting at Nanhutou, was a momentous event, which heralded rapid expansion of the guerrilla force and a fresh upsurge in the anti-Japanese armed struggle as a whole. The birth of the women's company signified

that Korean women, locked up in feudal fetters in back parlors for ages, now stood on the first line of revolutionary battle.

When we talk about female social position nowadays, we say figuratively that women are "one wheel of the revolution". However, many people rejected this idea during the revolution against the Japanese. It is no exaggeration to say that scarcely anyone believed that women could engage in manual combat a long time shoulder to shoulder with men.

To be quite frank, at first I also considered a female presence on the field as unnatural. The thought of their tender physical constitutions, which in my prejudiced opinion, would be unable to withstand all the hardships of guerrilla warfare, stood uppermost in my mind.

Of course, we were aware that in history some women had amazed the world by the battle exploits they had performed, when destroying aggressors or had given rise to fascinating anecdotes. The exploits of Kye Wol Hyang, a renowned Pyongyang kisaeng (*Ed. Korean term for geisha or call girls*), who participated in the beheading of Konishi, a commander of Japanese invaders, and of the woman patriot Ron Kae in Jinju were well-known.

The readers of Imjinrok will be able to imagine how fierce the battle of Haengju mountain fort was, and the gallant role played by Korean women in that battle. As General Kwon Ryul fought with his back to the wall on the mountain fort in Koyang County, Kyonggi Province, against 30,000 Japanese samurais, who had surrounded the fort, the women of Haengju were busy carrying stones in their skirts to supply them to Korean soldiers, who were slinging stone missiles. The short skirts worn by the women patriots in the battle served as the origin for the apron worn by all Korean housewives, when doing kitchen work or used as a decoration. The apron was named Haengju apron after the fort.



*Photo: The sisterhood of Kim Il Sung female warriors*

Sol Juk Hwa was also renowned for her accomplishments, dressed in male clothing, when she destroyed the marauders from Kitan during the Koryo dynasty.

There were historical accounts of the distinguished military services rendered by such individual heroines, but hardly any instance of a hand-to-hand combat fought by a purely women's unit.

However, in the guerrilla war we were fighting, women would not only play an auxiliary role as nurses, sewing-unit members or cooks. They would also be combatants. Once they joined the army, they would have to obey the implacable logic of war. The rigors of war would not make any exception for women. The battle situation would require them to do the same as men, to make at times a forced march, fully equipped and heavily loaded, for several days on end, fight, prone on frozen ground, under heavy artillery fire or plunge into a bayonet charge. They would have to be sent to an enemy-held area for political work or the acquisition of food, or would have to build earthwork in the severe cold. There was no knowing how long they would have to fight, for a few years or decades, eating and sleeping rough in severe winter cold.

Could women endure all these hardships? Would it be right to bring them to such a battlefield, where the threat of death would loom over them at all times? This was a question I felt unable to decide.

Many women comrades, who had been working for the revolution since our days in Jirin, requested that I admit them to the army. Han Yong Ae, for instance, beseeched me to let her fight among the guerrillas. But I left her behind in northern Manchuria when I moved to eastern Manchuria. Some girl members of

the Children's Association in Jirin followed me as far as Dunhua, expressing a desire to join the guerrilla army. Some women comrades in central Manchuria wrote to me, asking to be recruited. Although I knew that they were intensely patriotic, I declined their requests.

In those days I thought: It would be unacceptable for women to participate in the armed struggle, which was for men. A woman's place was elsewhere. It would be alright to bring them from their back parlors and let them work for the revolution, but how could I allow them to fight under arms?

As guerrilla units began to be formed in many places, after full preparations were made, women grew more vocal about participation in the armed struggle. Many women comrades, who had been working in underground organizations, came to the guerrilla army without permission and refused to leave for all the advice given by their comrades.

These circumstances obliged us to raise the issue of women's armed service for earnest debate.

Some married men flatly rejected the very idea of recruiting them. They said: "According to our ancestral customs, women have their place at home, and men outside the home. Admittedly, Lee Kwan Rin was once a soldier of the Independence Army, who swaggered about, wearing a pistol. But she was one out of a thousand. How can ordinary women trek rugged mountains and endure the hardships of guerrilla warfare, which can even be difficult for a man to withstand? It would be foolhardy to take women on the battlefield." Some comrades even argued against the need to debate the matter.



*Photo: Ryon Po Bae, a woman partisan.*

By contrast, Cha Kwang Su and some other comrades brushed aside these arguments. Cha said, "Surely you accept that a matriarchal system existed for a long time in history, and that according to this system men lived under women's protection?"

"If a child is caught in a fire, the mother is the first to rush in to rescue her child. What is more, when the country is bleeding, why should women remain onlookers? We should be aware that our sisters themselves want to join the army and that the times call for them to fight in the army."

The discussion was repeated over and over again, but no decision was reached. We decided to organize the guerrilla army with young men first and then observe further developments, before discussing the matter again.

The deferred argument on women's participation in the army was resolved, when the news of the women's struggle to capture enemy weapons in Jiandao reached us. Two peerlessly daring women in Helong County had struck a Japanese policeman with washing clubs and snatched his rifle. The report silenced all those, who had opposed women's military action. The whole of Jiandao had turned out to

obtain weapons.

Kim Su Bok, an eighteen-year-old girl, who had realized the importance of weapons with the help of her organization, racked her brains on how to obtain a weapon. She went with a friend with a laundry basket on her head to the site of a single-log bridge over a stream. Heavy rain had washed off the bridge a few days before. Only piers remained. The two girls pretended to be washing, waiting for a good chance all day.

Towards sunset a Japanese policeman appeared and ordered them to carry him on their backs across the stream. Kim Su Bok walked into the stream with the man on her back, and her friend followed, pretending to help. When they reached mid-stream, she hurled the man into the water, as he was complaining of his feet being wet, and then clubbed him to a pulp. The two girls thus avenged the murder of their parents and joined the anti-Japanese guerrilla army in summer 1933. For this venture Kim Su Bok was nicknamed "washing club".

Park Su Hwan also captured a weapon from the enemy by knocking him out with a washing club. She later became the sewing-unit leader of our army's main force. In one instance, a group of women lured policemen to drink wine and seized many weapons.

No certificate provided better proof of the mental ability and strong will of our women than the weapons they captured. In the northern border of Korea and many parts of Manchuria a large number of women joined the army with the weapons they had captured.

What did the radical advance of these women and their profound change signify? What impelled these women to take up heroic armed resistance, who used to tend their kitchen gardens, lamenting over their lot in feudal fetters, which had bound them hundreds of years? This was the terrible plight suffered by the Korean women, where there was no way out other than manual combat.

The women had no other heritage than the chain of bondage and grievances. This was the worst crime committed by Korean feudal society; it had kept all women in the bondage of male supremacy, a state of inhumane existence. Women had been considered no better than house servants, who were destined to produce offspring, cook and serve food, weed crop fields and weave cloth, until their fingers were worn out. Even young widows were compelled to remain widows all their lives. Women were sold off to pay debts.

The Japanese imperialists, who occupied Korea, made the women even more miserable by turning them into instruments and commodities and labeled them as the women of a ruined nation.

The anti-Japanese revolution acted as a tempest, which would sweep off all these misfortunes and irrationalities, a historic event to lead the women of this country along a revolutionary path. The Korean women began to write their new history on the ground with their blood rather than a pen.



*Photo: Lee Sun Hee, a woman warrior.*

As the number of women soldiers increased, we thought that we should take better care of them. Although under arms, women were women. Even under the difficult circumstances of guerrilla warfare, we had to make sure that they lived like women.

After the appearance of women soldiers in the guerrilla army, we always took special care of them, as we would look after our own sisters. We equipped them with the best rifles, provided them with the snuggest shelters we could afford, and gave them the best choice of booty.

During this time, I felt a need to upgrade their special treatment and form a separate unit for women soldiers in order to establish a single organization for their daily routine and military action. I believed that a separate women's company would inspire them with greater revolutionary pride and enthusiasm, encourage them to display their self-consciousness and combat power to the maximum, and relieve them from life's discomforts. They burned with a unanimous desire to take up arms and take revenge on the enemy by killing at least a few of them, as this enemy had murdered their parents and brothers. At the sewing unit, at the hospital and cooking unit I heard them voice this earnest desire unanimously.

When we were forming a new division in Fusong, I came to a firm decision to organize a separate women's company directly under Headquarters.

The hundred plus "Minsaengdan" suspects, who became the backbone of the new division, included Jang Chol Gu, Kim Hwak Sil and many other women soldiers.

On learning that the files of the "Minsaengdan" suspects had been burnt and that all suspects had been absolved, the other suspects hiding in different places came to us. They included many women, such as Lee Kye Sun, Kim Son, Jong Man Gum, etc. Many others came to us individually, like Park Rok Kum, who brought her beddings on her head. Many women came in groups, together with small units, which had been operating independently at Dajianchang and Wudaoyangcha and were admitted to the new division.



*Photo: Park Rok Kum, a female commander.*

When we went to the secret camp at Mihunzhen, Kim Chol Ho and Ho Song Suk, members of the sewing unit there, entreated me to transfer them to a combat unit. However much I tried to dissuade them, they would not listen to me. The whole of the sewing unit insisted on following us to fight. I asked them who would make clothes for the soldiers if they were all gone; they replied that there was any number of infirm women who could take their place. As I was to discover, there were so many women comrades at Mihunzhen, that they were more than enough for the work of the sewing unit, hospital and cooking unit. The surplus women had to be assigned to a combat company or more effective measures had to be taken.

I thought of forming a separate women's company on an experimental basis. But a company needed more than the surplus women at Mihunzhen. I confided in Choe Hyon that if the women continued to insist on fighting on the first line, he should try and form a women's platoon.

One day I hinted to Park Rok Kum, "What about forming a purely women's combat company?" She welcomed the idea with cheers. But Kim San Ho and Lee Tong Hak inclined their heads dubiously.

"Can women fight alone?" Kim San Ho remarked. "It seems impossible for them to fight successfully alone hordes of ferocious Japanese, although things might be different, if the company and its platoons were commanded by men...."

"If they are commanded by men, how can they be called a women's company or a women's platoon? If they are women's units, they must fight under female command," I said in disagreement.

"I wonder if it is possible."

"Did you become commanding officers by going to a military academy or military university?" Kim San Ho was speechless; he still seemed dubious. Lee Tong Hak also shook his head, exclaiming, "A women's company! A women's company!..."

Kim Ju Hyon was astonished at our mention of the women's company. He said that the women's company would ruin a battle, and asked what would become of the reputation of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

Around April 1936, when we were busy in Manjiang preparing for the formation of a women's company, a composite unit of men and women came to us. Although a composite unit, it contained only four or five men, with the remainder made up of women, including Kim Chol Ho, Ho Song Suk, Choe Jang Suk and Hwang Sun Hui.

I asked Kim Chol Ho why she had come, abandoning Comrade Choe Hyon, who was ill. She said that

Choe Hyon had sent her to me. Choe Hyon, who had recovered by then, had formed a small unit of women by selecting healthy women, as they tenaciously asked him to send them to a combat unit. He had told them to come to me and added that on arrival they would find out why they were being sent. Obviously, he wanted to be relieved of any annoyance caused by the insistent women and leave even their fate at my disposal.



*Photo: Kim Chul Ho, a female commander, married to Choe Hyon.*

The leader of Kim Chol Ho's small unit was a young boy surnamed Jo. Feeling it strange to see a young recruit like a newly-hatched chicken leading the small unit, I asked why. Ho Song Suk complained, "Comrade Choe Hyon takes no account of soldiers in skirts. He only wants us to provide kitchen duty, rather than make one of us leader."

The assistant leader of the small unit was also a young recruit named Thae Pyong Ryol. The role of the real leader was played by Choe Jang Suk, a tall woman of sturdy build. As well as her rifle and knapsack, she carried a cauldron, containing a sackful of grain, kitchen utensils, axe and saw on her back; the load was larger than the individual. Ho Song Suk also carried a load, which was not much smaller than Choe's. Truth to tell, I had never seen during my guerrilla activity any of my men or women carrying a load larger than theirs. I helped Choe Jang Suk unload and found it too heavy for me to hold. "You are a titan!" I exclaimed.

"She swallowed a hundred dumplings for dinner," Thae Pyong Ryol said with a grin. "She gulped down sixty and then forty again, after being relieved from her guard duty. She digested them all, and nothing was wrong with her stomach. She really is a female titan!" We all burst into boisterous laughter.

Choe Jang Suk said, glaring at the boy, that he was telling a sheer lie.

"No, it isn't a lie. How can you carry such a tremendous load if you don't eat a hundred dumplings at a meal?" More laughter burst out as I supported the boy.

That day I tactfully arranged a strength contest for men and women.

I called a soldier first, who was known to be as strong as a bear, and told him to try lifting the knapsack which Ho Song Suk had brought. His young bones were said to have grown hard, as he worked with a hoe, and he had gained renown as a first-rate wrestling champion in the area of Wangqing. He was also known as a glutton, who had eaten at one meal thirty-five glutinous-rice cakes by dipping them in cold water.

He stood up easily with the load on his back. I slung two taotongs (*Ed. homemade rifles*) on his shoulders and asked him how long he could walk with all the load on his back without taking a rest. He replied that he could go about four kilometers without a break.



Then, I told him to try Choe Jang Suk's load. With the load on his back he stood up with great difficulty. I slung the two taotongs on his shoulders again and asked how long he could march. He answered that he could go about two kilometers.

When I asked Choe Jang Suk how much distance she had covered with the load, she was too shy to answer. Kim Chol Ho answered that Choe had marched all the way from Dapuchaihe without a rest after the battle there. Everyone became wide-eyed. It was nearly 25 miles from Dapuchaihe.



*Photo: Choe Sun San, a female guerrilla.*

Choe Jang Suk was the winner in the contest. I told Ho Song Suk to the women's small unit, with Choe Jang Suk as the "vanguard leader", had run out of food supplies on its way to us. After suffering many hardships, they met a Chinese anti-Japanese unit in a mountain and jointly raided with them a concentration village near Dapuchaihe. In that battle the women fought as courageously as men.

The Chinese soldiers were armed with modern rifles, but when they were counterattacked by the Manchukuo police force who had at first retreated, they ran away in all directions. The women, however, fought the enemy bravely, although they were equipped with outmoded tao-tongs. They destroyed the enemy force, which had been attacking in the direction of the line held by the Chinese.

The woman who stood watch that day fought self-sacrificing. Although bleeding from a wound on her side, she stubbornly contained the enemy. One enemy soldier after another fell from her shots. Some of the enemy began to retreat dragging dead bodies away. The women charged at the fleeing enemy shouting war cries. The commander of the Chinese shouted at his men, "You sons of a bitch! You're running away, while the Korean women fight courageously even with tuotongs." The men of the anti-Japanese unit now joined in pursuit. The battle ended in our victory.

Hearing the battle story, we were all moved deeply by the courage, audacity and fortitude of the women soldiers.

The birth of the women's company was formally announced in a forest near Manjiang in April 1936. We kept the company under the direct control of the headquarters, forming its platoons and squads. Park Rok Kum was appointed company commander.

The women's company was the first of its kind in the development of the armed forces in our country.

The birth of the company broke the convention of male supremacy, a social evil, which had been considered incurable for thousands of years, and put women's mental and social positions on a par with those of men.

Ever since ancient times male supremacy had been practiced in the military field more strictly than in politics. Certainly, the women's franchise had been almost totally neglected in the political field. In many instances, the women's influence, which had worked invisibly like a magical power on the opposite sex, affected politics and politicians and resulted even in the rise and fall of states.

Nevertheless, the fair sex, which was said to be more powerful at times than an emperor or army commander, was powerless in the military field. Military affairs were the monopoly of the male sex. By realizing women's equality in the military field, we emancipated women, albeit in the limited scope of our revolutionary army.

The emergence of the women's company was also significant in that it emphasized the national scale and popular character of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

The existence of a women's company in the revolutionary army and its combat efficiency, which was no inferior to male units, soon became known to the whole nation and amazed the world as a whole.

In the latter half of the 1930s, a newspaper in the homeland carried a report entitled, "More Than a Dozen Women Soldiers in Kim Il Sung's Unit". The brief title had a tremendous effect on the minds of our people.

The fact that women were engaging in manual combat against the Japanese as courageously as men inspired all Korean women and other people with great strength. The news encouraged a large number of people at home and abroad to volunteer to fight for the People's Revolutionary Army.

After the formation of the women's company, we helped it carefully stand on its own feet and toughened it through battle. At every opportunity available, we told the women soldiers moving stories to enhance their political enthusiasm and awareness.

I recall how at Xiaotanghe we told them the story of Kim Stankevich.

Kim Stankevich was born and grew up in Russia. She was a renowned Korean woman fighter, who dedicated her all life to the cause of communism. Her parent came from Kyongwon County (Saeppol County), North Hamgyong Province.



*Lee Wha Rang notes: Photo: Kim Alexandra Stankevich (left) and Maria (a Chinese), circa 1917. Kim Alexandria Petrovna was born on February 22, 1885 in a Korean village near Usurisk, Siberia, a hotbed of Korean nationalism. Her father, Kim Du Suh came to Russia in 1869, crossing the Tumen River from his home town of Gung-hung, South Hamgyong Province. Later he went to Manchuria to fight the Japanese. Alexandria followed her father to China in 1895, but he died leaving her in the care of his comrade in arms, Stankevich. She was sent to Vladivostok to attend girls' school. After graduation, she became a teacher and married Stankevich's son. She left her husband and moved to the Urals region and became a political activist. She was a charter member of the Russian Socialist Workers Party in 1917. She returned to Siberia in July 1917 and promoted Bolshevism among left-leaning POWs interned in Siberia, forming an international*

*communist brigade. She joined the Korean Red Brigade in June 1918.*

*Lenin sent Alexandra Kim, the first Korean woman to join the Soviet Communist Party, to Siberia to organize the Korean resistance against the Japanese. The first Korean migration to Siberia predated as early as to the time of Jesus Christ, if not earlier. By the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, some 300,000 first-generation Koreans lived in Siberia. Poor Korean farmers saw an opportunity to own a farm in Virgin Siberia and Korean nationalists found a refuge and an eager ally there. There rose Korean towns in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Irkutsk, Chita and other major regions in Siberia. Korean farms were scattered all over Siberia.*

*Alexandria intervened on half of Yi and Yi was released from prison for the last time in his life. On June 28, 1918, Yi Dong Whi organized the Korean People's Socialist Party in Khabarovsk, Siberia. Yi tried to mobilize Korean and Chinese nationalists in Siberia against the Japanese and Czarists in Siberia. In August 1918, Yi met Lenin in Moscow to discuss the Korean situation. Lenin said to his close associates that: "We must help Comrade Yi here. He has hot blood for Korean independence but no method. This is a natural Oriental condition. They have no revolutionary base but only a background of terrorism and military action."*

*On September 4, 1918, the Japanese troops and the White Russians took over Khabarovsk and captured scores of Korean communists including Alexandra Kim, the first Korean woman communist and an independence fighter. Many non-communist Koreans sided with the White Russians. Alexandria was executed at 4 a.m., September 16, 1918 by a firing squad. She shouted "Freedom and Independence for Korea!", her final word. During the next six months, Vladivostok and its surrounding towns would change hands more than six times and both sides killed thousands of Koreans. Terror stricken Koreans poured into Manchuria.*

She graduated from a normal college and taught at a primary school. As more and more Korean compatriots and exiles came to Russia, she gave up teaching and moved to Vladivostok, where she devoted herself to championing the rights and interests of the Korean workers living in various parts of Russia.

After the Tsar was overthrown, she joined the Bolshevik Party and left her husband and children at home, becoming a professional revolutionary, in order to protect the gains of the October Revolution. While in charge of external affairs at the Far-Eastern Department of the Bolshevik Party in Khabarovsk, she encouraged Lee Tong Hwi, Kim Rip and other Korean independence fighters to organize the Korean Socialist Party.

Her remarkable activity was admired by all Koreans in the Maritime Provinces and other parts of Russia, and won their active response.

When the Far-Eastern Department of the Bolshevik Party withdrew from Khabarovsk, as the situation in this part of Russia turned in favor of counterrevolution, she remained there to wind up unsettled affairs and then left there by steamer, but was unfortunately captured by the White Party on the River Amur and shot to death. At the last moment of her life she shouted at the enemy, "I am not afraid of death. You, rascals, your days are numbered. You resemble a pack of dogs in a mourning house and will never overthrow communism. Your goal is a pipedream." She died at the age of thirty-four.



*Photo: Lee Kwnag Rin. See Chapter 2 Section 5 for more on Lee.*

As well as Kim Stankevich, Sol Juk Hwa, Kye Wol Hyang, Ryu Kwan Sun, Lee Kwan Rin and other heroines became close spiritual friends of our women soldiers.

Immediately after its appearance, the women's company attracted public attention. Wherever they went, the women soldiers were loved and respected by the people. Whenever women soldiers wearing caps with five-pointed star emblems and carbines on their shoulders appeared at a distance, people used to shout, running around the whole village, "Women soldiers are coming!"

The women soldiers won exceptional love from the people, because they behaved themselves properly in all situations, sincerely helping and respecting the people and displaying noble and beautiful moral characters. Whenever in billets, we could see women soldiers sweeping the yards of the houses, they were staying in, fetching water, washing up the dinner things or weeding kitchen gardens to help the mistresses.

The women soldiers danced and sang songs for the people, made speeches before them and taught them how to read and write. The women's company was the pride and rare flower of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

To tell the truth, the company in its incipient days was not properly equipped. Most of its weapons were taotongs. Some of the women did not even have such weapons. We intended to arm them with light and attractive carbines and fought a few battles, but had no chance of capturing carbines.

Meanwhile, we received information that the garrison troops of the barracks. I decided to raid the construction site and gave the combat mission to the women's company. I accompanied them close to the construction site to encourage them. The battle was very impressive.

A downpour was looming. The enemy stopped working and even the sentry was off his guard. At the signal shot given by the company commander Park Rok Kum, the women, lying in ambush near the construction site, rushed at the enemy like angry tigers and pointed their gun muzzles at the enemy's breasts, shouting, "Hands up!" "Hands up!" here and there.

An enemy soldier picked up a rifle from the rack and attempted to resist. Jang Jong Suk swiftly knocked him out with her rifle butt. The battle ended within ten minutes. Several enemy soldiers were killed, with the rest taken prisoner. Dozens of small arms were captured in battle. To my regret, there was no carbine among the booty. A prisoner said that the carbines had been carried by the soldiers out on mounted patrol. The prisoners were surprised to know that they had been raided and captured by women guerrillas.

The women's company distinguished itself in many subsequent battles. The battles at Daying and Donggang proved its excellent combat efficiency.



*Photo: 'Woman general' Kim Hwak Sil.*

These women soldiers gave an unforgettable performance of their exploits in every battle they fought. At the battle of Daying, Jang Jong Suk, sparing her ammunition, knocked out an enemy sentry with her fist to open the way to a charge. In the battle of Donggang, Kim Hwak Sil and two other women delivered one shot each in the dim moonlight and cut off the telephone line of the enemy. The event became legendary. Historians say that the police department of South Hamgyong Province under the Korean Government-General left many records of the actions of the women's company.

The records contained information that Park Rok Kum and forty other women soldiers of Kim Il Sung's unit attacked the puppet Manchukuo garrison force at Xinancha, Fusong County, early in the fifth month by the lunar calendar in the eleventh year of Showa (1936). Around the same time they raided Daying and captured about a dozen rifles and uniforms. There was also a record about the action of the women's company in the battle of Donggang, Fusong County.

Whenever I recall the anti-Japanese revolutionary martyrs, who dedicated their bloom of youth to the country, I see in my mind's eye the women's company and its peerless heroines. Park Rok Kum, the first commander of the women's company, was good at commanding her company. Many of her comrades-in-arms characterized her by a single word "heroine".



*Photo: Kim Su Bok, a female commissar.*

People will be surprised to know that she wore a pair of rubber-soled canvas shoes which were as large as a size 41 today. There were many pairs of canvas shoes among the booty, but such large sizes were rare. So Park Rok Kum had to wear straw sandals most of time.

While in Wangqing, Park Rok Kum had worked as the head of the Women's Association of the district. As such she was a woman social worker. She was so poor that she did not have her own beddings, when she married and wore rags at her wedding. Her husband's family was no less wretched. Consequently they had not prepared beddings for the newly wed. The wife and husband joined the army at the same time and were assigned to the 1st Company in Wangqing.

One day the political instructor of the 1st Company came to me and said that Park Rok Kum had just given birth to a baby. Upset, he said that there was not a piece of cloth to make a quilt for the baby at her father's home, where she had had the baby. I hurried to her place and found no quilt worth mentioning. Her father, bereft of his wife, was too hard pressed to take proper care of his married daughter. He said that the war had played havoc with his home ceaselessly and he had forgotten what a quilt looked like. The baby was wrapped in rags.

I immediately sent out a small unit to obtain materials for their beddings. The sewing unit made comfortable beddings and baby's clothing with the materials all through the night and sent them to her.

She and her husband dressed the baby properly now and covered it with a quilt, but they wrapped their own quilt carefully and kept it on a box, without even thinking of using it. Even in the piercing cold they did not touch the quilt.



*Photo: Park Su Whan - a female warrior*

When her husband Kang Jung Ryong was appointed leader of a platoon of the 7th Company and left for the Independent Regiment in Antu, she remained with the Wangqing unit and stayed there all the time. On hearing that her husband's unit had come under my command, she resolved to come to us. When she left her father's home, she offered the quilt to her father.

But her father declined, saying that the quilt had been prepared for her and her husband by Commander Kim.

The bundle of quilt, which she carried on her head, became her nickname. Her comrades-in-arms addressed her by the nickname, Ibulbottani (quilt bundle).

She looked blunt, but was a considerate and kind-hearted woman. She was sociable and suited to underground work.

So we sent her to carry out political work to Xinxingcun, Changbai County, early in 1937, on a mission to help Kwon Yong Byok and Lee Je Sun rally the women in Shanggangqu, Changbai County, to join the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. She worked hard to carry out her mission in a responsible manner, but was unfortunately arrested and imprisoned.

Park Rok Kum, like Lee Je Sun, helped release many revolutionaries by stating that she was responsible for the charges laid against them.

When her inmates, who were bleeding from torture, lay limp in the prison cell, she sang revolutionary songs to encourage them.

She was moved from Hyesan police station, where she had been in custody, to Hamhung prison, where she was dumped into a cell, as the inmate of a TB patient, to die of consumption. The patient, a woman surnamed Kim, had been involved in the Jongphyong peasant union incident before her arrest. Park Rok Kum did not care at all about her own health, but nursed the seriously ill woman, as if she were her own sister.

Some time later on, the patient, on the brink of death, was released on bail, but Park Rok Kum was infected and lay down. The family of the released prisoner came with a silk jacket and cakes to repay her indebtedness, but the prison authorities did not permit them to see Park Rok Kum. The kind-hearted heroine of the guerrilla army, who had displayed warm love for other people throughout her life, died in prison after much suffering without even receiving the tearful thanks, sent to her by the woman on the verge of death.



*Photo: Wha Sun Hee, a female guerrilla.*

Our women soldiers included Ma Kuk Hwa, Ma Tong Hui's sister. When we were operating in west Jiandao, she joined the guerrilla army at Pinggangde, Shiqidaogou, under the influence of Kim Se Ok, a political operative from my unit. Kim Se Ok was her teacher and lover. They planned to marry after the country's liberation and worked devotedly for the revolution, postponing everything for the future.

One day she was on kitchen duty. As she was dividing up maize porridge among the comrades, the food ran short when two of them had no shares. She thought she could bring herself to skip a meal, but who else could go without a meal? After some hesitation, she decided to tell Kim Se Ok about her embarrassing situation. She called him from the barracks and explained the circumstances.

"Comrade Se Ok," she said, "Please understand that you'll have to go without supper this evening, as the food will not go round to all of us. I am very sorry.

"Never mind. Then I ought to go hungry, but I would like to say I will eat double shares for every meal when the country is liberated," he said jokingly, and turned away with a bright smile on his face.

Ma Kuk Hwa could not sleep that night, thinking of her lover, who drank a cup of water for the supper. She never regretted her own hunger.

They both fell in battle without seeing the liberated country. After her death, her women comrades found in her knapsack a sheet of quilt cloth embroidered with a brace of cranes. It had been prepared by Ma Kuk Hwa in the arduous circumstances, looking forward to her marriage.

Is there in the world a dowry more valuable and sadder than that? The woman fighter fell in the wilderness. Her dream remained unrealized in a foreign land. What would be done? Her comrades wrapped her dead body in the quilt cloth.

The women's company existed only half a year, but performed imperishable exploits which will be remembered by the motherland forever, and emulated by the people through the generations.

The women soldiers, who fought on the bloody battle front of the revolution against their formidable enemy, the Japanese imperialists, are paragons of modern Korean women, as well as heroines who can be held in high esteem as typical of the struggle for the emancipation of humanity. They were the first women to achieve female social and human equality and paved with blood the path to women's emancipation in our country.

The age of our Workers' Party has produced innumerable heroines, socially active women and women



labor innovators, who have inherited the revolutionary spirit of Paektu and the traditions of struggle, displayed by the women's company during the anti-Japanese revolution. The spirit of Paektu dominated the thinking and action of An Yong Ae, Jo Ok Hui, Lee Su Dok, Lee Sin Ja, Jong Chun Sil and many other heroines of our times. Millions of our women are still building up an impregnable bulwark of socialism in that spirit on this land.

Today, our People's Army has many women's units, which have inherited the anti-Japanese revolutionary traditions. The women's units of the People's Army as well as an innumerable number of women members of the Worker-Peasant Red Guards and the Young Red Guards are armed to defend the country. In our country where all the people are armed, the ten million women, who account for half the population, are all prepared to fight, arms in hand, to defend every inch of the country in case of emergency.

The women's company, under the direct command of the Headquarters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, is the prototype of the ten million armed ranks of women.

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## 13.5. The Secret Camp on Mt. Paektu

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Towards the end of August, when the late crop of potatoes was in full bloom, we left the village of Manjiang. The barley in slash-and-burn fields, which had been awaiting the harvest season, had just begun to be reaped.

We marched southward in silence. All my comrades, ranging from the regimental political commissar Kim San Ho to the boyish orderlies Choe Kum San and Paek Hak Lim, were fully aware of the importance of our advance to Paektu mountain area.

Mt. Paektu was an impregnable natural fortress, so to speak, for its terrain features were so favorable to defence, that even one single man could repel 1,000 attackers. No base was more suited to the expansion of guerrilla warfare than the mountain. Yun Kwan of Koryo and Kim Jong So of the Lee dynasty had fulfilled their heavy duty of national defense and pioneering of the frontier, by basing themselves on that mountain area. On that mountain General Nam I also conceived the high aim of pacifying the country, inscribing his idea in a poetic form on a pumice rock.

Mt. Paektu also provided an ideal fortress for the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The establishment of a new base in this mountain by the revolutionary army to step up its advance to the homeland did not mean that we were abandoning the Manchurian theatre of operation, which had been pioneered with great difficulty. We planned to fight, moving freely around Korea and China from the base in this mountain.

We attached special importance to the mountain as a natural fortress for military action and also as our moral background.

Mt. Paektu, soaring majestically as if the ancestor of this land, is the symbol of Korea and cradle of the 5,000-year-long history of her nation.

The spiritual effect of this mountain on Koreans can be illustrated by the inscription, "Monument to the Dragon God of Heavenly Lake, Guarding Mt. Paektu", on a rock at the foot of the Janggun Peak, on the shore of Lake Chon. At the beginning of the 20th century, when the people were feeling apprehensive about the survival of the nation, the monument was erected by the religionists, connected with Taejong faith and Chonbul faith. As the inscription indicates, the people who erected the monument prayed to the Dragon God for the lasting security of the nation.

Their veneration of Mt. Paektu implied veneration of Korea and love for their motherland. Ever since childhood we loved and venerated Mt. Paektu especially as an ancestral mountain. This was the natural sentiment of the Korean nation. Listening to the stories of Pu Pun No and Ul Tu Ji at the time of Koguryo's territorial expansion, chanting General Nam Il's magnificent poem, and listening to the

accounts of Yun Kwan's and Kim Jong So's defense efforts and their pioneering of the frontier, we were deeply moved and fascinated by the forerunners' patriotic spirit, enshrined in Mt. Paektu.

The mountain, which soared higher and higher in our minds as we grew up, became the symbol of our struggle for national liberation as well as that of Korea.

Our belief that we could only muster all the forces of the nation for resistance and ensure an ultimate victory of the struggle by entrenching ourselves in Mt. Paektu, was derived from our experience of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle during the first half of the 1930s as a natural conclusion drawn from the summary of the struggle.

To reach Mt. Paektu from Manjiang, we had to cross Duoguling Pass. The pass was a primeval forest, where even an experienced mountain hunter used to lose his way.

Kim Ju Hyon, who had been to Changbai as the leader of an advance party three months before, guided us on our way. His advance party had reconnoitered the enemy situation, the ground in the Mt. Paektu area and the climate of public opinion, choosing the sites of secret camps, and pioneering the path for the advance of the main force.

We followed the River Manjiang deep into the valley, until we entered the dense forest of the Duoguling Pass. It was still summer, but the alpine broadleaves had begun to turn red and yellow, and the cool weather had set in.

During our march across the pass we marked the 26th anniversary of the day of national disgrace.

Our southward march through the rugged terrain almost coincided with the arrival in Seoul of General Minami of the Japanese army, appointed the seventh Governor-General of Korea. On the eve of the battle of Fusong county town, we learned through a newspaper of his appointment as successor to Ugaki and estimated that he would arrive in Korea at about the same time we would.

The coincidence between his appearance in Seoul and the advance of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army to Paektu mountain area had a subtle psychological effect on me.

Japan's occupation of Korea is known to the whole world as rank piracy, although they tried to justify it from the outset. Robbers have their own way of thinking. They rob another man of his property and argue that the owner who tries to take it back is a robber.

The Japanese imperialists, who adopted the robbers' way of thinking, called the Korean People's Revolutionary Army a "horde of bandits", "mounted bandits" or "communist bandits". In the world of robbers everything turns topsy-turvy.

The uninvited guest, Minami, strode into Seoul in broad daylight like a master, whereas we, the masters,

had to steal our way to the homeland through a virgin forest. What a deplorable situation!

After climbing the Duoguling Pass, I changed the march plan and decided to take a route round about the area on River Yalu to see our compatriots in the border area and let them hear our gunshots.

The first village we visited was Deshuigou. My unit included a recruit from Dadeshui, who had worked for many years among the young people of an underground organization in Changbai, which had once been guided by Lee Je U and my uncle Hyong Gwon. The name of the recruit was Kang Hyon Mm. He had joined the revolutionary army, when we were operating in Fusong area. He frequented Fusong, dealing in opiate and cattle. During this time he met our operatives and on their recommendation met me and joined the guerrilla army.

Kang Hyon Min and Kim Ju Hyon's advance party provided detailed information about the political climate among the inhabitants of Deshuigou.

The villagers were more revolutionary-minded than any other peasants in Changbai. This place maintained the tradition of anti-Japanese patriotic struggle, developed by independence fighters after the March First Popular Uprising (1919), as well as a reliable force of the masses, which had been trained through the struggle.

Deshuigou was the home base of the Independence Army led by Kang Jin Gon. The Independence Army founded a four-year primary school course in that village and enlightened the younger people and peasants as well.

In his days at Badaogou my father had also been to the village on many occasions. When the Independence Army movement was on the decline, owing to the dissolution of the army, Lee Je U and his armed group brought the programme of the Down-with-Imperialism Union to the village and launched military and political activities.

After Lee Je U's arrest, my uncle Hyong Gwon, together with Choe Hyo Il and Park Cha Sok, had established their base in Deshuigou and roused the masses in the village and surrounding area to revolutionary awareness and organized them. Thanks to their efforts, a subordinate organization of the Paeksan Youth League was formed in Changbai.

The league established a politico-military training center and produced many political operatives and reserves for the guerrilla army.

Even after the departure of the armed group of the Korean Revolutionary Army for the homeland and imprisonment of many of the league's cadres, its members continued their underground struggle.

We pinned our hopes on the force of the masses, which had been educated and given revolutionary training by many patriots and communists.

When my unit arrived in the village, Kim Ju Hyon guided me to the house of an old man, Ryom In Hwan, whom he had marked off as reliable, while performing the mission of the advance party.

The country doctor's house itself was steeped in poverty. A renowned acupuncturist, he was apparently called on by the people of Deshuigou, as well as Changbai, Linjiang, and even by the people on the far side of the River Yalu, who came to take him by sleigh or cart. It was impossible for him, however, to cover the cost of drugs, so that his wife had to beg with her empty gourd hidden in the folds of her skirt. The family experienced much the same strained circumstances, as we did at Badaogou and at Fusong, where my father practiced medicine.

The old man took my pulse and said that I was weak both mentally and physically owing to overwork and poor nourishment. He offered me a root of wild ginseng. Jang Chol Gu and Paek Hak Lim had told me that they had been given a few roots of wild ginseng to improve my health by old man Ho Rak Yo at our departure from Manjiang.

"Rumor has it that hundreds of Japanese and Manchukuo troops were destroyed at Fusong by the allied anti-Japanese force under your command, General Kim," old man Ryom said to me.

"Is that true?"

The news of the battle of Fusong county town seemed to have already reached the village. When I said this was true, the old man slapped his knee, exclaiming, "Bravo! Korea has now come to life again!"

The old man was subsequently dragged to the Erdaogang police station and murdered for the kindness he had accorded us in providing us with a night's shelter and a meal of potato and barley. The thought of his tragic death still boils my blood. As I was passing by the village in command of a small unit one day, I took time off my schedule and paid a visit to his grave, poured a cup of wine and bowed to him.

The next day we left for Dadeshui in the morning dew. Sitting on the shoulder of a mountain which commanded a view of the village at a close distance, we ate a few potatoes each for our morning meal. I instructed the company commander, Lee Tong Hak, to prepare a flagstaff and fly our flag at the head of our column and sound the bugle, when we climbed down to the village. I wanted to show the depressed people the gallant-looking Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

The villagers of Dadeshui greeted us with immeasurable delight and surprise. They said that ever since their settlement in the place they had never seen in broad daylight hundreds of Korean soldiers, equipped with modern rifles and even machine-guns, marching and blowing a resounding bugle, with a flag flying at the head.

I set up an impromptu stage to give the villagers a dramatic performance, as we had done at Manjiang. But the performance we planned to give after lunch was aborted. When we were about to take lunch, the

enemy surprised us. A battle was held in a yellow-ripening barley field between the opposing forces.

I still remember I was afraid of damaging the ripe crop.

The enemy was closing in upon us, along the furrows of the barley field. I waited until the enemy had almost cleared the field, and then gave my signal for firing.

My men fought triumphantly. The enemy suffered dozens of casualties and retreated towards Erdaogang. This was the first engagement we had with the enemy in Changbai. The gunshot at Dadeshui announced the arrival of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army on Mt. Paektu to the people in the homeland and the enemy.

The village became animated and festive. Even the people from neighboring villages came to congratulate us upon our victory. The people prepared potato cakes and starch noodles and welcomed us, and we danced and sang songs in return. I made a stirring speech.

The audience responded positively to the speech.

An old man with a slanting moustache said:

"General, please say loudly on Mt. Paektu: 'All those who want to fight for Korea's independence, come here!' Then, crowds of people will throng here from all parts of Korea. Bent as I am from old age, I can still do my bit."

Later on I learned the old man was from Xiaodeshui and nicknamed "Old Hunchback".

The Hunchback was an old acquaintance of "Tobacco Pipe". When old man "Tobacco Pipe" was in charge of the South Hamgyong Provincial Bureau of Communications of the War Fund-Raising Association, the Hunchback was a company commander of the same organization.

Tobacco Pipe proudly introduced to me his old comrade-in-arms, whom he met in excitement after an interval of more than a decade. Hunchback's real name was Kim Tuk Hyon, alias Kim Se Hyon during the years of his service in the Independence Army and ever since. He was not a born hunchback. His back was unusually bent like a hunchback. While still young he had been erect, square-shouldered and well balanced. The story behind the hunchback roused in me a feeling of deep respect. He was born in Hamgyong Province.

In the dreary year immediately after the "annexation" of Korea by Japan, he moved to Deshuigou in search of livelihood. The settlement had been pioneered by drifting people, who were haunted by nostalgia for their hometowns and homeland. When the War Fund-Raising Association made its appearance in Deshuigou, which preached how to win back their country and return to their homes, Kim Tuk Hyon joined the organization without hesitation. To raise money for the association he did not

hesitate to send his 13-year-old daughter into another man's family as his future-daughter-in-law. To obtain weapons, he ventured into the battlefield in Russia, which was in a state of civil war.

However, more than ten years of devoted efforts ended in a longer prison term for himself than any fellow members of the association. The convicts were forced to work on handlooms for fourteen to fifteen hours every day. Whenever he tried to straighten up his back a little he was lashed and flogged on the back mercilessly. Seven or eight years of slavery made him an incurable hunchback.

The Hunchback looked like an invalid but his patriotic spirit and fighting will were as strong as ever. Not surprisingly, he was the first to join Lee Je U's armed group. He said he had been waiting impatiently for our advance to Mt. Paektu, ever since he had met Kim Ju Hyon. Kim Ju Hyon had made friends with him, while in Changbai in charge of the advance party.

After a brief art show and my speech, I ordered the unit to withdraw. The villagers begged us to stay at least one night, asking why on earth we should go away, when they had only just grown attached to us. I explained that if we stayed the village would suffer, as the enemy would bring his reinforcements and fall upon us any minute. The Hunchback guided us on our way.

I gave the old man a pamphlet, which contained a mimeographed copy of the Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and its Inaugural Declaration. He was the first man to receive the pamphlet from me since our advance to the area on River Yalu. Soon subordinate organizations of the association appeared in Deshuigou area.

The old man became a member of the Sbiliudaogou branch of the association. This branch constituted the hard core of the many grassroots organizations in that area. If we had introduced a title such as a model branch as Chongryon, the Shiliudaogou branch would have been the first to be awarded the title. Old man Kim Tuk Hyon raised several dogs. These ferocious, clever dogs, with a keen sense of smell, kept enemy agents and policemen off his house.

These animals were clever at identifying different people. They did not bark at our men, even if these men were strangers to them. Kim Ju Hyon, Kim Hwak Sil, Kim Jong Suk and other members of our small units, who were working separately in that area, as well as our messengers sent there, were greatly indebted to the old man..

Kim Jong Suk once worked on a separate mission to Zhonggangqu, Changbai County, in the early winter of the year, when we advanced to Mt. Paektu. The comrades on a separate mission in those days carried cooked rations such as rice balls or potatoes, instead of raw rice. Individual messengers in the guerrilla bases in Jiandao did the same. A group of people working together could post a watch and then cook their meals, but it was impossible for an individual, working single-handed, to make fire and cook, because he would be suspected as a "mountain man".

Jong Suk, also left Yaofangzi with a bundle of boiled potatoes and met on her way an old woman and a

child chewing frozen leaves of dry vegetable. She shed tears of sympathy about the wretched sight. She gave her potatoes to the vagrant orphan and old woman, and then plodded shakily on her way up the mountain. As she recollected in later years, she did not know how she could manage to get to Hunchback's house. When she came to herself, she found the old man and his wife holding a bowl of gruel and a spoon and weeping over her.

They nursed her with all their hearts, serving her gruel, green-bean pancakes and stewed chicken, which they had been keeping for breeding. In the years after liberation Jong Suk reiterated this experience, saying that without their nursing she would have been unable to return alive to the secret camp on Mt. Paektu.

Old man Hunchback paid many visits to our secret camp. He used to carry aid goods on his deformed back to the camp and grab chances of seeing me without the knowledge of others. In the battle of Banjegou he served as our guide. He represented the peasants at the May Day celebrations held in the forest of Xiaodeshui in 1939, which pleased us.

I recollected him occasionally in my days on Mt. Paektu and later years.

One day in November 1947, on hearing that uniforms for the children of the Mangyongdae Revolutionary School had been prepared, I sent for some of the schoolchildren, as I wanted to see them in uniform. The children who came to my house at that time included the old man's son, named Kim Pyong Sun.

On her visit to the school later, Kim Jong Suk met the boy separately and gave him a fountain-pen, which had been her favorite since her days in the guerrilla army, encouraging him to be a good schoolboy.

One day in August 1949, Kim Pyong Sun, wearing an officer's uniform with the shoulder straps of platoon leader, appeared before Kim Jong Suk and me. He had been appointed leader of the guard platoon for Headquarters. It was, indeed, a strange convergence of events.

From that day on he never left our side. He shared with me the sorrow of losing Jong Suk, accompanied me to the front headquarters at Suanbo, North Chungchong Province, and stayed with me at the Supreme Headquarters in Kosanjin, Jagang Province. He worked by my side for many more years.

Whenever I felt his father's image hovering around me, I recollected the words of the old man in the village of Dadeshui and the moonlit night scene on the Xiaodeshui tableland. We camped overnight on this tableland and the next day I moved my unit into the forest of Madengchang and ordered my men to take a rest. I also lay down on the grass and, while reading, fell fast asleep. Sudden gunshots woke me up. Enemy forces from the directions of Shiwudaogou and Erdaogang swooped upon us almost simultaneously from north and south. The dense forest made it difficult to identify friend from foe. If we slipped away, it would create an ideal opportunity to make the enemy forces fight and kill each other in an attempt to catch us.



We withdrew from the forest by stealth and climbed up the high ground along the valley of Shiwudaogou, where we watched the enemy fighting among themselves. The event is known as the battle of Xiaodeshui or the remote observation battle of Madengchang.

The enemy forces fought each other for three to four hours, so long that onlookers even felt tedious. In the end, the enemy from the direction of Erdaogang was pressed too hard to hold on and sounded the bugle for retreat. On hearing the bugle sound, the enemy from Shiwudaogou realized that they were fighting among themselves and ceased fire.

Where did the hundreds of guerrillas vanish? Surely this was a mystery, which even the devil wondered at.

The enemy seemed to have found an answer to the mystery; they called it the occult art of transformation. In my opinion, since the battle of Xiaodeshui, rumour had it in the border area that we were rising into the sky and dipping into the ground or appearing from where and disappearing into where, God only knows.

The enemy was so short of stretchers that they tore the doors off every house in the village of Xinchangdong to carry their dead bodies away. The villagers had to keep the door-less openings screened with straw sacks for some time.

The gunshots raised by the People's Revolutionary Army at Dadeshui and Xiaodeshui evoked a great response from the people in Changbai and the homeland across the flyer.

When we said some words of sympathy for the battle-ravaged potato fields, a peasant of Xinchangdong said:

"Although our potato fields have been devastated, we find it more pleasant to see the Japanese being destroyed than have a rich potato crop."

Many young people from Deshuigou and the neighboring villages volunteered to join the army. Their enlistment marked the beginning of a widespread movement for armed service, which contributed to a rapid expansion of the revolutionary army in the Changbai area.

The enemy was terribly alarmed by the advance of the People's Revolutionary Army and its formidable strength. It became a trend among policemen in Changbai to apply to resign in groups and shirk their official duties. The enemy's ruling machinery was thrown into great confusion. The passage in and out of the concentration village of Erdaogang was permitted only through the back-gate, rather than the front one.

In Changbai we conducted organizational and political work to educate and organize the masses, in

addition to military actions. Our political operatives formed subordinate organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in Deshuigou, Diyanxi and in neighboring villages.

Organizations also began to be formed in the homeland.

The organizations, established in various places surrounding Mt. Paektu, became reliable political footholds for the new base to be established.

The battle of Xiaodeshui was followed by many actions in Shiwudaogou-Donggang, Shisandaogou-Longchuanli, Ershidaogou-Erzhongdian in Changbai County and many other places, while moving about various villages on River Yalu. The riverine area resembled a stirred hornets' nest.

The objective we had set ourselves in taking a roundabout route was achieved. It was now time to entrench ourselves in Paektu Mountain and establish our home base. Guided by Kim Ju Hyon and Lee Tong Hak, I proceeded to the site selected for the establishment of our secret camp on Mt. Paektu. I was accompanied by senior officers, the guards and some combat companies. The other soldiers were instructed to continue harassing the enemy in Changbai area.

The Sobaeksu valley, reconnoitred by Kim Ju Hyon, Lee Tong Hak, Kim Un Sin and others, was the first site of the secret camp on Mt. Paektu in the homeland. Mt. Paektu soared approximately ten miles northwest of the valley. About five miles northwest one could see Mt. Sono, Four miles northeast of the valley Mt. Kanbaek rose above a dense forest. The long elevation behind the valley was called the Peak of Saja.

Our arrival in Sobaeksu valley was a jubilant homecoming after many years of absence. In the historical context of the anti-Japanese revolution, it implied the shifting of our operation center from eastern Manchuria to Mt. Paektu.

A man's homecoming is a matter of joy for his neighbors as well. But there was no neighbor of ours in the valley lying in the depths of Paektu mountains, from which even "A bird flew away unable to endure the loneliness of the forest," as one poet put it. We were greeted by the sighing forest and murmuring stream. The people in the homeland were still not aware of our arrival in Sobaeksu valley.

Twenty-five miles south of the place, there were the homeland people who would welcome us warmly, but there were also uninvited guests from the island country, who were aiming their guns at us. If this obstacle had not existed we would have gone to our beloved people and met them in excitement. Fighting the enemy was the only way to meet our compatriots. To fight the enemy, we advanced to Paektu mountain area and began to establish our base in the Sobaeksu valley.

The comrades with me in the valley at that time never imagined that the place would be a famous historical site, which would attract visitors from the rest of the world. Without leaving any trace of our movement, we walked up along the water edges of the stream, which was flowing with floating leaves.

Travelers to this place nowadays will never imagine that it was part of a primeval forest half a century ago. The quiet and serenity of the old days have given way to the well-surfaced road, where tourist buses and visitors pass without cease, to the houses for the travelers and travelers' village, as well furnished as fashionable hotels, and to the endless flow of pedestrians and their songs ringing out in all seasons. But in those days we could hardly find a footprint of wild beast in that primeval forest. We were attracted by the exquisite scenery of the valley, which preserved its beauty at the time of genesis and its terrain features, which provided us with a natural fortress.

The valley of Lishugou with the C.P. of the guerrilla army in my days in Macun, Xiaowangqing, had been excellent. The valley was deep and ragged and denied easy access for the enemy. If the enemy could ever manage to approach, they had been successfully repulsed. The terrain of the Sobaeksu valley at the fork of the streams down the Peak of Saja, from which we made our way to the site of the secret camp on Mt. Paektu, was quite similar to the features of Lishugou valley.

There was a slight difference between the two; Sobaeksu valley was a little more spacious, deeper and beautiful. The farther we climbed, the greater we found the difference. The valley, located in one of the great folds of thousands of peaks and ridges of the majestic Paektu Mountain Range, was profound against its mammoth background.

Before dark we pitched tents by the stream and at the foot of a peak on the opposite side of the Peak of Jangsu and slept through the night. I usually sleep no more than three to four hours a day. When fighting on the mountains, I had the habit of waking up around two o'clock in the morning to read. But that night I was so tired that I did not read in the early morning, when I discovered that it had frosted during the night.

The alpine area had a longer winter and experienced much more snowfall than elsewhere. The snow in the area did not melt easily. In late June and early July one could see the snow of the previous winter, and in late September and early October one could find new snow on mountain tops. The accumulated snow was often deeper than a man's stature and made it necessary to dig a tunnel to open a passage through. Snow shoes were needed to travel outside the secret camp. Without them one might sink into the snow and suffer an accident.

The rigorous climate of the alpine region, which was frequently threatened with gales and heavy snowfalls, made distinctions between different seasons and brought us different seasonal benefits.

I had eaten saussurea for the first time during the battle of Laoheishan and found it delicious. Boiled rice wrapped in saussurea tasted better than in lettuce. I had tasted cacalia at Lee Hun's house in Shijiudaogou, Changbai County. It was also very delicious. There were many types of wild vegetables in Paektu mountain area, saussurea in Taehongdan, cacalia in the area surrounding Lake Samji, and musuhae in Pegae Hill. These wild greens, picked by the cooking unit members, enriched our summer dishes.

As we settled down in the secret camp on Mt. Paektu, the cooking unit formed a kitchen garden at an edge of a grassland and grew various kinds of vegetables. Cabbage and radish did not thrive, but lettuce and crown daisy grew well.

Char, caught from the Sobaeksu, was also served occasionally. In those days there were not many of them in the stream, but nowadays a lot of them have been bred.

On the day after our arrival I inspected together with other commanding officers, the site of the secret camp, and the sites for barracks chosen by the advance party. I convened an officers' meeting and reviewed our expedition from Nanhutou to Mt. Paektu, debated our task, and then gave assignments to the officers. We aimed to establish the Paektusan Base as soon as possible. It comprised two aspects: the construction of secret camps and establishment of underground revolutionary organizations in the villages around Mt. Paektu.

There were considerable differences in content and form between the guerrilla zone, established in eastern Manchuria in the first half of the 1930s and the new Paektusan Base created in the latter half of the decade. The former was a fixed, visible open base of guerrilla warfare, whereas the latter was an invisible revolutionary base, which consisted of secret camps and underground revolutionary organizations, serving as the base of military actions and political activity.

The people in the base in the first half of the decade lived in line with the policy of the people's revolutionary government; the people affiliated with underground organizations in the latter half were under enemy rule in appearance, but in effect acted on our instructions and lines.

Great efforts had to be devoted to the defense of the guerrilla zones in the first half, whereas there was no need to do so in the latter half.

This enabled us to launch guerrilla activity over a wider area. In other words, the change in the form of the guerrilla base meant we could assume an offensive. Therefore, the wider the guerrilla base was expanded, the broader the area of our activity.

We intended to expand the guerrilla base, centering on the secret camp on Mt. Paektu, to the wide area of Changbai, and then deep into the homeland along Paekmu, Kaema Plateaus and Rangrim Mountains, and then spread the flames of armed struggle from the northern region to the middle and southern regions of Korea, while at the same time expanding and developing the Party organizations, as well as the united front movement and pushing ahead with preparations for nationwide resistance.

As the creation of the network of secret camps and laying of the network of underground organizations were burning issues, which our destiny and the victory of the anti-Japanese revolution depended on, we had to direct our attention to the solution of these issues before all else. In the first place, we assigned each unit the task of building secret camps. Kim Ju Hyon was instructed to provide for food and clothing. The two aspects of construction and operation of the secret camps were, in plain terms, our problems of

food, clothing and housing.

The recruitment of able assistants for the establishment of the underground network and combat actions to encourage the people to turn out in the sacred cause of national liberation were also important tasks. These tasks were given to Lee Tong Hak's company. The commanding officers immediately began to carry out their assignments to build the Paektusan Base. Kim Ju Hyon, Lee Tong Hak and his company left us. Many other comrades were also sent away on individual missions to different places. Accompanied by the guards and some members of the 7th Regiment, I made for Heixiazigou, where we would meet the main body we had parted with at the village of Huanggongdong. Our experiences on our way from Sobaeksu valley to Heixiazigou were very impressive.

At that time I saw Mt. Sono and the Samdan Falls. The scenery was exquisite. We lost our way and spent a great deal of time in the forest. I still remember our experience at Datuo Hot Spring. After roaming the forest for more than two hours, unable to find our way, I sent scouts off in many directions. One of them returned with an old man. The old man said that he was living alone on a foot hill of Mt. Paektu and that, on his way back from Manjiang, where he had been to obtain salt and foxtail millet, he met the reconnaissance party. The old man took us to his grass-thatched hut at Datuo.

The hut was located by a good hot spring. The water was so hot that the crayfish we had placed there turned red. We took a bath, washed our clothes and cooked crayfish in the hot spring. The Icelanders I watched taking an open-air bath in the depth of winter on television one day reminded me of my own experience at the hot spring.

At that time I talked a lot with the old man. I asked him why he was living in the deep mountain. He said he had been a lowlander, but on seeing the waning stars, had moved to the ancestral mountain.

"If I died a shameful death of an enslaved nation, it would make no difference where I should die. But I wanted to live and die at the foot of Mt. Paektu. My teacher at the village school, who taught me A Thousand Chinese Characters, used to say that the Koreans should live with Mt. Paektu in their embrace and die with it as their pillow. His words were, indeed, a maxim, which should be inscribed on a monument," the old man said.

Following endlessly his narrowed eyes, which were gazing at Mt. Paektu, I solemnly felt as if every phase of his wretched existence were unfolding before my eyes. His words, that he wanted to live at the foot of Mt. Paektu and die with his head, resting on the mountain, moved me.

"Well, how do you like Mt. Paektu?"

"Wonderful. Hard as it is to live by growing potatoes and hunting roe, I feel hale and hearty, because I don't have to see the Japanese."

My talk with the old man reaffirmed my belief that Mt. Paektu offered strong moral support for our

people. I keenly felt that I was absolutely right to make Mt. Paektu into the strategic center of the revolution. The old man, who was living alone stoutly in the mountain in his late years, was really patriotic. I regret that I did not ask for his name.

Like the old man Ma in the highlands of Luozigou, he had many books. When we were leaving for Heixiazigou, after taking a bath at the Datuo Hot Spring, he gave me several story books. Later we built a recuperation center at the hot spring for the wounded and infirm. One day after our arrival at Heixiazigou, the 2nd Regiment, which had been operating in Jiaohe, came to us. Kwon Yong Byok, Oh Jung Hup, Kang Wi Ryong and some others came with the 2nd Regiment and shared their innermost feelings with me.

They had endured many hardships on their way. Without wearing proper clothes and half-starving in the winter cold on their way to Mt. Paektu, they attacked a lumber station and captured cattle. They brought two of them to us alive. It was painful to see them, skin and bones in rags. They also shed tears, hugging me. I supplied them with new clothes, both outerwear and underwear, as well as leggings and rubber-soled canvas shoes. I provided them with whole sets of toilet articles, tobacco and matches.

On the orders of Headquarters, Kang Wi Ryong, who had returned from Jiaohe, and Park Yong Sun, built secret camps in Heixiazigou, Hengshan, Mt. Hongtou and many other places. Park Yong Sun and Kang Wi Ryong were excellent carpenters. They used to build a log house large enough for a regiment in two to three days, using only axes. They did more work for the construction of secret camps in the Changbai area than any other comrades. When Cao Guo-an's unit came to Heixiazigou, they admired the men of my unit for building their barracks in only one day, attributable to the two carpenters.

By the time I returned to Sobaeksu valley, after staying some time at Heixiazigou, log houses were built in many sites of the secret camp. The barracks for Headquarters, subordinate units, a printing shop, garment shop, guard house, and checkpoints, had sprung up in the forest.

The door handles of the log houses in the secret camp were made of roe-hoofs.

The trifle roe-hoof handle was engraved on my memory, as if a landmark of a historical period. Since the appearance of the roe-hoof handles on the doors of our "living quarters" on Mt. Paektu and the establishment of our home base in the Sobaeksu valley, in other words, the secret camp on Mt. Paektu served as the strategic base of the Korean revolution, as the base for its central leadership.

The secret camp on Mt. Paektu was not only a strategic center and heart of the Korean revolution; it was also an important operational base, a base of activity, and logistic base.

Many secret bases soon fanned out from this very secret camp to different places in the northern and middle regions of Korea.

From the secret camps, Kwon Yong Byok, Kim Ju Hyon, Kim Phyong, Kim Jong Suk, Park Rok Kum,

Ma Tong Hui, Ji Thae Hwan and many other political operatives, carried the seeds of the revolution to every nook and corner of the homeland. From there, Lee Je Sun, Park Tal, Park In Jin and many other representatives of the people, who had come to see us in Mt. Paektu, went with the kindling of the revolution back to the people. From there our units took the field to destroy the enemy. All moves, both big and small, directly related to the destiny of the revolution, were planned at the secret camp on Mt. Paektu.

Satellite secret camps in Korea and China were part of the network of the secret camp on Mt. Paektu.

The Korean side included the Sajabong Secret Camp, Komsan Secret Camp, Sonosan Secret Camp, Kanbaeksan Secret Camp, Mudubong Secret Camp, Soyonjibong Secret Camp and others. The west Jiandao area on the Chinese side included the Heixiajigou Secret Camp, Diyangxi Secret Camp, Erdaogang Secret Camp, Hengshan Secret Camp, Limingshui Secret Camp, Fuhoushui Secret Camp, Qingfeng Secret Camp, and other secret camps in Fusong. We made use of all these secret camps whenever necessary.

The secret camps in Mt. Paektu area performed various missions and duties. As well as purely secret camps, here clothes were sewn, weapons repaired and the wounded and ill were taken care of; some of them also served as liaison points and shelters for the operatives.

The secret camp in the Sobaeksu valley was the heart of the network of the secret camp on Mt. Paektu. So we called the camp in Sobaeksu valley Paektusan Secret Camp No. 1 in those days. Nowadays it is called the Paektusan Secret Camp or Paektu Secret Camp.

This camp was home to Headquarters and departments directly under it, and the guards and some key units, and passage in and out of it was strictly controlled for maximum security and secrecy. When subordinate units or individuals, not in constant contact with us, came to Headquarters, we met them at Secret Camp No. 2 (the Sajabong Secret Camp), not at the secret camp in Sobaeksu valley. At Secret Camp No. 2, units or individual persons on a visit to Head-quarters were met, provided with rest or sent away and sometimes given short courses or training.

Secret Camp No. 2 was the reception centre for visitors to Headquarters. There the visitors waited for instructions, had interviews, slept or received short courses or training. In those days, it was a rule for messengers coming to Headquarters to make their way from the direction of Limingshui and follow the stream of the Sobaeksu from the entrance to the valley, to avoid leaving any trace of passage to Headquarters. The locations of secret camps were not known to everybody. If they had been known, they would not have been secret.

The details of Paektusan Secret Camp and other secret camps in the surrounding area were known to only several people, like Kim Ju Hyon, Kim Hae San, Kim Un Sin and Ma Tong Hui, who performed all liaison missions, and to a small number of commanding officers. Fortunately these secret camps and their "inhabitants" were able to keep their existence secret, until the anti-Japanese revolution emerged

victorious.

Mt. Paektu was my "home" during my prime of youth. That "home" contained a large number of my messmates, an incomparably larger number than my family at my childhood home. They stayed with me in that "home", worked in the rain and snow of Mt. Paektu, and dreamed of today's homeland.

Not many of the people, who shared weal and woe with me on Mt. Paektu, are still alive. For this reason we could not fulfill early enough the mission of an elder generation to tell the younger generation the revolutionary history of our Party and the results of our forerunners' struggle, which were imprinted on every fold of Paektu Mountains.

I, too, failed to make the Paektusan Secret Camp known earlier to the younger generation. The many responsibilities on my shoulders, responsibilities to build the Party, State and Army, burdens of war and postwar reconstruction, did not permit me in my younger days to take time to pay a visit to my home base in Mt. Paektu.

On a number of occasions I told Park Yong Sun and others to discover during their lives the site of the Paektusan Secret Camp for the younger generation, but even the formerly nimble carpenter and his company failed to find it, although he discovered the sites of the secret camps at Heixiazigou, Diyangxi and Hengshan, which he himself had built, and the camping sites on Chongbong, Pegae Hill and Mupho. But I did not blame them. They had never been to the secret camp in Sobaeksu valley.

After all, I myself identified the site of the Paektusan Secret Camp, only in my late years. I found some leisure only then and went to the Mt. Paektu area, as I wanted to see the newly-built secret camps in that area. On my way back, I found the terrain round the bridge over the Sobaeksu familiar to me. So I sent some members of the expedition party to Sobaeksu valley. I told them to climb up the valley until they found a very small piece of grassland at the foot of a crag as high as a hundred fathoms. I emphasized that the valley would not look distinct when seen from outside, because the mountain sides were very close to each other.

The forest in that area was so dense and steep until those days, that my senior secretary and my aide-de-camp, who had been sent to inspect the area to build the Yalu Riverine road for the visitors, lost their way and had a hard time. They were only rescued by the guard company, which had been sent to search for them. It was indeed no less labyrinthine than Mihunzhen. The members of the expedition party and visitors' group found some trees, where slogans had been inscribed, and then the sites of log houses and camping sites. In this way the Paektusan Secret Camp came to be shown to the younger revolutionary generation in its original look.

Mt. Paektu is now a school where the second, third, and fourth generations of our revolution learn from the revolutionary spirit of Paektu, cherished by the first generation. A great open-air revolutionary museum has been created on the vast land of Paektu.



With the progress of history the symbolic meaning of Mt. Paektu has grown richer. The mountain began to acquire a new meaning in the latter half of the 1930s on top of its original symbolic meaning.

The "lava" of the revolution to liberate the country, which erupted from the extinct volcano on Mt. Paektu, attracted the attention of 20 million Korean compatriots. Song Yong, a writer who had inspected the places swept by the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution, entitled his travelogue, "Mt. Paektu Is Visible from Anywhere." As the title indicates, Mt. Paektu has become an active volcano of national liberation, a sacred mountain of revolution, visible from anywhere, since the time when we entrenched ourselves in that mountain.

## 13.6. Patriotic Landowner, Kim Jong Bu

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When communists emerged on the international political scene, the proletariat of all countries raised the slogan, "Down with landlords and capitalists!" Shouting this slogan, the working masses of Korea also waged a long, grim and fierce class struggle to overthrow the reactionary exploiting classes, which were allied with the foreign forces of imperialism.

Even the left-wingers of the Korean Revolutionary Party, the political party under Kukmin-bu, declared their objective of overthrowing landlords and capitalists and raised a whirlwind in their desire to knock them down.

We do not hide our idea of opposing landlords and capitalists or conceal our objective of fighting against them. Opposing exploiters who live on others' sweat and blood; this is our life-long principle. I was and still am opposed to exploiters. I think that I will continue to hate those, who live in clover squandering the wealth, which has been produced at the expense of the sweat and blood of hundreds of millions of working masses, while these people suffer from starvation.

Progressive people throughout the world affirm the idea of humanism, which advocates an equitable distribution of material wealth and social equality. We oppose political dictatorship and economic monopoly by a minority of the propertied class and their spokesmen, as well as moral corruption, and regard it as our noble duty to put an end to all these evils.

In practice, of course, the potential overthrow of the exploiting class and issue of dealing with individuals of this class or propertied individuals must strictly be distinguished from each other. Consequently, during the anti-Japanese revolution, we struggled against the Japanese imperialists and wicked rich men, who were lackeys of the enemy.

In the past, however, some communists only emphasized the class struggle, so that they committed a Leftist error in dealing with landlords and national capitalists, who were patriotic and opposed to imperialism. Their pursuit of a stereotyped policy of indiscriminate liquidation, expropriation and persecution of propertied people in political, economic and social aspects disregarding reality, led to a misunderstanding of communism in a number of countries.

This brought grist to the anti-communist propaganda mill of those, who opposed communism. In our Republic there is no landlord or capitalist.

Class education is now provided on a high level and in great depth; therefore all officials can combine the class line and mass line. It can be said that the prejudice that all rich are bad, the narrow-minded view that the people of landlord and capitalist origin should be ruled with the same stick, regardless of their service records and merits, has now disappeared.

The people nowadays rejoice at the news that somebody, who was gloomy owing to his checkered family connections, has been admitted to the Party or promoted to the right post and is living optimistically. They regard it as their own happiness. This is a valuable result of the all-embracing politics, practiced by the Workers' Party of Korea.

We have been pursuing all-embracing politics for half a century. Since the years of the anti-Japanese revolution, the true communists of Korea have worked hard under the banner of great national unity, to rally into a single force the various sections of the population, who have different family backgrounds, religion and property status.



*Photo: Kim Jong Bu, a progressive landowner.*

I believe that an account of our experience with the landowner, Kim Jong Bu, will promote an understanding of our specific view on landlords and capitalists and the historical roots of our all-embracing politics.

We first met Kim Jong Bu late in August 1936. A small unit, which had been to Diyangxi on a fund-raising mission, brought deep in the night several persons, who were said to be pro-Japanese landlords, including an old man apparently on the wrong side of seventy. At that time we worked among the masses at a lumbermen's settlement of Majiazhi near Erdaogang.

I was surprised to find Kim Jong Bu's name in the list of the detained, as he had been classified as a "pro-Japanese landlord". Some of us reminisced that Lee Tong Hak was in charge of the small unit at the time. However, as far as I recall, it was Kim Ju Hyon who took Kim Jong Bu with him.

I summoned Kim Ju Hyon and asked him sternly, "What brought you to decide to knock down Kim Jong Bu?"

"That old man owns as many as 150 hectares of land. I have never heard of a man, who owns so much land as he does."

"Who made the law to knock down a man, owning 150 hectares of land?"

"Comrade Commander, don't ask me about the law, please. According to a saying, a rich man beggars three villages. A man as rich as that landlord will ruin more than ten villages."

I asked Kim Ju Hyon for his next piece of evidence. He gave me a lengthy explanation that Kim Jong Bu was on intimate terms with a councilor of a branch of the Japanese consulate, that the councilor had brought a Japanese capitalist, named Ito, from Yongchon or somewhere round North Kyongsang Province and let him give a loan of 6,000 yen to Kim Jong Bu to help him open a lumber yard, that the

landlord had bought a truck and performed a large transaction with the backing of Japanese imperialists.

"Any other evidence?"

"Yes, a lot. As head of the forest conservation association and that of the rural union, he is said to frequent the office of Manchukuo. His son, Kim Man Du, also served as headman of the village of Erdaogang for some years under his wing."

When I asked if Kim Jong Bu had any good qualities, Kim Ju Hyon was somewhat embarrassed. He seemed to have given no thought to hearing the public opinion of his merits or had never imagined that I would be interested in such things.

"Good qualities? How can one expect good qualities from such a pro-Japanese element?"

The small unit leader's report was completely negative. His thoroughly prejudiced report made me heartsick. Not yet completely free from the past tendency of asserting the class struggle and class spirit, and lacking a full grasp of Kim Jong Bu, he captured the landlord and even his son, labeling him a "pro-Japanese landlord" and "reactionary", the man we had considered possible to enlist in the work of the united front, when we were coming to Changbai. His act contravened our policy of the united front, the Inaugural Declaration and the Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

He even used the telephone at Kim Jong Bu's home as proof of his pro-Japanese elements. He contended that his telephone must have been required for spying, rather than as a means of luxury, and that he could only talk on the telephone to the consulate, police or the office of Manchukuo, and that such a telephone conversation would merely provide them with information against revolutionaries. In fact, in those days no ordinary person dreamed of such a telephone at his home.

Nevertheless, wouldn't it be preposterous to see a telephone at a man's home as a sign of pro-Japanese tendency and as a means of benefiting the enemy? If every one of us were to judge people in such a way, our united front policy would come across grave difficulties in practice, which was not a problem relating to Kim Jong Bu alone.

Before rebuking the small unit, I criticized myself in my mind for failing to teach my subordinates properly. When dealing with Zhang Wei-hua in Fusong, some of us were apprehensive from their prejudice. It was not until many sleigh loads of aid goods and a large sum of money had been sent to us by Zhang Wei-hua, that they admitted that there were good people among the propertied class.

But when they saw in Changbai a landlord possessing 150 hectares, they became suspicious of him. How could people who admitted Zhang Wei-hua as our ally, fail to realize that Kim Jong Bu was a man to be embraced in the united front? This meant that there had been a shortcoming in our education about the united front policy.

The masses of strata, we were talking about, included people in all walks of life, people with different backgrounds and living conditions. There could be no panacea for dealing with all these people. But some principle should serve as a reference in all cases.

What principle served as our standard for judging people in those days? Whether a man was pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese or loved his country or not. We maintained that a person who loved his country, his nation and his fellow man and hated the Japanese imperialists could be our ally, and that a person who was pro-Japanese for his own pleasure and comfort, caring nothing about his country, nation and compatriots, should be the target of our struggle.

We saw Kim Jong Bu in this light and defined him as a man we could work together with for the united front. We planned to write to him on our arrival in Changbai, asking for his cooperation or invite him to the secret camp for an interview.

"I think your judgment of Kim Jong Bu is ready-made and unscientific. You must not see people in such a superficial way. The man you judge as a pro-Japanese landlord is, in fact, a patriotic landlord. I know his past well. You say that Kim Jong Bu is such and such and Corporal Kim is such and such, judging them from the comments you have heard from one person or two in Diyangxi. You have only seen them superficially and have not looked into their minds. If Kim Jong Bu were such a bad man, why should the people of Diyangxi have erected a monument in his honor in their village? Do you know that there is a monument in Diyangxi?"

The small unit members replied in the negative.

I told them that if they had known Kim Jong Bu's past, they would not have looked down upon him as a pro-Japanese landlord, and that I could guarantee there and then that he was a man to be welcomed, rather than knocked down, that he was a patriotic landlord, rather than a reactionary landlord.

"Comrade Commander, we have wronged him, without knowing your intention clearly," Kim In Hyon said, full of remorse. "I will apologize to him on behalf of the small unit and return him to Diyangxi."

I did not agree with him.

"Don't return him, I wanted to see him. Since things have come to this pass, take him to the secret camp. I think I should take time off and talk to him. I will apologize to him on your behalf."

[That day I explained to the small unit all the reasons why I felt we should cooperate with him for the united front. Consequently the past of the landlord was known to the whole unit within that day.

I guess Kim Jong Bu was born in the early 1860s. When we were in Changbai, he was already in his seventies. His hometown was Chongsudong, Uiju County, North Phyongan Province. When I was at

school in Jirin, Jang Chol Ho from Uiju used to tell me about Kim Jong Bu with a feeling of attachment and how he had committed himself to the Independence Army movement, although he was a very rich man. Kim Man Du, his son, had been a childhood playmate of Jang Chol Ho and O Tong Jin in their days at Chongsudong.

When the Independence Army fought in high spirits in Changbai, Kim Jong Bu was the head of the Southern Department of the War Fund-Raising Association. He provided the Independence Army with clothing, food and other supplies at the expense of his own family property. When the army was strong, he produced potato starch in Diyangxi and cleaned rice at a water mill for the association.

The independence fighters, operating in Jirin, Fusong, Linjiang, Badaogou, Huadian and other places used to stay at Kim Jong Bu's house, when they came to Changbai, and also had meetings there. Judging from this fact alone, I thought I should treat him prudently.

Kim Jong Bu also made a considerable contribution to the education of the younger generation. Under his sponsorship a village school for conventional education was established in Diyangxi around 1920. As seeking to give the children of his tenants better education, he transformed the village school into a four-year course modern primary school, and then innovated it into a six-year course private school, with an enrollment of more than 150 pupils.

He made sure that children from neighboring villages were admitted to his school. The expenses for the management of the Jongsan Private School and the payment for its teachers were provided by the rents received from his tenants. The school provided national education to inculcate in the pupils the idea of independence and sovereignty, as well as love for the country and nation.

His tenants paid their rents on a voluntary basis. Rent was decided by the tenants themselves, say, one sack or ten sacks, according to the crop situation, as Kim Jong Bu as their landlord had not fixed the amounts of rents, according to the sizes and qualities of the rented land. There was not even a contract between the landlord and his tenants, a contract for the sharecropping of the annual harvest.

Lee Chi Ho, an anti-Japanese revolutionary fighter, who had once been Kim Jong Bu's tenant in Diyangxi, said, "I have never heard of a landlord, who was as good-natured and magnanimous as Kim Jong Bu. We tilled his land, not even knowing how much rent we should pay. We borrowed food from him occasionally, but never returned it with interest. But he did not take issue; he left it up to us. Not surprisingly, the villagers put up a monument in his honor in front of his house. He had many hectares in the upland of Diyangxi, but all his land was worth no more than 15 hectares of fertile lowland fields."

The people of Diyangxi unanimously praised Kim Jong Bu, calling him, "Our uncle", "Our head of department", "Our school founder". This was unusual.

The landlords in neighboring villages feared of his benevolence. They were afraid that their tenants might be envious of their counterparts in Diyangxi.

They said to Kim Jong Bu, "Isn't it too much to be as generous as you are, allowing your tenants to pay their rents as much as they please, without making contracts with you? If you continue like this, your property will be depleted in less than three or four years."

However, Kim Jong Bu did not listen to the people, who occasionally advised him to refrain from benevolence. He said, "Should my family of three starve, because no contract has been signed for the rents? When my tenants eat their fill, I will also eat my fill; when they are hungry, I also have to go hungry. With this principle in mind, we can share each other's kind hearts. That's all there is."

As Kim Jong Bu was such a benevolent man, the Manchukuo authorities and Japanese consulate dared not approach him as a mere nobody.

The landlords exchanged significant glances with one another, apparently shocked by something. They even whispered among themselves. They seemed to be saying that I was too hard on my subordinate. This provided a good chance to resume the talk.

"I am awfully sorry to have made you, old men, walk in the dreary night. We make this kind of mistake, although not often, while traveling around places, which are not familiar to us. I believe that you are magnanimous enough to forgive my comrades for their possible rudeness."

When I apologized again in this manner, they seemed to feel relieved.

"Well, which army is this? You don't look like bandits or the erstwhile Independence Army in appearance...." Kim Jong Bu watched me closely with curiosity.

"We are the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, fighting for Korea's independence." In this way we introduced ourselves to the influential people in Changbai.

"The People's Revolutionary Army! Do you mean General Kim Il Sung's army, which routed the Japanese in Fusong?"

"Yes."

"Is General Kim Il Sung still in Fusong?"

"Forgive me for not greeting you, sir. I am Kim Il Sung."

Kim Jong Bu stared dubiously at me, and then mumbled bitterly.

"Don't look down upon me, because I am over seventy. Can it be that General Kim Il Sung, who is said to use the art of compressing space, is so young? He is not an ordinary man. Rumor has it that he even

has double lines of teeth."

At that moment, Kim Ju Hyon interrupted our conversation and explained that the man in front of him was Commander Kim Il Sung.

Only now Kim Jong Bu identified me. He apologized for failing to recognize me sooner. "For that matter, a young General is better than an old General," he said to Corporal Kim. Corporal Kim replied that a healthy and sturdy young General was more reliable, because the fight to regain the country would not be over in a year or two.

We talked on in an amicable atmosphere. The landlords asked me many questions. Kim Man Du embarrassed me by asking me if I could divine what would happen in three days, as the rumor had it.

Although a silly question, I felt awkward as I answered.

"It is a mere rumour that I can foresee events three days ahead. We are good at estimating the situation, not because I can foretell the future, but because the People's Revolutionary Army maintains close touch with the people and thereby obtains timely and valuable information. I believe the people are as wise as Zhu-ge Liang. Without the people's support and assistance we cannot make one step forward."

"General, as you extol the people to the skies, I feel awkward. I feel we should help you in your great cause, so please tell us what we should do for you."

"To tell you the truth, we wished to see you when we are out in Changbai to discuss the matter with you. For several years now we have been fighting, arms in hand, to destroy the Japanese imperialist aggressors in the wilderness of Manchuria. We started the war empty-handed, but the People's Revolutionary Army is now destroying the enemy in many places.

As I mentioned earlier, it would have been impossible for the People's Revolutionary Army to grow stronger as it is today, without the people's support and assistance. To defeat the Japanese, who are armed to the teeth, and liberate our country, the whole nation must unite in mind and body. All the people, including landlords and capitalists, who love their country, must come out in support of the People's Revolutionary Army."

Apparently, the landlords were greatly encouraged by my words.

"Whoever loves his country and his compatriots is duty bound to support the revolution and has the right to do so. Sir, you have reclaimed hundreds of thousands of phyong of slash-and-bum fields in the upland of Diyangxi in order to contribute money and rice to the independence movement, haven't you? Consequently your tenants and the independence fighters have agreed to erect a monument in your honor."



"Excuse me, but how do you know the past of such an insignificant man, General?"

"I heard your name from my late father and also from O Tong Jin, Jang Chol Ho, and Kang Jin Gon and kept it in my memory."

"What was your father's name?"

"Kim Hyong Jik, sir. When he was in Badaogou and Fusong, he talked a lot about you."

"Oh, my" Kim Jong Bu gazed at me, eyes blinking. "Not to know that you, General, are Kim Hyong Jik's son! ... While living in the country, this old man has become ignorant of developments in the world. Anyhow I was on intimate terms with your father.... I can't find an apt word to express all my excitement at seeing you in command of your army to the land, which was trodden by your late father."

"I am also very glad to meet a patriot like you. While ignorant of you, my comrades have taken you here. So I explained to them that you are a patriotic landlord, rather than a pro-Japanese or reactionary landlord. Although we have been unable to erect a monument in your honor as the people of Diyangxi did, we will not commit such a foolish mistake, as to take a patriot for a pro-Japanese landlord. You should be proud of the devoted service you have rendered to the independence movement."

Kim Jong Bu, with tears in his eyes, thanked me. "Since you say that I am a patriotic landlord, I would have nothing to regret, even if I died now."

Kim Man Du also expressed his gratitude to me with a low bow. Other landlords glanced at the father and son with a mixed feeling of envy and apprehension.

Sensing their feeling, Kim Jong Bu went on, "To tell you the truth, General, they are not reactionary landlords. I swear on my honor, General. If you trust me, please don't consider them as traitors."

"Why should I not trust them, if you supply references? If you do so in person, I won't see them in a bad light."

On hearing this, the landlords bowed in thanks.

Our first interview ended there. My impression of the talk remains vivid in my memory. If it had been an interrogation of pro-Japanese elements or an indignation meeting to accuse them of crimes, I would have been unable to recollect so light-heartedly, as I do the conversation I had with influential persons from Diyangxi, until midnight in a drizzling night at the lumbermen's hostel in Majiazi where I met Kim Jong Bu and his company.

At that time I did not ask if they had exploited their tenants or about the level of support they provided to the Japanese imperialists in the pursuit of their colonial policy or the wrong they had done to their

fatherland and people. Instead, I took it for granted that those landlords were not pro-Japanese and immediately displayed my confidence in them. This confidence helped them change that night their views of communists.

The day's talk, however, was merely our mutual introduction and the beginning of our relationship. The principal matters I wanted to discuss with them still remained for the future. I aimed to lead the landlords of Diyangxi ideologically, in the spirit of the "Inaugural Declaration of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland", to encourage them to provide the maximum material support for the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and, through them, transform the influential persons in Changbai, who were merely looking on the revolution or obstructing it, into sympathizers, supporters and cooperators for the revolution. I had to hold many more talks with them. But I intended to return Kim Jong Bu and his son to Diyangxi immediately.

The next day when I told him to return home, Kim Jong Bu said in surprise, "General, I thought about many things last night. This time I met you by providence. I have tried to work for the country and the nation in various ways, but all without much success. I am now old and weak, but I realize that good conduct alone is not enough to save the nation. As I was so anxious to find a way to contribute to national liberation in my late years, I had the good luck to meet you, General.

"If I stay here, my son, when he is back home to Diyangxi, can send aid goods over here on the grounds of saving me. My son will say to the authorities that he has to send goods to the guerrilla army in order to bring his father back home. If he tells them not to be nervous about his dispatch of food, clothes and footwear to the mountain, they will connive at it."

I was deeply moved by his words. The cry of his conscience touched my heart.

But it was too much. So I said, "I fully understand what you mean. Your noble suggestion inspires me with great strength. But this is not the suitable place for you, as we have no decent accommodation or food. The weather will grow much colder, and the Japanese imperialists will be more violent in their attempts to 'mop us up'. So you must return home."

But the old man persistently refused. He begged me not to deprive him of his best opportunity to help the independence of the country, although he might not be able to fight as a soldier. I allowed him to stay in the secret camp for some time and let his son return home.

We arranged special quarters in the secret camp for the people from Diyangxi and looked after them as best as we could.

In the depths of mountain, with no ready source of supplies, we ourselves had to eat gruel now and then, but provided them with rice meals from our emergency rations. My men smoked leaf tobacco, but we supplied cigarettes to them. Kim Jong Bu spent his birthday and New Year's Day in 1937 in the secret camp.

I remember that his birthday fell on one day of the twelfth month by the lunar calendar. He did not want to return home even then; he insisted that he would not go home before the aid goods from his son at Diyangxi arrived.

I felt that I was doing wrong to the old man and his family. Could there be anything more heartless than keeping an old man in his seventies in the mountain on his birthday?

I ordered my men working behind the enemy lines to bring rice, meat, and liquor and visited his quarters on his birthday in the company of my orderly, who carried the supplies on his back. Although not nectar and ambrosia, the birthday meal we prepared for the old man was almost unprecedented in the history of the People's Revolutionary Army. Even for the wedding ceremonies for our comrades-in-arms, we never laid on such a sumptuous table. In those days a bowl of rice and soup for each were all we could afford on such occasions. Kim Jong Bu became wide-eyed at the sight of his birthday dinner table.

"What does this feast mean, when New Year's Day is still far off?" he asked.

"Today is your birthday, sir. I congratulate you on behalf of the People's Revolutionary Army."

I filled a cup of wine to the brim and offered it to him, saying, "Mr. Kim, I am sorry to have kept you in the mountain in this winter cold on your birthday. Please accept this humble birthday dinner as a token of our best wishes."

Tears trickled down from Kim Jong Bu's eyes, as he said, holding the cup in his hand: "I am so sorry to see you guerrillas endure all these hardships eating maize porridge, in order to win back the lost country, that I can hardly eat three hot meals every day. To give a birthday party in honor of an old man like me in the depths of mountain! General, I will never forget your kindness even in my grave.

"I wish you a long life until the country wins independence."

"It doesn't matter whether I live long or not. But I wish you good health, General, so that you can save the nation from sufferings."

That day I talked a lot with Kim Jong Bu.

A severe cold set in and there was heavy snowfall in the mountain. So I dissuaded him from going home. Afraid of a possible accident on his way home in the deep snow, I made sure that he stayed in the secret camp through the winter.

He frankly told me about his impressions of the four months he spent in the secret camp. It was a summary of his impressions of the People's Revolutionary Army as well as a brief statement of his views on the Korean communists whom he had observed for a long time.

"To be candid, I did not look upon the communists with a gracious eye. But, General, your communism is quite different. You discriminate between pro-Japanese and anti-Japanese landlords and attack only pro-Japanese. Who could dislike such communism? The Japanese call the guerrillas 'communist bandits', but that is a nonsense.... I have thought many things, eating the food of guerrillas over the past months. Of course, I have made a fresh resolve. I don't think I can live many more years, but I will dedicate my remaining years to the worthwhile cause. I am determined to back up the People's Revolutionary Army, even if I die. Believe me, I am your man, alive or dead."

During his stay in the secret camp, he became our active supporter.

The landlords we had brought to the secret camp to educate and obtain material aid, included some, who were treated with scorn by the peasants. But Kim Jong Bu stood surety for them and held them under his control. He gave them good influence, so that they all took the patriotic path against the Japanese.

Kim Jong Bu offered more than 3,000 yuan in support of the People's Revolutionary Army and supplied it with food, cloth and various other goods. We made wadded coats and uniforms for all my unit with the cloth he had supplied.

On his return to Diyangxi, his son supported the guerrillas in a big way, true to the resolve he had made before us. On his arrival in his village, he raised a large sum of money by selling ten heads of cattle from the ones he had received from the authorities. In those days the county authorities loaned him dozens of heads of cattle to reclaim wasteland, allegedly to provide secure livelihood to the peasants of Diyangxi. Afterwards, he again loaned twenty heads of good cattle from the county authorities and on his way back home handed them over to us. He even sent his sewing machine to the guerrillas as aid goods.

Since the advance of the People's Revolutionary Army to Mt. Paektu area, the enemy tightened up control of the people in Changbai and stepped up their repression. Kim Jong Bu and his family were blacklisted.

One day Kim Man Du was summoned to Changbai police station for interrogation. Tell us frankly what kinds of goods and how much you have sent."

Kim Man Du flatly denied and made a plausible excuse.

"You speak as if I maintain secret communication with Kim Il Sung's army; this is a misunderstanding. Such communication does not and cannot exist. Do you think that a communist army uses a large landowner like me as its agent? You know full well that my father is detained in a secret camp of the communist army. What does it matter if a son sent them some goods to save his father? I am anxious to save my father even if it costs all my family property. If you were in my place, wouldn't you do so?"

The police authorities accepted his excuse as reasonable and questioned him no more, releasing him.

Kim Jong Bu and his son sold a large portion of his land and work animals in order to support the revolutionary army in this manner.

Kim Jong Bu reclaimed wasteland in order to supply food and funds to the Independence Army and became a landowner. He spent all the remainder of his property and money on the support of the People's Revolutionary Army. It is not as simple as it sounds for a landowner or capitalist to give up the idea of amassing wealth, which is vital to them, and offer up the source of wealth to the country.

This is the depth of Kim Jong Bu's patriotism and the height of the service he rendered to the anti-Japanese revolution. During the whole period of the anti-Japanese revolution I seldom saw a landlord who supported us in such a big way and with such ardent patriotic loyalty as Kim Jong Bu did.

Some of Kim Jong Bu's feelings and experiences in the secret camp were carried in Samcholli, a magazine, in later days in the form of interview with me.

Part of the interview is given below.

"~Kim IL Sung is well-known in the border area, and everyone who reads a newspaper will remember.

"The man, addressed as commander-in-chief, conducts raiding actions in command of ... Manchurian and Korean subordinates, directs his bases in the mountain in stubborn resistance to the army, rallies his comrades in secret, dreaming one thing or another! Who is this man?

"Old man Kim Jong Bu had an interview with this enigmatic man.

"A man of slender build, with a roaring voice, and a manner of speech, which suggests that he is from Pyongan Province. A virile young man in his twenties, much younger than he is generally imagined to be. He has a good command of Manchurian, with no affectation of being a commander, shares bed and board with his men, wearing the same clothes as those of his men, and sharing weal and woe with them, with apparent influence and magnanimity.

"'Old man, how do you find this cold weather?' he greeted me cordially, and then.

"'...Which of us young men would dislike a warm place and a comfortable life? Although we have to skip two or three meals of barley porridge, we endure all these hardships for such and such. I am also a man, who sheds tears, blood and has a soul. But we move about in this manner in the cold winter.'

"He spoke in a calm voice and was good-mannered, unlike a ringleader of bandits, which was beyond my imagination.

"He consoled old man Kim in various ways, saying that in the rigors of winter and deep snow it would be

impossible to walk another step and that he need not worry, for he would go back home next spring, and then ordered his men to take special care of him...."

This article was written by Yang Il Chon, Park In Jin's disciple in Hyesan. Kim Jong Bu seems to have spoken his mind comparatively frankly and daringly to the mass media, which was under the surveillance and control of the Japanese authorities. Surprisingly the magazine Samcholli carried this kind of article at a time when there was a strict news blackout about the movements of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

Kim Jong Bu moved to Wangqing-Hamatang, as I had advised him to, and is said to have died there, without seeing the liberation of the country.

I met Kim Jong Bu in my twenties and now am past eighty, or about ten years older than Kim Jong Bu was at that time. On the wrong side of eighty I can feel more tangibly how much he suffered in the secret camp of the guerrillas, as if it were my own suffering. I tried my best to take care of him, but I may not have been meticulous enough. I still regret that I was unable to take better care of him and provide him with sumptuous food.

I have been unable to move his grave, and have not erected a monument in his honor. In its early days in Mt. Paektu, my unit was in extremely difficult circumstances. We had no money, rice, cloth, practically nothing. But Kim Jong Bu solved many problems for us. This was the best gift he could make to the true sons and daughters of Korea as a senior independence fighter. I cannot forget my indebtedness to him.

The gallant act of conscience and patriotism displayed by a propertied man, the owner of a large estate, like Kim Jong Bu, made a tangible contribution to the preparation for nationwide anti-Japanese resistance, and provided powerful support to our cause. In the 1930s, when armed resistance was the main trend of the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle, unlike in the 1920s, landowners or capitalists, who wished to give us material, financial or moral support, had to risk their own lives. However, Kim Jong Bu did so.

Consequently we regard him as a patriot and still remember him even after several decades. In half our country there are still landlords and capitalists. Apparently some of them are billionaires. There will be reactionaries and no small number of patriots.

What will be the attitude of the Korean communists towards landlords and capitalists in a reunified nonfederal state? The story of patriotic landlord Kim Jong Bu suffices to answer this question.

## 14.1 West Jiandao

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Ever since the several counties north of Tuman River, which flows eastward from Mt. Paektu, have been called Jiandao or north Jiandao. The area north of Yalu River, which flows westward from Mt. Paektu, has been called west Jiandao.

West Jiandao is a historic area directly associated with the activities of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in the latter half of the 1930s. The Paektusan Base covers the wide area of west Jiandao and the homeland around Mt. Paektu. The vast area of west Jiandao, along with the Paektusan Secret Camp established by the KPRA in the homeland, holds an important place in the Paektusan Base. In this context, whenever the Paektusan Base implies only the area on the Chinese frontier, it may be termed the West Jiandao Base.

Some people used to refer to it as the Changbai Base. However, I feel this is wrong, as one gains the false impression that the Paektusan Base covers only the area of west Jiandao including Changbai, whereas in actual fact the base was not limited to the Changbai area; it was very big, covering several counties in west Jiandao on the upper reaches of the Songhua and north of the Yalu and a vast area of homeland, around Mt. Paektu.

The latter half of the 1930s marked a heyday for the KPRA's military and political activities. This period should be embossed with gold letters. After building dozens of secret camps near Mt. Paektu, we start fighting was most frequent and gunshots were the loudest.

I often said that west Jiandao was a good place. Although the scenery is beautiful, I meant that its inhabitants are good. No matter how beautiful, a place cannot be considered good, if its inhabitants are ill-disposed. On the contrary, a barren land, where trees do not thrive, is called a good place when its inhabitants are kind-hearted.

In those days many Koreans lived in west Jiandao. Poor Korean immigrants grew potatoes in slash-and-bum patches, in insufficient quantities for their wretched existence. They built villages on barren plateaus and valleys in west Jiandao, calling them Phungsandok, Kapsandok, Kiljudok and Myongchondok after their native villages in the homeland, and toiled away in a laborious life, recounting the tale of Tangun, the Founder of Korea, and The Tale of Ondal under the pine-knot light.

Most landlords were Chinese. Although there were Korean landlords in some places, they were few and far between. Owing to the size of land they owned, they were petty landlords, acting no better than rich farmers.

Most Koreans living in west Jiandao had drifted there from their motherland to seek livelihood or were patriots, who had embarked on the road of the anti-Japanese independence movement to remove the

disgrace of a ruined nation, after Japan's annexation of Korea.

We met in all the villages of slash-and-burn peasants in west Jiandao we visited, people who had devoted themselves to the movement of the Independence Army in the bygone days, as well as people who had assisted the army. As I already mentioned in preceding chapters, Kang Jin Con, a veteran of the Independence Army, had also lived in Changbai County, while Hong Bom Do, O Tong Jin and Lee Kuk Ro had frequented there via Kuandian, Fusong and Antu. My uncle on my mother's side, Kang Jin Sok, had formed the Paeksan Armed Group in Linjiang and conducted his activities.

In west Jiandao quite a few people, who had failed in attempts to launch peasant union movements in various places in the homeland, brought their families there to settle. They opened night schools at almost every village in Changbai and worked to enlighten the masses. Most renowned revolutionaries in Changbai area, including Lee Je Sun, Choe Kyong Hwa, Jong Tong Chol, Kang Ton and Kim Se Ok, taught at night schools. Many private schools for Korean children were established in the area by exiles and patriotic, public-minded people, who had emigrated from the homeland.

These private schools devoted considerable time to patriotic education. Mass enlightenment through night schools, as well as the school education of children and youth, produced many Korean patriots in west Jiandao.

The strong national spirit of the people in this area and their bitter hatred for the Japanese emanated naturally from their miserable living conditions, as well as from the consistent enlightenment movement, conducted by patriotic thinkers and their precursors. They had such intensified national and anti-Japanese feelings that our operatives could easily recruit hardcore elements and use them to organize many people.

By the early 1930s we had already sent operatives of the Korean Revolutionary Army to west Jiandao and blown "Jirin wind" there. Thanks to their efforts, a considerable number of revolutionary organizations sprang up in the area. After debating the establishment of a new type of base in Nanhutou and Donggang, we dispatched a small unit, headed by Kim Ju Hyon, to the area. The small unit roved many villages around Mt. Paektu, focussing on Changbai County, learning about the state of the revolutionary movement in that area, recruiting hardcore elements, educating the masses, and thereby laying the foundations for the political and military activities, due to be launched by the main force in the future.

Their efforts spawned solid foundations, facilitating assistance to the activities of the main force of the KPRA and promoting the mass development of the anti-Japanese national united front movement.

This was the prime factor, which enabled us to rapidly transform west Jiandao area into a revolutionary area, without experiencing any hitches.

We learned another valuable lesson during our activities in west Jiandao; qualified operatives could organize the masses and transform them into revolutionaries very quickly, by instilling revolutionary ideas, relying on favorable mass foundations.



We also discovered that the rule of Manchukuo had had virtually no effect on west Jiandao. Most inhabitants were poor peasants, who subsisted on the potatoes they cultivated. Very few people could afford to pay taxes. Only a few government officials, apart from the county headman, ruled over the people in Changbai County.

After some months in Fusong, I discovered that only a small number of people in the government office of the county could conduct land surveying and registration properly. This led to such a pass, that the officials deplored the fact that many people were tilling unclaimed land without obtaining a permission.

Police operations in Fusong area were crippled by the ties of kinship and hometown links. Moreover, many of the policemen had been hunters in former days. As they had been picked out on the merit of their marksmanship, the policemen were all ignorant and unable to control the people properly. This led to ineffective administration.

I discovered the situation was very similar in Changbai. These factors facilitated the awakening of the masses to revolutionary consciousness and their organization. In west Jiandao no people persecuted the Korean communists, stigmatizing them as "Minsaengdan" members, no one censured Koreans for fighting to liberate their country under the banner of the Korean revolution or put brakes on their efforts. In other words, nobody held us contemptuous for living in a foreign country and discriminated against us. This was another favorable factor, enabling us to conduct free political and military activities in the areas along the Yalu and deep in the homeland round Mt. Paektu, unaffected by any restraint and restriction, acting in accordance with our own conviction and determination to bring about an upsurge in the anti-Japanese revolution.

We did not feel any restraint in forming our own party organizations; we could launch the drive to form independent party organizations in a big way, in accordance with our plan for both west Jiandao and Korea.

In a word, no particular people in that area put a spoke in our wheel. We could attack walled towns, formed party organizations and advanced into the homeland in large units, as we deemed necessary.

By contrast, things were different during our struggle in the guerrilla bases in north Jiandao. In those days, our short visits to the people in the homeland across the Tuman had been criticized as a practice of nationalism. When we had proposed the creation of a people's revolutionary government, the East Manchuria Special District Party Committee and the county Party committees had objected and tried to force us to build a soviet government, saying that this was the line of the central authorities.

Another favorable factor enabled us to expedite the rapid transformation of the people in west Jiandao into revolutionaries and encouraged them to render active support to our independent line of struggle; the people did not worship Russia. They yearned for socialism, but were virtually unaffected by Russia.

However, north Jiandao, bordering the far eastern region of Russia by land, had been considerably

influenced by Russia. The people there used many words borrowed from Russian in their everyday language. Just as the elderly in North Hamgyong Province today call match pijikkae, the people in north Jiandao in those days called it the same way in Russian. The people in Wangqing, Hunchun, Yanji and Fielong more frequently said the Russian words "pioner", "kolkhoz" and "yacheika" than "children's corps", "collective farm" and "cell".

Some used Russian words on purpose to show off their knowledge, but most people used Russian words to express their craving for socialism and intimacy with the Soviet people, who had emerged victorious in a socialist revolution for the first time in the world. In a sense, their use of Russian words could be regarded as a simple expression of their sympathy with the communist ideal.

All the people in north Jiandao, men and women, young and old, could sing a few Russian songs. They danced Russian dances skillfully. The dance of sitting and standing while slapping his leg with one hand as well as dances, which are staged today at the April Spring Friendship Art Festivals, were staged in the guerrilla zones.

In such places as Hunchun and Wangqing we frequently came across self-styled communists, clad in the rubashka (shirts) worn by Russians, who shouted for victory in the world revolution and the proletarian dictatorship.

While living in Russian dress, using words borrowed from Russian, singing Russian songs and dancing Russian dances, and feeling sympathy with Russia, the first socialist country in the world, worship of Russia and a belief that it was the best country in the world and that her people were the best in the world, wormed its way into the minds of the people in north Jiandao before they even realized.

They also worshipped China to some extent. Quite a few of them thought that the Korean revolution could only succeed in the wake of victory in the Chinese revolution and that the Korean revolution could only be completed only with aid from the Chinese people. They used words borrowed from Russian and also Chinese. The people there called spade guangqiao.

However, the people in west Jiandao never pronounced Chinese or Russian. They used the untainted dialects of the Hamgyong and Pyongan Provinces, as they had done in their motherland. The Koreans there preserved their own national character in their lifestyle, manners, diet, language and all other aspects.

After advancing to the Mt. Paektu area, we toured west Jiandao and became acquainted with the physical geography and tendencies of the masses; we realized that the area offered favorable conditions in every aspect for guerrilla activities. Our determination to build up a revolutionary stronghold near Mt. Paektu and launch a vigorous armed struggle grew firmer and unchangeable, during contacts with the people there and acclimatization there.

The movement of the main force of the KPRA to west Jiandao constituted a momentous event, ushering

in a great new era, termed by our historians and people as the heyday of the anti-Japanese revolution. It was a historic event, casting a beam of light on a ruined motherland in a pitch-dark night. The sons and daughters of Korea, faithful to the ideal of patriotism, not only grieved over the destiny of the nation, which was at stake. They advanced to Mt. Paektu in stately strides, in order to relieve their compatriots from distress. They were determined to seal their fate with the advent of time.

In retrospect, we had prepared for the advance to Mt. Paektu for 10 long years, since the formation of the Down-with-Imperialism Union. We had been forced to experience many ups and downs, before transforming the determination into practice; this was the determined desire we had proclaimed at Huadian to raise an armed struggle on Mt. Paektu, when the time came and launch a sacred struggle for independence. The thousands of miles we traversed had not been straight; they had been steep.

If we had taken a direct route from Huadian to west Jiandao, after organizing the DIU, we would have reached Mt. Paektu in five or six days at the latest. But we had not chosen the direct route; we had laid foundations by building up revolutionary ranks in Jirin and its surrounding areas. After moving the theatre of our activities to eastern Manchuria, we had continued this work. Why? To train the soldiers we would take to Mt. Paektu, and rally the masses, who would render hearty assistance to the soldiers.

When the guerrilla army had been organized in Antu, I could not repress an urge to lead the unit to Mt. Paektu. The mountain was within hailing distance from Antu. However, this was a mountain nobody could climb, even if he wanted to. Our ranks had been so delicate and small in size, compared to the grandeur of Paektu. We had resembled a new-born eagle. A bright blue sky spread over our head, but we still lacked the wings to fly across the sky. To base ourselves on Paektu, we had had to expand our ranks and cultivate our strength.

Paektu was not a mountain we could climb, whenever we wanted to. Our inability to climb as we pleased was the true meaning of Paektu; the more restrained we were from going there, the more we felt that its ascent represented the true bewitching power of Paektu.

Mt. Paektu awaited the steel-strong units and fighters of the revolutionary army, capable of defeating the crack divisions and corps of the Japanese army.

During the establishment of the guerrilla zones and their defense, a steel-strong army, with each man the match for a hundred, had been prepared. The indomitable, steel-strong soldiers had been brought up via hundreds of engagements with the enemy. During the dynamic advance along the lines, set forth at the meetings held at Kalun, Mingyuegou, Dahuangwai, Yaoyinggou, Nanhutou and Donggang, the Korean revolution had accumulated sufficient strength to launch into Paektu. We advanced to west Jiandao, drawing on this strength.

In retrospect, the history of our anti-Japanese revolution involved the transmission of a banner to our fellow countrymen, who had been scattered with a shame of national ruin and arming them to lead them to Mt. Paektu, and defeating Japanese imperialism on Paektu.

The meetings in the forests of Nanhutou and Donggang marked a decisive turning-point in that process. After those two meetings Paektu was the main theme of our topic: The motherland is calling us; Mt. Paektu is awaiting us; let us climb the mountain as soon as possible, to expedite preparations for the founding of the party and expand on a mass scale the network of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and thereby vanquish the Japanese imperialist aggressors through do-or-die all-people resistance!

We should ring the bell of national resurrection on Paektu, the ancestral mountain, to inspire the whole Korean nation with love for their country and dedication to national salvation; we should instill courage in people, who had lost faith and been dispirited, so that they rise up; we should stand in the vanguard and launch the advance into the homeland, by checking the separation of the nation and rallying them - this was the will and faith we had when advancing to Paektu.

We did not believe that Mt. Paektu was a gateway to the sky, as our forefathers had done. Instead, we regarded it as a gateway to the homeland, a bridgehead to meet our compatriots there. Mt. Paektu was an important strategic vantage point, where the boundaries among west Jiandao, the homeland and north Jiandao, converged.

By basing ourselves on Paektu, we aimed to draw together the people in the homeland, patriots in west Jiandao and communists in north Jiandao and ensure our unified leadership to the revolutionary movement in the homeland, the independence movement in west Jiandao and the communist movement in north Jiandao. On this mountain we could also establish, with the homeland as a stepping-stone, relations with Japan, form a link with the anti-Japanese movement, conducted in China proper beyond Shanhaiguan, and realize, via north Jiandao, cooperation with the communists and anti-Japanese independence champions in northern Manchuria and Maritime Provinces of the Soviet Union.

Aware of the many lessons gained from building and defending guerrilla zones in eastern Manchuria, we did not try to transform west Jiandao into a full-scale guerrilla zone as we did in north Jiandao; we turned it into a semi-guerrilla zone, which was the enemy's ground by day and our ground by night, as I previously mentioned. Almost all the posts of ten-household head, district head and sub-county chief were all occupied by people under our influence. They pretended to work for the Japanese army and police and Manchukuo authorities by day, but at night were busy holding meetings, teaching at night schools, and collecting goods and cleaning rice to be sent to the revolutionary army.

Lee Je Sun, Lee Ju Ik, Lee Hun, Choe Pyong Rak, Jong Tong Chol, Lee Yong Sul, and Ryom In Hwan constituted the typical embodiment of the situation in semi-guerrilla zones.

Previously the leaders of party organizations in eastern Manchuria established guerrilla zones in the form of a liberated area and cold-shouldered the people living outside the zones. Worse still, they had shown enmity towards the people in enemy-ruled areas, calling them "White people"; they had given wide berth to the people in the intermediate zones, calling them "double-faced". It had been a serious error to divide the masses into "White" and "Red". It had only helped the enemy blockade the guerrilla zone.

Consequently, it had hindered our attempts to create a united front, aimed at rallying the revolutionary forces more firmly.

This painful experience led us to turn the whole area of west Jiandao into a semi-guerrilla zone and put all the masses there under our influence, without defining them as either "Red" or "White".

Many Self-Defense Corps men guarding the concentration villages came under our influence. On one occasion we went to the concentration village of Badaojiang to obtain food grain. The Self-Defense Corps of that village included an operative we had dispatched. On receiving information from him, our small unit raided the village, singing revolutionary songs and firing blank shots. But we did not disarm the Self-Defense Corps men; we only returned with the grain prepared by the operative beforehand.

After the guerrilla unit had withdrawn, the operative went to the Japanese police and said that the guerrillas had raided the village and plundered grain, but had failed to occupy the fortress and that the Self-Defense Corps could survive owing to the fortress. In this way, he managed to deceive the enemy.

As the people in west Jiandao were friendly towards the guerrillas and disloyal to the Japanese army, police and Manchukuo government, we could achieve all our goals to our satisfaction.

West Jiandao was the main theatre of our activities, developed by the KPRA on its own initiative and controlled for 3-4 years from the day we advanced to the Mt. Paektu area to the day, when we switched to large-unit circling operations. In the days after the arduous march (December, 1938?March, 1939), eastern Manchuria once again became the main theatre of our operations. After the meeting at Xiaohaerbaling (August 10-11, 1940), we had another base in the Soviet Union, as well as the one in Mt. Paektu and made preparations for the great event of national liberation.

As a whole, the centers of the KPRA's actions during the anti-Japanese revolution were first, north Jiandao, second, west Jiandao and third, the area of Mt. Zhanggu along the Tuman; they were important bases, which ensured our victory in the anti-Japanese revolution.

As we had experienced during our activities in eastern Manchuna, we keenly felt once again in west Jiandao that the more intensified and outrageous the enemy's offensive, the better the semi-guerrilla zone was in every aspect. The transformation of west Jiandao into a semi-guerrilla zone and our world of influence was a factor behind the successes and victory we gained in several fields after our advance to the Mt. Paektu area.

After developing the area into a semi-guerrilla zone, we conducted brisk, military activities. Armed units of 20 or so men attacked the enemy almost everyday, moving freely in the west Jiandao area. We frequently dispatched small units to the homeland.

We dispersed our forces and operated in small armed units instead of a large unit to refrain from imposing any burden on the people, who were leading tough lives on scanty meals of potato and oats. It was

extremely hard to obtain food for a unit of 200 guerrillas, to say nothing of a larger unit of more than 500-600.

The enemy finished building concentration villages in eastern and southern Manchuria by 1938 or so. Since then it had become harder for the revolutionary army to obtain food. We had to fight big battles to get food, which meant, in the long run, exchanging food for the blood of our comrades. So we conducted small-unit activities in many cases and solved the problem of food in this way. I thought that we should not spill comrades' blood, even if it meant going hungry for some days.

Under the direct influence of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, the people's spirit to fight the Japanese rose and our revolutionary advance was stepped up in west Jiandao. During an interview with elderly people in the area, I discovered that the people in Changbai had heard a great deal about us since 1932-1933.

In the early 1936 Lee Je Sun and Lee Ju Ik met Kwon Yong Byok and Kim Jong Phil, political workers from the guerrilla army, who had gone to west Jiandao disguised as opium traffickers and acquired information about the KPRA's activities from them. On learning that the restructuring of the guerrilla army was under way, they realized that the main force of the KPRA might advance to the Changbai area. The news soon spread throughout Changbai County and as far as Kapsan Working Committee in the homeland.

I was told that Lee Yong Sul, who had been a ten-household headman in Tianshangshui, had been spreading propaganda about us among his friends since 1932. He had said that General Kim Il Sung was engaged in guerrilla activities in north Jiandao and would lead his unit to Mt. Paektu at any moment to liberate the motherland; he had called on them to continue anti-Japanese patriotic activities without changing their mind.

Encouraged by news of the activities of the KPRA, the young people in the Changbai area had for a long time tried hard to join our guerrilla army. Kang Hyon Mmn, who had been working with the youth in Dadeshui, had told his friends, "I can no longer wait for General Kim with arms folded. I am going to his unit to join up; please take good care of my family when I am gone." Then, he came to the direction of Fusong and joined our guerrilla army.

After our advance to Changbai, the whole west Jiandao was afire with passion to join the guerrilla army. After meeting us, many young people called on Headquarters and asked to join the army. We only admitted some of them, as we had to leave a great number of young people in the enemy-ruled area to intensify underground activities.

However, after the concentration villages had been built, we recruited all the volunteers. If they had been left in the earthen walls, the young people would have to be drafted for forced labor, organized by the enemy, doing nothing for the revolution.

Since the first gun report at Dadeshui after our advance to Changbai, the anti-Japanese spirit of the people in west Jiandao soared.

Witnessing the ignominious defeat of the Japanese army in Dadeshui and Xiaodeshi, the old men at Shiliudaogou could not hide their rapture, saying, "Every devil from the old days, who molested the people, has gone ruined, and the Japanese swines are no exception." The young people released a shout of joy, saying, "Hurrah! We thought Korea had been destroyed forever but she is not totally collapsed. We can feel her heart beating fast."

Following the brisk armed struggle of the KPRA in west Jiandao, the people on both sides of the Yalu produced legend after legend about us. Spreading the news of the might of the guerrilla army, some of the elderly people believing in Chondoism said that Commander Kim Il Sung was employing the "art of shortening distance" to defeat the Japanese imperialists, appearing in the east and west. They even concocted such stories that, whenever a policeman made a phone call, the guerrillas appeared, when they fired a shot, his ear was cut and, when he tried to take flight, they fired another shot and his legs would break.

Such stories produced by the people in west Jiandao spread deep into the homeland across the Yalu. When one person shouted, "The revolutionary army raided Banjiegou last night!" on the Changbai bank of the Yalu, the people in Samsu across the river could hear it all. When operating in west Jiandao, we received considerable assistance from the people. The many written recollections kept in the archives of our Party patently indicate how passionately the people in west Jiandao supported the People's Revolutionary Army.

They backed the revolutionary army with all sincerity. They regarded sincere assistance to the army as a token of their conscience. They labeled any rejection of the revolutionary army to pursue one's own interest and luxury as little-minded.

After our establishment in west Jiandao, the Japanese imperialists made desperate efforts to cut off the relations between the revolutionary army and the people and prevent support of the people from reaching the revolutionary army. They even kept watchful eyes on Koreans, who shook hands in greeting, claiming that they were tainted by communism.

In west Jiandao the commoners had to obtain permission from the village head to pay a visit to the neighboring village. They had to keep a spoon for each family member. The enemy carried out searches at all hours and took away all surplus spoons, claiming that even one surplus spoon would help the revolutionary army.

The enemy issued a proclamation, announcing a 50 yuan reward for anyone, who beheaded a revolutionary army soldier and a greater reward for anyone, who captured a soldier alive. Several documents proved that a larger sum of money had been offered for my head. Sometimes they would force people to scatter leaflets, inciting us to surrender, and send poisoned salt to the revolutionary army as "aid

goods".

These were all tricks to disconnect the blood-sealed ties between the revolutionary army and the people. The people of west Jiandao were not taken in by this trickery. The more frenzied efforts the enemy made, the more they strengthened their relations with the KPRA and the more rapidly they offered support en masse. When the enemy organized a night guard corps in every village to check the activities of the guerrilla army, the corps men would help the underground operatives and guerrillas infiltrate the concentration village by standing guard for them, while pretending to be on patrol.

The enemy burned mercilessly any village, which revealed the slightest sign of support for the guerrillas, and killed all others, young or old, involved in the supporting scheme. Diyangxi, Dadeshui and Xinchangdong were totally burned in this whirlwind. A teacher in Dadeshui was shot to death for sending a fountain-pen to the guerrillas. The west Jiandao people did not yield, however; they assisted the guerrillas as one at the cost of their blood.

The enemy constantly sustained heavy casualties from the military offensive of the KIPRA, but acted in front of the people as if it were winning victory after victory. When we had an engagement with the enemy in Xiaodeshui, the people thought that the revolutionary army had lost the battle, as the enemy had displayed its troops after the battle, blowing bugles, as if it had won the battle. They soon realized the truth, after seeing dozens of dead bodies of Japanese soldiers scattered on the battlefield.

When carrying off the dead bodies of its soldiers, the enemy said that it was carrying the corpses of communist soldiers.

After our withdrawal following the attack on Shierdaogou, the rumour about our guerrilla army spread widely in Shierdaogou and its vicinity. The enemy felt awkward: So it hung the head of a Japanese army officer on the entrance of the north gate, which the revolutionary army had just stormed through before withdrawing; it propagandized that the men had killed a leader of the communist army. It was soon revealed as a fake, when the officer's wife later saw the head on a pole in front of the gate and wailed, saying, "Oh, my! How could this happen to you?"

Such a tragi-comedy was staged regularly. A similar farce was staged in Fusong and Linjiang.

To win the reward from their Japanese bosses, the Jingan army soldiers one year hung the head of an unidentified man and a Mauser rifle inscribed "Kim Il Sung" respectively in the downtowns of Fusong and Linjiang and spread the false rumor that our unit had been vanquished. However, when my primary schoolmates and friends in Fusong and Linjiang went to the site and revealed that the Jingan army's propaganda was false, this dirty deceptive farce also collapsed. Indeed it had the opposite effect, giving the impression that the KPRA and its commander were sturdy and offering continued resistance.

The enemy could not deflate the anti-Japanese spirit of the people of west Jiandao or suppress their sympathy and support for the People's Revolutionary Army. Support for the guerrillas was not stamped



out; the more intensified the suppression, the more support increased.

I will describe the support-the-guerrillas movement, conducted by the west Jiandao people in subsequent sections and will therefore introduce a few bits about information and the people here.

Whenever we passed through a village in west Jiandao, the villagers would come out with dark toffee made from potato and place it in the pockets of the soldiers.

After the establishment of concentration villages, they sincerely helped the guerrilla army. Given that the Japanese imperialists confined all the people in those villages and exercised strict control over grain, inquiring into the size of the field and crops harvested, they assisted us by employing clever methods. They would only clear away creepers during the season for harvesting potatoes; they did not dig potatoes, so that the guerrillas could lift them and take them away to eat. They kept the unshucked corn in reserves built in the forests and informed the guerrillas to take it away. If corn is stored unshucked, it does not rot. They did not harvest the beans and informed the revolutionary army, so that they could bring them away. One year we spent the winter on boiled ground bean.

West Jiandao was the first place, where the guerrilla army received food grain from the people in such a way; the grain was left on the field so that the soldiers could take it away.

The chief of the police department of South Hamgyong Province made his well-known remarks in Hyesan: During my current inspection of this area, I discovered a problem with west Jiandao.

First, the people there clearly maintain a secret communication with the guerrilla army. The size of the guerrilla army runs into at least tens of thousands, whereas apparently only three mat (a mat approximates to two pecks) of rice was sent to them. Suppose 300 guerrillas came; they would consume several mal of rice a day, but they reported that they had given only three mal. This proves that they are secretly communicating with the guerrilla army.

Second, they have become Reds. When we ask if they have seen people in the mountains or bandits, even children say they haven't; but when we ask if they have seen the revolutionary army, they say yes. This testifies that the west Jiandao people regard the guerrilla army as their army and that they have become Reds.

Third, west Jiandao has become a permanent base of the guerrilla army's activities. Previously the Independence Army units and bandits would stay there in summer or autumn and move to other places in winter. However, Kim Il Sung's unit operate here even in winter. So we must build concentration villages in this area.

This is impressive evidence, which indicates the strength of the ties between the revolutionary army and the people and provides vivid material, revealing how daringly the latter championed and supported the former.

Maintenance of peace in west Jiandao was causing such problems that the enemy cried in distress that both communism and the three principles for the people had become a beacon-light, illuminating the road ahead for the people, saying, "To win the masses from the communist bandits and the anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese bandits and defeat these bandits, we must set up an objective more dazzling than their political objective, indicate a clear-cut road to that objective and run a more popular government.

In other words, we must advance the ideal of building Manchukuo more clearly, by enlisting the masses more easily and peacefully than the communist bandits and create a policy capable of meeting the requirements to lead them to that ideal. Only treatment of the bandits as a special sector of the political, economic, ideological and social, national movement, guided by this policy, will enable us to effectively disintegrate the foundations of the political and ideological banditry and overcome them."

The words "communist bandits" constitute a derogatory term for the People's Revolutionary Army, and "anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese bandits", for all armed forces opposed to the puppet Manchukuo and Japanese imperialism.

The enemy resorted to every possible means to vanquish the People's Revolutionary Army and disconnect ties between the revolutionary army and people, but to no avail.

After their village had been totally burned, owing to "punitive" operations of the Japanese imperialists, the peasants in Diyangxi felt a tremendous difficulty for lack of draught animals. They had to till the land and carry timber from the mountain for pay before long, but had no single draught ox. After discussions, they decided to solve the problem through negotiations with the county administration, and sent a Lee as a delegate for the negotiations and some young people as his escorts. Apparently, he was the most sociable and eloquent person in the village.

As he arrived at the county office, Lee complained in this way: The people in our village have never maintained secret contacts with the communist army; however, the Japanese army turned the village into a heap of ashes in a night, without waiting for clear evidence; where on earth can you find such an unfair incident?; what the hell was the county administration doing?; you mentioned that you would create "a village of good citizens" at every opportunity, but you did not check the advance of the "punitive" forces, even though you saw them coming; the construction of "a village of good citizens" has now fizzled out, as we have no ox to till the land with, and can't take meals, as we can't farm.

That complaint touched the heartstrings of the county officials so greatly that they lent about 20 oxen to the peasants in Diyangxi.

As the negotiations proceeded as he had intended, Lee changed his mind. He was overcome by thoughts that the guerrillas were going through hardships on the mountains, without eating a piece of meat. He thought: We should send these oxen to the revolutionary army for their meals, even though this means that we cannot plough the land and carry timber for pay with them. He transmitted his thought via the underground organization in the county. He noted that, as he and his friends were returning to their

village with the oxen, we could "raid" them from an ambush and take the oxen to our secret camp.

On receiving this information from an underground organization, we dispatched an ambush party to a key position on the road between the county town and Diyangxi. The party played the drama very skillfully. At that time the county administration provided Lee with armed escorts from the puppet Manchukuo army so that he could take the oxen in safety. Needless to say, the escorts were caught by the guerrilla raid.

After disarming the escorts, the guerrillas intentionally bound Lee and other young people from Diyangxi within their sight and took them all to the secret camp, threatening that they would shoot them to death, as they were vicious traitors, fawning upon Japan and Manchukuo. The young people, who came to the camp, all joined the guerrilla army. We killed two birds with one stone.

This is only one piece of episode, which shows the relationship between the army and the people in our days in west Jiandao.

The movement to assist the KPRA materially and morally, initiated since the first day of our advance to the Changbai area, not only involved the basic class of workers and peasants; it also attracted the strata, some communists stained with dogmatism, considered as objects of our struggle and regarded with hostility.

There was a big Chinese landowner, named Cao De-yi, in Shijiudaogou, Changbai County. Inheriting a fortune from his deceased uncle, he had suddenly become a man of great wealth in his 30s, with 80 or so hectares of land. Half the crop land there was owned by him. He kept six concubines and had sworn brotherhood with policemen. In the dogmatists' view he had to be liquidated. His strong national consciousness could be called something noteworthy.

When the People's Revolutionary Army defeated the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo soldiers and policemen at Dadeshui and Xiaodeshui, Cao was scared out of his senses and fled with his concubines to Changbai county town. He left his house and land in the care of his agent.

Lee Hun, a district head, placed that landlord under our influence. The way in which he won over Cao was dramatic.

After the establishment of secret camps in the area around Mt. Paektu, I ordered the logistical personnel to make preparations for the New Year's Day of 1937. I attached great importance to that day, as this was the first New Year's Day for us on Mt. Paektu. That year my men also looked forward eagerly to New Year's Day. Kim Ju Hyon, the supply officer of the unit, was busy traveling around villages in west Jiandao in order to obtain supplies.

The basin of the Yalu at Shijiudaogou was the only area, where rice was cultivated. Even though rice was cultivated, every grain of rice was carried off to the stores of the landlords.

The message that Cao De-yi had a great store of food grain, meat and sugar for the feast on New Year's Day was delivered to Kim Ju Hyon from Ji Thae Hwan, a political operative. On receiving the message, Kim Ju Hyon, in collaboration with Lee Je Sun, wrote a notice there and then addressed Cao in the name of the People's Revolutionary Army, which read: We believe that you have not abandoned your national conscience as a Chinaman; consequently, on the principle of protecting the properties of all people, except that of the pro-Japanese lackeys, we have not damaged your property; you should repay our just measure in deeds; you should help the revolutionary army, by living up to our expectations; please reply immediately, explaining when and how you will assist us.

On receiving this note, Cao broke with the world and, bed-bound, was plunged into mental agony. He was too afraid of the Japanese to help the People's Revolutionary Army as required by the note; he was too afraid of possible punishment by the revolutionary army to ignore the note. Even though his concubines played coquetry by his bed, he did not respond; he only heaved sighs. His concubines made a great fuss of the fact that a misfortune had befallen.

Around this time Lee Hun, as directed by Lee Je Sun, came to the county town to sound out the landlord Cao's thoughts. In the town he came across one of Cao's concubines, who told him that Cao had not been taking meals and sleeping for several days and asked him to console him while having lunch with him. Believing that everything was going as planned, Lee Hun visited the landlord's house with an air of reluctance.

Cao welcomed Lee Hun warmly, as if he were his savior. After drinking some cups of wine, he showed Lee the note from the revolutionary army and asked, "What should I do, my dear younger brother?"

Lee Hun gave a cursory look at the note and, gripping his hands, said: Don't worry too much; they will not kill you; I was once captured by them a few months ago and taken to their camp, but they differed from the bandits; the revolutionary army, which does not harm the people's lives at random, will be deeply impressed, if you offer them a treat and they will protect you.

Cao replied that he did not stint his property, but hesitated out of fear of the Japanese, afraid that his act might be divulged. He went on that he would do whatever Lee would suggest.

Lee said, "If you do not feel so sorry for your property, why don't you send it to them? What's all this worry? Please behave yourself in front of the revolutionary army; otherwise I will not remain district head in Shijiudaogou and the peasants there will not live in peace."

Hearing him out, Cao requested that he take care of sending materials to the revolutionary army, making sure that he avoided causing trouble.

On learning that Cao had decided to send supplies to us, I soon dispatched about 20 soldiers to Shijiudaogou. They returned safely to the secret camp with 600 mal of rice, several pigs and a considerable amount of sugar on scores of ox-sleighs. Cao subsequently sent us considerable supplies on

several occasions.

Members of the Japanese police force and taskmasters at construction sites participated in the grand movement to support the guerrillas, a movement which whetted the ardor of revolution in west Jiandao.

A policeman at a sub-station in Samsu County, who had reviewed seriously his own life under the influence of the might of the KPRA and resolved to follow the road of resurrection, killed the head of his substation and his deputy, took their weapons to us and joined the guerrillas. Some of the taskmasters at the construction sites of the logging railway and felling stations would, when our unit went there, open the doors of warehouses as if under pressure and willingly give us supplies.

A taskmaster at the felling station in Ershidaogou propagated in public the song Lamentation of a Pro-Japanese Soldier, which incited war-weariness and draft-dodging among the workers and peasants, who were working in the station and among the mountain rebels nearby.

I always recall the intellectuals in west Jiandao, who actively supported the guerrillas. Most intellectuals in west Jiandao in those days were teachers. Kang Yong Gu, who taught at Jongsan private school, remains vivid in my memory.

When he first met me, he said that he could not face seeing me, as he was a henchman, who had been executing the educational policy of the Japanese imperialists.

I consoled him, saying, "One must not regard as bad all the people, who execute Japanese educational policy. How can one call it a crime to teach the children of our country, who are growing up in darkness in an alien land? Even though they serve the Japanese imperialism under pressure, they can contribute to the independence struggle, if they have a national conscience."

He was still strained and looked at me carefully with a sullen face. When I said that he no doubt often found it hard to teach children, he said with a bitter smile that he did not go to the length of troubling himself over Japanese education.

As we withdrew from the village, I told him, "I would like to make only one request. Do not forget that you are a Korean. To teach the younger generation to maintain the spirit of Korea, the teachers themselves must preserve the spirit of Korea."

Kang respected my request. Soon after our departure from the village, he joined the ARF and conducted brisk activities. He helped us in real earnest, while engaged in education; he sent us a mimeograph, cloth and provisions whenever we asked and often visited the secret camp carrying supplies in person. He even tapped the telephone wire with a telephone we had sent to him and frequently informed us of the enemy 5 movements. He devoted himself to education, and taught the younger generation even after returning to the motherland when the country was liberated.

But one day, as far as I remember, it was in the late 1950s, I received a report that Kang, who was the principal of a higher middle school in Pyongyang, was indulging the students too much, hesitating to train them in productive labor and at construction sites. I called him and asked whether this was true. He said yes, his head hanging low.

I said, "I can hardly believe that such a deviation has occurred in the school where you work as principal. Have you already forgotten the days in west Jiandao?"

He replied that, although our parents had worked their fingers to the bone in the past under the rule of the Japanese imperialists, it had been his lifelong wish to let our children study in comfort in bright classrooms.

Needless to say, his mind was understandable. But I said sternly: If we are too indulgent with the children, without putting them to work and giving them scolding, what will become of them in the future? We must toughen them through hardships; they must undergo the experience of carrying goods on their backs or yokes and know how to use hoes; only then will they get to know the value of sweat, respect workers and peasants and build socialism; to build socialism, we must hand down the revolutionary spirit of Paektu and the fighting spirit of the west Jiandao people to the coming generation.

On the unforgettable land where the gunfire of fierce battles rumbled, the west Jiandao people laid, together with us, the cornerstone of revolutionary relations between the army and the people, providing the foundations of a united front, involving the broad masses of people, including believers in Chondoism, patriotic men of property, young people, students and intellectuals, and opened a route for establishing contacts with the people and revolutionaries in the homeland. West Jiandao produced a considerable number of outstanding patriots and heroic people, who would proudly adorn the pages of history of the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle of our country.

The revolutionary spirit of Paektu, the fighting spirit the west Jiandao people displayed, still vibrates in the hearts of the people across the country.

## 14.2. The Sound of the Watermill

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We are now exerting ourselves to rally the masses behind the organization, and will continue to do so, even after building a communist society. Furthermore, we will build an eternally prosperous and independent society on this land and make our motherland and system an impregnable fortress, by drawing on the efforts of the organized popular masses.

When the Japanese imperialists, deceiving the world through the so-called "policy of good-neighborliness between Japan and the Soviet Union" of the early 1940s, clamored that the Korean communists were "fighting alone" to subdue our struggle, and when Hitlerite Germany talked about the "tragic termination" of communists, as they swept away everything on their way toward Moscow, I gained strength and confidence from the memory of the watermills in Wangqing and Changbai.

In the grim days of the war against the US imperialists, who boasted that they were the "strongest" in the world, and the armies of their satellite states, I kept faith in the victorious tomorrow, while recalling the watermills in Changbai. Some people might think it strange that I felt certain of victory, as I remembered the sound of watermills, but this was indeed the case.

When frequenting the villages in Changbai, I could clearly detect through the watermills the unqualified love of the people for us, their impregnable support for us and unchanging faith, even in the face of death.

During a temporary retreat, I once walked with Mr. Lee Kuk Ro along Tongno River (Jangja River) and told him about the watermills in Changbai. I stressed several times that, during the fighting on Mt. Paektu, we had fought without going hungry, as the Changbai people had hulled grain by watermills and sent it to us, that the sound of watermills had not died out, despite the fact that the enemy had burned down the villages and destroyed the watermills, and that we could repulse any strong enemy, when we relied on the people and enlisted their efforts. I continued that it was too wasteful to let this wide river flow unharnessed, whereas the Koreans in Changbai in those days had even installed watermills on small streams and made effective use of them and that we should build a big hydropower station by damming the river after the war was over.

The traditions of support for the army and the unity of the army and the people established during the anti-Japanese armed struggle became more indestructible and was consolidated even more in the great Fatherland Liberation War. The victory of our young Republic in the fight against the "strongest power" on the globe should be attributed to the fact that we enlisted the entire people and relied on the unity of the army and the people, whereas the enemy imposed mostly pure military force.

These grand traditions are being advanced honorably today under the guidance of our Party.

Today, the campaign of "our village, our post" and "our post, our village", whereby the people help the

soldiers and vice versa, is conducted briskly at every corner of our country. This campaign has been popularized at a rapid rate in factories, enterprises, agricultural farms, residential quarters and schools across the country, in particular ever since Comrade Kim Jong Il was acclaimed the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army.

Such a relationship between the army and the people is a source of great pride for Korea, which cannot be found in the history of the building of the armed forces of any country. Buttressed by such power, based on the integrity of the army and the people, we do not flinch before blackmail and threat of an enemy.

I regard single-hearted unity and unity between the army and the people as the greatest success achieved in the Korean revolution.

My ears still ring with the sound of the watermills I heard during the great anti-Japanese war. With that sound, the faces of a great number of Changbai people appear in my mind's eye. How many of them died on the gallows and behind bars! How many of them froze to death or laid down their lives on the snow-capped Mt. Paektu, on their way to aid the guerrillas!

I take off my hat to them and my heart swells with gratitude when I remember their boon and virtue.

In Yinghuadong many households suffered from a dearth of food grain; one of them was Lee Ul Sol's. Although they had scanty meals of grass gruel, his family tried not to lag behind the others in supporting the revolutionary army. So they picked wild berries in summer and wild grapes and rocambole in autumn to sell them at the market in Hyesan.

Whenever the mother returned with wild fruits and assorted them, his younger brothers would sit round her with watery mouths. Even though she read their minds well, she did not readily give them even a single wild berry, for she considered this to mean less sincerity to the revolutionary army.

On returning from the secret camp, Lee Pyong Hon boasted to his children that he had seen me. Lee Ul Sol replied that he would go to the guerrillas right away and fight under my wings, but his father stopped him.

Lee Pyong Hon rejected his suggestion there and then, saying, "The soldiers under the wings of the General are all stalwart and good at shooting. How can you venture to become a soldier of the revolutionary army, when you only know the hoe in the field and hemp trousers? Train yourself a little more before you go."

He made his son join a branch of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland for training. Next summer he sent his son and nephew to the guerrilla army. Sending beloved children to the army constituted the highest expression of the spirit of support for the army.

Lee Pyong Hon invariably supported the revolutionary army, even after sending his son to the guerrilla



army.

I met him again at Tianshangshui in late spring 1937. The dyestuffs brought at that time greatly helped in the dyeing of flowers and flags to festoon the joint celebration of the guerrillas and people to commemorate the victory in the battle of Pochonbo.

The support goods sent by the Changbai people were always permeated with moving sincerity. In those days a slash-and-bum peasant family, with four able-bodied persons, could harvest 20 or 30 tan (a tan equals 40 pecks?Tr.) of potato at most in a year. They had to grind a dozen mal of potato to get one mal of starch. One mal of starch cost 60 fen or so at that time. A mal of starch was not enough to buy a pair of workman's shoes. So they made toffee or wine and sold them for money. In those days it was difficult to buy goods even if you had money. Therefore the people had to rack their brains and make tireless efforts to purchase every supply sent to the guerrillas.

Even under such adverse conditions the people in Changbai County obtained various kinds of goods and sent them to the mountains.

Every Korean living in Changbai County helped the guerrillas. Even the elderly, who could only walk with the help of canes, climbed mountains and barked basswood trees; they burned the midnight candle to make us shoes with the bark. The women ran the watermills, standing guard in turn, refraining from lighting fires in cold winter nights, in order to avoid the lackeys' surveillance.

In most cases the village heads organized the transport of support goods. As most of the village heads in Changbai County chaired branches and chapters of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, it was convenient for them to take charge of that task. The supply workers in our revolutionary army would in those days send the village heads threatening notices on purpose, demanding delivery of goods, to enable the latter to offer excuses to the enemy for organizing aid to the revolutionary army. On receiving a notice, they secretly organized the work, allegedly under pressure.

The people vied with one another to take the goods on days, when the conveying teams left the villages.

Our soldiers dropped in at the houses in Changbai County, as if they were their own homes. We frequented most often in those days Ryom Po Bae's house.

Ryom In Hwan told me that Kang Jin Gon was the first to develop Deshuigou. Kang could not live any longer in his native village, crossed the Yalu with some of his family and relatives and built a village in a valley in Shiliudaogou. Ryom Po Bae is the wife of Kang's cousin. Ryom In Hwan said that Mrs. Ryom and her husband were intensely anti-Japanese and upright, as they had come under the great influence of Kang.

Therefore I went to see them both, when we were staying in Dadeshui. I still vividly recall the face of Mrs. Ryom, who was so shy at that time, as she treated me with boiled oats and barley mixed with potato.

She would always dip oats and barley in water in a large vessel, so that she could boil them in an instant, even if we dropped in at her house at midnight. The barley mixed with oats she boiled was well-cooked and aromatic, stimulating our appetite.

Her husband Kang In Hong set the chimney low and covered it with wheat straw to make the smoke issue downward, lest the smoke ascending through the chimney at night should arouse the suspicion of the lackeys. Both of them were tenderhearted.

The people in Deshuigou were literally as poor as church mice, but regarded it as a great honour to serve the revolutionary army.

It was not surprising that the enemy turned the village of Dadeshui into a sea of flames in a day. This atrocity reminded people of the "sea of blood" in north Jiandao. When the villagers swept away ashes on the floors and set up straw-thatched cottages, the enemy would attack them again and set the cottages on fire.

Ryom Po Bae's family had to move to Zhangmozi, Xinchangdong.

When we went there to see her on hearing the news, we could again hear the sound of a watermill there. I felt it was a good omen, for where a watermill made a sound, I could feel the spirit of Korea, which did not burn in fire or drown in a storm and a struggle; the people took the greatest pleasure to support the army. The sound of the watermill resembled the giant strides of the people, who continued their resistance to the Japanese imperialists, by aiding the army.

I first went with my orderly to the watermill and met Mrs. Ryom there.

On seeing me, she bent her knees and cried bitterly. Her tears contained so great sorrow after leaving Dadeshui.

I consoled her with great difficulty, saying, "Please calm yourself, mother. What can be done? You have to endure it...."

I later learned that her family had set up the mill after moving there. Her house, a small log-cabin, was situated near the mill.

That day she got a hen from a neighboring village and served us starch noodles in meat stock, with chicken garnish. However, she was sorry that it was such a poor meal.

The starch noodles I ate frequently in the villages in Changbai County were so unforgettable that even when I give a banquet to distinguished guests, I still serve them frozen-potato noodles or starch noodles as a rare dish.

That night she was very concerned that the sound of the watermill might disturb my sleep. However, this was unnecessary, as that sound only induced sound sleep and deep meditation. Her family did not set up a new watermill after moving to Zhangmozi for their convenience. It was aimed at supporting the guerrillas.

That remote village was not, however, a place, where one could live in peace. The enemy also stretched out his tentacles to this heart of the mountain. The policemen from Erdaogang pounced upon the village without notice, destroyed the watermill and took all the villagers to the police station. Her family members underwent atrocious tortures for three days and were released as good as dead. They returned on an oxcart. Old man Kang, who had been beaten most, was in a critical state.

On hearing this, I sent them some bear galls, which are effective for welts. Apparently they got out of bed after taking the galls. Even Mr. Kang, who had been most seriously injured, rose from the bed and again devoted himself to supporting the guerrillas. He was good at carpentry; he felled a birch on the mountain and repaired the mill's long board, which had been broken. His children tried to dissuade him, saying that he should start working after achieving a full recovery. But their words fell on deaf ears. He only said, "What are you talking about? Even the elderly in their 80s are busy making straw sandals and socks to help those on the mountain. I am too strong to have a nap."

The watermill at Zhangmozi once again started to hull grain for the guerrillas.

On Mr. Kang's request, we admitted his son Kang Jong Gun to the revolutionary army. We always took good care of him, taking him with us. However, he was killed in action later to our regret.

Kim Se Un, who lived in Pinggande, Shiqidaogou, also came from a praiseworthy family, which helped the revolutionary army with all its sincerity.

Kim Se Un persuaded his two younger brother and sister and four children and relatives to engage in the revolutionary struggle and rendered active support to their work; he was a faithful revolutionary. Kim Se Ok, the fiancé of Ma Kuk Hwa, is his younger brother and Kim Ik Hyon, an anti-Japanese revolutionary veteran, is his youngest son. His eldest son, too, joined the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and fought bravely. Soon after joining the army, he took part in the battle at Jiansanfeng and later conducted political work in the homeland, before his arrest by the enemy. I learned that he had been sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and served his term in the Sodaemun prison with Kwon Yong Byok and Lee Je Sun, and that he was executed in spring 1945.

The small units and political operatives from the guerrilla army frequented his house, situated in hinterlands in the mountains, not far from a secret camp of the revolutionary army. Usually, revolutionaries calling on the secret camp from the homeland, would put up at his house for a night. His house was an "inn", where the soldiers of the KPRA and political operatives took up lodgings free of charge. He cultivated the land, leased from a Chinese landlord, and devoted all his harvest to supporting the revolutionaries. Kwon Yong Byok provided guidance in party work in Changbai County, while

staying in this house.

My comrades nicknamed Kim Se Un "Dashifu", a Chinese word meaning a cook. True to his nickname, he entertained a great number of guests. The cooking pot in his house was five times as big as ordinary pots. They boiled grain in that pot and scooped it with a big scoop to serve the guests. When there were many guests, Kim Se Un would personally go to the kitchen with folded sleeves and helped the women in their work, sweating profusely. He was disabled; he could not walk properly, as the heels wore down, owing to severe frostbite, but carried straw sacks full of grain to the watermill several times a day. He often joked with his guests in this way, "If it weren't for my heels, I would have become a quartermaster in the guerrilla army, despite my age."

As a tenant farmer, he supported the political workers by boiling a pot of grain for them every day, how much grain would be left in that house! He no doubt skipped meals on many occasions.

The sincerity displayed by the Changbai people in their support for the revolution was indeed unique. They enthusiastically aided the revolutionary army, even selling their properties and laying down their lives when circumstances demanded.

In May 1937 a surprising incident happened; the dead bodies of a baby and a woman were discovered on the road to Erdaogang. She was a common rural woman, who had secretly nursed a wounded guerrilla in her house, before her arrest. A military police officer of the Japanese army pounced upon her and the wounded man under medical treatment and escorted them to his headquarters. She was a tough woman; she stealthily hid a dagger in her bosom, when leaving the house and on the road cut the officer's face with the dagger, then took out the pistol from his waist.

Thanks to her efforts, the guerrilla escaped. She kept the watch of the officer with the pistol in her hand for nearly half an hour, until the guerrilla had run out of sight. Regaining his consciousness, the officer pounced upon the woman, snatched the pistol from her and stabbed her and her baby mercilessly to death.

Some time later this incident became known to the public. One night their dead bodies vanished. The military police made a great fuss, as if an awful accident had happened. God only knew it, as their secret agents had kept watch on them round the clock. Apparently a revolutionary organization in Erdaogang or in its vicinity had dealt with them like a flash, when the opportunity had appeared.

In Changbai County there is a village called Zhujiadong; it produced many renowned revolutionaries. Kim Ryong Sok, known as "dagger oldster", also fought in this village. Like the aforementioned unknown woman, he cut with a dagger the rope binding him and stabbed the Japanese army officer escorting him. When he was working as a quartermaster, after joining the guerrilla army, his comrades-in-arms nicknamed him "dagger oldster". Since then the nickname had become synonymous with him. Even the children living in the apartment house in Pyongyang, where he was spending his last years, called him "dagger oldster".

To our deep regret, the “dagger woman” did not leave her name behind. Apparently the wounded man, who escaped with her help, failed to return to his unit.

One day I left two of my men under the care of old man Ji Pong Phal, a member of the underground organization in Zhujiadong; one was Kim Ryong Yon, who was suffering from an intestinal disorder, while the other wounded individual was a recruit, whose name escapes my memory. The old man took tender care of them for two months and was then killed during an enemy's "punitive" operation.

When the enemy attacked his village, he made sure that the soldiers of the revolutionary army took shelter on the mountain; he then stayed on his own in his house aware that if he also escaped leaving his house empty, the enemy would comb the mountain in search of the soldiers of the revolutionary army.

The enemy tortured him to expose the whereabouts of the revolutionary soldiers, but he curtly replied that he did not know. The enemy beat his face ruthlessly with a leather belt. Blood gushed from his face instantly. However, the more they beat him and swore, the firmer his closed mouth became.

They stood him in a grave, saying that they would bury him alive. They threatened at gunpoint that they would give him a cash reward, if he told them where the wounded had taken shelter or else they would bury him.

However he remained silent.

In despair they shot him standing in the grave. Before breathing his last, the old man left this simple request with his fellow village people, "Please help our army wholeheartedly. Only then will a new society emerge."

His last moment was subsequently called the "Zhujiadong incident". On hearing a report from Kim Ryong Yon in later days, I came to know of his death.

How could a gentle peasant, who led all his life in a simple and untainted way tilling land, be so calm just before his death in the grave, where he would be buried, and add luster to his last moment standing firmly like titan?

His last words to the effect that sincere help to our army would expedite the advent of a new world remind all of us forcibly of how important faith is for a man and the great power, a man with faith can generate.

Although the people in Changbai County aided our revolutionary army at great risk, even sacrificing their lives, they never expected rewards for their efforts. After the liberation of the country, no one made his or her existence known.

Following the country's liberation, Mrs. Ryom Po Bae moved to Hyesan with her children. But she did

not inform us for more than ten years where she was living.

It was only in 1958, when I was providing field guidance to Ryanggang Province, that I came to know that she was living in Hyesan.

I met her at the railway station. Her hair had turned grey.

"Mother, your son Jong Gun and husband have already passed away... To see you today when your hair has turned grey...."

I was too choked to go on. Beaten at a police station for helping the revolutionary army, her husband Kang In Hong had coughed out blood and died.

She embraced me, tears streaming down her face.

Feeling her rough hands I said with disappointment:

"I frequented your house in the bygone days, mother, as if it were my own. But it is too much. More than ten years have passed since liberation; why didn't you call on me? Couldn't you write to me even once?"

"How could you believe that I was not eager to go to Pyongyang to see you, General? But I might not be the only person wishing to see you. If we all call on you, when you are always busy, how can you run the government properly?"

The passionate people of Changbai, who rushed out of the village entrance in the past without noticing how their shoes fell off as they saw us, returned to the liberated country and led a quiet life without making themselves known to the world.

Soon afterwards I brought Mrs. Ryom to Pyongyang and chose a house on the scenic River Taedong for her.

The Changbai people, who helped us at the cost of their blood in the days of the anti-Japanese revolution, were all people of such caliber.

Kim Se Un, as I mentioned briefly above, went to the homeland in autumn 1937 and, roaming about Unhung, Pochon, Musan and Songjin (Kimchaek City), formed underground organizations and ensured support for the guerrillas.

He later went over to Tumen and engaged in underground work under the disguise of an oxcart driver, until the day of liberation. Surprisingly, although his feet were disabled, he conducted underground activities travelling about the wide area as freely as able-bodied men. He did not talk about his performance. His activities in the homeland became known to us many years later and drew the attention

of historians.

How could Kim Se Un be the only one to be so unassuming!

Most west Jiandao people were in those days members of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland; in today's terms, they would be called unassuming heroes and meritorious individuals.

The enemy built concentration villages to cut the ties between the People's Revolutionary Army and the people and attempted to remove the links of support for the guerrillas by forts, earthen walls and barbed wire; however, it failed to shut the minds of the west Jiandao people, inclined as they were to Mt. Paektu. As most of the heads of the self-defence corps, village heads and gatekeepers of the concentration villages fell under our influence, the enemy's fuss about the concentration villages was merely a derisive farce.

The Paektusan Base was located farther away from the populated areas than the base in eastern Manchuria. However, it can be said that the ties between the army and people were stronger and that the feelings between them were warmer in the former than the latter. The expectations we held for the people, when we transformed Mt. Paektu into a new strategic base of the Korean revolution with confidence in them, were confirmed. The people in Paektusan Base, endowed with unstained patriotic fidelity and a pure mind for the revolutionary army, threw the enemy into a panic through a support-the-guerrillas campaign, exceeding our expectations and imagination.

They were heroic people, who set an example for the revolutionary traditions of supporting the army and enriched these traditions. The campaign developed into a pan-national campaign, involving the people of all strata, young and old, men and women, every village and household. Supported by their campaign, we always emerged victorious in hard battles against the enemy.

The campaign to support the army, sweeping the vast area of west Jiandao, convinced me once again of the great power produced by the organized people. Even a village on a plateau or in a valley with only three peasant households, had an organization. If we sent a messenger there with a short notice, the villagers would get out of bed and busied themselves cooking food, saying that the revolutionary army four kilometres away from there would have a meal in their village and that they should make haste to serve them warm food.

We were able to enlist organizations via a short message to call west Jiandao people to climb Mt. Paektu all at once and shout for the independence of Korea on the top of the mountain. They acted on our orders, because these people became organized from autumn 1936 in such a way.

According to a Korean proverb, beads become a treasure only when threaded in a string. All men and women in west Jiandao were as precious as beads. The organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland turned west Jiandao into our world of influence and made these beads a treasure.

What would have happened to them, if we had not rallied them behind our organizations? Those individual beads would have been broken one by one at the hands of the enemy or eclipsed in the mud. However ardent a man's patriotism may be, what could he perform on his own?

Consequently I always say that the greatest asset for a revolutionary is organization. The significance of an organization can be said to be imperishable for the revolutionaries and people in all countries, who aspire for independence. The role of an organization does not dwindle with a change of times, nor should the rallying of the popular masses around the organization be neglected, following the victorious advance of the revolution.

It is imperative to hold the masses together in an organization, when winning power, and also when building a state after gaining power, and continuing the revolution, after the establishment of a communist society, by drawing on successes gained in building this society. As revolution knows no bounds, the unification of the masses behind an organization has no end. This is the physiology of social development and a law, which all people aspiring to build a developed society should attach great importance to.

When I entered farming villages in west Jiandao, to be found in each range of Paektu, I would see foaming, meandering streams and hear the sound of watermills pounding grain with the stream as its power. What tingling nostalgia the sound of watermills falling on our ears from afar at moonlit nights stirred in our minds! With our advance to Mt. Paektu, the watermills in Changbai, which had been pounding grain amid the tears of Korean immigrants, came to be used for different purposes and acquired another meaning.

Ever since autumn 1936, the Changbai people pounded an immeasurable amount of grain with those watermills to support us. Nearly all the dozens of watermills, both big and small, installed in Changbai, were related to the support-the-guerrillas work. The watermills are inscribed in my memory as a symbol of the all-people, support-the-guerrillas campaign.

Thanks to the active support and encouragement of the Changbai people, we could wage a protracted anti-Japanese war, with Mt. Paektu as a stronghold. The people in Deshuigou, Shiliudaogou, were the first in the Changbai area to assist the People's Revolutionary Army. We first went to Xinchangdong on our advance to Changbai. The villages in the valley of Shiliudaogou, including Xinchangdong, were called, as a whole, Deshuigou.

The upper Xinchangdong was a remote village of 40-odd households situated on the confluence of two streams. There was also a watermill. The villagers hulled buckwheat with the watermill that day and treated the People's Revolutionary Army to refreshing noodles. The support-the-guerrillas campaign, started by the Deshuigou people in Shiliudaogou, later affected the whole region of west Jiandao such as Wangjiadong, Yaoshuidong and Diyangxidong.

Large teams frequently came to our secret camps along secret routes in the forests, carrying grain and



cloth on their heads and backs. In a fit of consternation, the enemy reinforced its troops in Changbai area and molested the people. It burned down villages, arrested or killed people at random at the slightest unusual sign.

"Anyone supplying the communist bandits with provisions and articles and making contacts with them will be regarded as helpers of the bandits and executed on the spot" - this threatening warning was posted in all parts of Changbai County in those days.

The people living in the border areas around Mt. Paektu were not even allowed to take with them a pair of workman's shoes and a box of matches. Nevertheless, supply goods sent by the people regularly came to our secret camps.

The assistance of the Changbai people to the People's Revolutionary Army was a voluntary campaign initiated on the basis of their vital needs. Helping the revolutionary army was the only way to resurrect Korea - this was their belief. Consequently they were not afraid of death and did not flinch from the scorching sun in mid-summer and the blinding snow in mid-winter, when it came to support for the army.

Whenever I recall the images of the Changbai people, who were out to assist the army, the upright and simple image of Lee Ul Sol's father, Lee Pyong Hon, who, as a member of our organization, was working as a village head in Yinghuadong, appears in my mind's eye. He and his two brothers were standard-bearers of the campaign for supporting the army in Changbai area.

At the end of 1936, when we were staying in the secret camp in Heixiazigou, Lee Pyong Hon and his party visited Headquarters, carrying supplies prepared by the revolutionary organization in Yinghuadong. I still recall vividly the Korean traditional socks, they brought, padded with more cotton and twice as long as usual pairs. I picked a pair of the socks from the package and tried them on; they came up to my knees.

I admired the women in Yinghuadong for their assiduous workmanship and sincerity. "They are excellent, indeed!"

He blushed at my praise.

"The snow is deep in Changbai, General. If you do not care for your feet in winter, the suffering is immeasurable."

This was my first encounter with him, but I could see in an instant that he was very faithful and modest. He never sang his own praises. Although he led the other people, carrying goods to the secret camp, he did not give the slightest air that he was their leader; he stood behind his colleagues and only looked at me thoughtfully.

While I looked carefully at the socks in my hands, someone unpacking a knapsack of grain exclaimed, "Look here, General! Even the Japanese Emperor may never have seen such barley." At that moment I

could not believe my eyes. Fine barley as white as snow! Is this barley, not rice? They must have pounded it with great sincerity to make it so clean and tempting! "You have taken so much trouble, sir. I see such barley for the first time. How did you hull it to make it as white as this?"

"We hulled it four times."

"Why? Barley can be boiled for eating after hulling only twice. Your sincerity is really beyond imagination."

"The women in our village are so persistent."

This time, too, Lee ascribed the meritorious deed to the village women. He said, "It was not men, but women who took the trouble to hull this barley. Grain can be hulled ten times, not four times, if one invests all one's efforts. It is never a trouble, as it is all for the benefit of the revolutionary army. Unfortunately secret agents make rounds of the village to detect which houses hull grain for what purpose and where they are taking the hulled rice to. The Women's Association members rack their brains to dodge surveillance.

They go to the market in Hyesan and buy cloth for the revolutionary army; then they tie it round their waist or fold it and put it on their babies, just like diapers. For this reason, they carry babies on their backs intentionally when going to markets. The elderly, who are unaware of this fact, rebuke them for going to all this trouble; however, the women always carry their babies, because only then do they have somewhere to hide cloth."

Lee did not mention a word about the trouble the men took; he only referred to the pains the women took.

His words moved me. I took a handful of barley from the knapsack and smelled it. Then I said to those around me, "Even though the Japanese Emperor is exalted, he is just like a tree without a root, while we are a sprout from a firm root, even though we are not visible. So, how can he ever see such fine grain as we have received?"

We came to know every detail of the support-the-guerrillas campaign, conducted by the people in Yinghuadong through Lee Ul Sol next year, who joined our unit that year. He was not inclined to sing the praise of himself, just like his father. Moreover, he hardly uttered a single word about the pains his father and mother took. However, he told an anecdote, apparently by a slip of the tongue, in which his mother picked wild berries to obtain money for the cloth used to make knapsacks.

In Yinghuadong many households suffered from a dearth of food grain; one of them was Lee Ul Sol's. Although they had scanty meals of grass gruel, his family tried not to lag behind the others in supporting the revolutionary army. So they picked wild berries in summer and wild grapes and rocambole in autumn to sell them at the market in Hyesan.

Whenever the mother returned with wild fruits and assorted them, his younger brothers would sit round her with watery mouths. Even though she read their minds well, she did not readily give them even a single wild berry, for she considered this to mean less sincerity to the revolutionary army.

On returning from the secret camp, Lee Pyong Hon boasted to his children that he had seen me. Lee UI Sol replied that he would go to the guerrillas right away and fight under my wings, but his father stopped him.

Lee Pyong Hon rejected his suggestion there and then, saying, "The soldiers under the wings of the General are all stalwart and good at shooting. How can you venture to become a soldier of the revolutionary army, when you only know the hoe in the field and hemp trousers? Train yourself a little more before you go."

He made his son join a branch of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland for training. Next summer he sent his son and nephew to the guerrilla army. Sending beloved children to the army constituted the highest expression of the spirit of support for the army.

Lee Pyong Hon invariably supported the revolutionary army, even after sending his son to the guerrilla army.

I met him again at Tianshangshui in late spring 1937. The dyestuffs brought at that time greatly helped in the dyeing of flowers and flags to festoon the joint celebration of the guerrillas and people to commemorate the victory in the battle of Pochonbo.

The support goods sent by the Changbai people were always permeated with moving sincerity. In those days a slash-and-bum peasant family, with four able-bodied persons, could harvest 20 or 30 tan (a tan equals 40 pecks?Tr.) of potato at most in a year. They had to grind a dozen mal of potato to get one mal of starch. One mal of starch cost 60 fen or so at that time. A mal of starch was not enough to buy a pair of workman's shoes. So they made toffee or wine and sold them for money. In those days it was difficult to buy goods even if you had money. Therefore the people had to rack their brains and make tireless efforts to purchase every supply sent to the guerrillas.

Even under such adverse conditions the people in Changbai County obtained various kinds of goods and sent them to the mountains.

Every Korean living in Changbai County helped the guerrillas. Even the elderly, who could only walk with the help of canes, climbed mountains and barked basswood trees; they burned the midnight candle to make us shoes with the bark. The women ran the watermills, standing guard in turn, refraining from lighting fires in cold winter nights, in order to avoid the lackeys' surveillance.

In most cases the village heads organized the transport of support goods. As most of the village heads in Changbai County chaired branches and chapters of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland,

it was convenient for them to take charge of that task. The supply workers in our revolutionary army would in those days send the village heads threatening notices on purpose, demanding delivery of goods, to enable the latter to offer excuses to the enemy for organizing aid to the revolutionary army. On receiving a notice, they secretly organized the work, allegedly under pressure.

The people vied with one another to take the goods on days, when the conveying teams left the villages.

Our soldiers dropped in at the houses in Changbai County, as if they were their own homes. We frequented most often in those days Ryom Po Bae's house.

Ryom In Hwan told me that Kang Jin Gon was the first to develop Deshuigou. Kang could not live any longer in his native village, crossed the Yalu with some of his family and relatives and built a village in a valley in Shiliudaogou. Ryom Po Bae is the wife of Kang's cousin. Ryom In Hwan said that Mrs. Ryom and her husband were intensely anti-Japanese and upright, as they had come under the great influence of Kang.

Therefore I went to see them both, when we were staying in Dadeshui. I still vividly recall the face of Mrs. Ryom, who was so shy at that time, as she treated me with boiled oats and barley mixed with potato. She would always dip oats and barley in water in a large vessel, so that she could boil them in an instant, even if we dropped in at her house at midnight. The barley mixed with oats she boiled was well-cooked and aromatic, stimulating our appetite.

Her husband Kang In Hong set the chimney low and covered it with wheat straw to make the smoke issue downward, lest the smoke ascending through the chimney at night should arouse the suspicion of the lackeys. Both of them were tenderhearted.

The people in Deshuigou were literally as poor as church mice, but regarded it as a great honour to serve the revolutionary army.

It was not surprising that the enemy turned the village of Dadeshui into a sea of flames in a day. This atrocity reminded people of the "sea of blood" in north Jiandao. When the villagers swept away ashes on the floors and set up straw-thatched cottages, the enemy would attack them again and set the cottages on fire.

Ryom Po Bae's family had to move to Zhangmozi, Xinchangdong.

When we went there to see her on hearing the news, we could again hear the sound of a watermill there. I felt it was a good omen, for where a watermill made a sound, I could feel the spirit of Korea, which did not burn in fire or drown in a storm and a struggle; the people took the greatest pleasure to support the army. The sound of the watermill resembled the giant strides of the people, who continued their resistance to the Japanese imperialists, by aiding the army.

I first went with my orderly to the watermill and met Mrs. Ryom there.

On seeing me, she bent her knees and cried bitterly. Her tears contained so great sorrow after leaving Dadeshui.

I consoled her with great difficulty, saying, "Please calm yourself, mother. What can be done? You have to endure it....

I later learned that her family had set up the mill after moving there. Her house, a small log-cabin, was situated near the mill.

That day she got a hen from a neighboring village and served us starch noodles in meat stock, with chicken garnish. However, she was sorry that it was such a poor meal.

The starch noodles I ate frequently in the villages in Changbai County were so unforgettable that even when I give a banquet to distinguished guests, I still serve them frozen-potato noodles or starch noodles as a rare dish.

That night she was very concerned that the sound of the watermill might disturb my sleep. However, this was unnecessary, as that sound only induced sound sleep and deep meditation. Her family did not set up a new watermill after moving to Zhangmozi for their convenience. It was aimed at supporting the guerrillas.

That remote village was not, however, a place, where one could live in peace. The enemy also stretched out his tentacles to this heart of the mountain. The policemen from Erdaogang pounced upon the village without notice, destroyed the watermill and took all the villagers to the police station. Her family members underwent atrocious tortures for three days and were released as good as dead. They returned on an oxcart. Old man Kang, who had been beaten most, was in a critical state.

On hearing this, I sent them some bear galls, which are effective for welts. Apparently they got out of bed after taking the galls. Even Mr. Kang, who had been most seriously injured, rose from the bed and again devoted himself to supporting the guerrillas. He was good at carpentry; he felled a birch on the mountain and repaired the mill's long board, which had been broken. His children tried to dissuade him, saying that he should start working after achieving a full recovery. But their words fell on deaf ears. He only said, "What are you talking about? Even the elderly in their 80s are busy making straw sandals and socks to help those on the mountain. I am too strong to have a nap."

The watermill at Zhangmozi once again started to hull grain for the guerrillas. On Mr. Kang's request, we admitted his son Kang Jong Gun to the revolutionary army. We always took good care of him, taking him with us. However, he was killed in action later to our regret.

Kim Se Un, who lived in Pinggangde, Shiqidaogou, also came from a praiseworthy family, which helped

the revolutionary army with all its sincerity.

Kim Se Un persuaded his two younger brother and sister and four children and relatives to engage in the revolutionary struggle and rendered active support to their work; he was a faithful revolutionary. Kim Se Ok, the fiance of Ma Kuk Hwa, is his younger brother and Kim Ik Hyon, an anti-Japanese revolutionary veteran, is his youngest son. His eldest son, too, joined the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and fought bravely. Soon after joining the army, he took part in the battle at Jiansanfeng and later conducted political work in the homeland, before his arrest by the enemy. I learned that he had been sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and served his term in the Sodaemun prison with Kwon Yong Byok and Lee Je Sun, and that he was executed in spring 1945.

The small units and political operatives from the guerrilla army frequented his house, situated in hinterlands in the mountains, not far from a secret camp of the revolutionary army. Usually, revolutionaries calling on the secret camp from the homeland, would put up at his house for a night. His house was an "inn", where the soldiers of the KPRA and political operatives took up lodgings free of charge. He cultivated the land, leased from a Chinese landlord, and devoted all his harvest to supporting the revolutionaries. Kwon Yong Byok provided guidance in party work in Changbai County, while staying in this house.

My comrades nicknamed Kim Se Un "Dashifu", a Chinese word meaning a cook. True to his nickname, he entertained a great number of guests. The cooking pot in his house was five times as big as ordinary pots. They boiled grain in that pot and scooped it with a big scoop to serve the guests. When there were many guests, Kim Se Un would personally go to the kitchen with folded sleeves and helped the women in their work, sweating profusely. He was disabled; he could not walk properly, as the heels wore down, owing to severe frostbite, but carried straw sacks full of grain to the watermill several times a day.

He often joked with his guests in this way, "If it weren't for my heels, I would have become a quartermaster in the guerrilla army, despite my age."

As a tenant farmer, he supported the political workers by boiling a pot of grain for them every day, how much grain would be left in that house! He no doubt skipped meals on many occasions.

The sincerity displayed by the Changbai people in their support for the revolution was indeed unique. They enthusiastically aided the revolutionary army, even selling their properties and laying down their lives when circumstances demanded.

In May 1937 a surprising incident happened; the dead bodies of a baby and a woman were discovered on the road to Erdaogang. She was a common rural woman, who had secretly nursed a wounded guerrilla in her house, before her arrest. A military police officer of the Japanese army pounced upon her and the wounded man under medical treatment and escorted them to his headquarters. She was a tough woman; she stealthily hid a dagger in her bosom, when leaving the house and on the road cut the officer's face with the dagger, then took out the pistol from his waist.

Thanks to her efforts, the guerrilla escaped. She kept the watch of the officer with the pistol in her hand for nearly half an hour, until the guerrilla had run out of sight. Regaining his consciousness, the officer pounced upon the woman, snatched the pistol from her and stabbed her and her baby mercilessly to death.

Some time later this incident became known to the public. One night their dead bodies vanished. The military police made a great fuss, as if an awful accident had happened. God only knew it, as their secret agents had kept watch on them round the clock. Apparently a revolutionary organization in Erdaogang or in its vicinity had dealt with them like a flash, when the opportunity had appeared.

In Changbai County there is a village called Zhujiadong; it produced many renowned revolutionaries. Kim Ryong Sok, known as "dagger oldster", also fought in this village. Like the aforementioned unknown woman, he cut with a dagger the rope binding him and stabbed the Japanese army officer escorting him.

When he was working as a quartermaster, after joining the guerrilla army, his comrades-in-arms nicknamed him "dagger oldster". Since then the nickname had become synonymous with him. Even the children living in the apartment house in Pyongyang, where he was spending his last years, called him "dagger oldster".

To our deep regret, the "dagger woman" did not leave her name behind. Apparently the wounded man, who escaped with her help, failed to return to his unit.

One day I left two of my men under the care of old man Ji Pong Phal, a member of the underground organization in Zhujiadong; one was Kim Ryong Yon, who was suffering from an intestinal disorder, while the other wounded individual was a recruit, whose name escapes my memory. The old man took tender care of them for two months and was then killed during an enemy's "punitive" operation.

When the enemy attacked his village, he made sure that the soldiers of the revolutionary army took shelter on the mountain; he then stayed on his own in his house aware that if he also escaped leaving his house empty, the enemy would comb the mountain in search of the soldiers of the revolutionary army.

The enemy tortured him to expose the whereabouts of the revolutionary soldiers, but he curtly replied that he did not know. The enemy beat his face ruthlessly with a leather belt. Blood gushed from his face instantly. However, the more they beat him and swore, the firmer his closed mouth became.

They stood him in a grave, saying that they would bury him alive. They threatened at gunpoint that they would give him a cash reward, if he told them where the wounded had taken shelter or else they would bury him.

However he remained silent.

In despair they shot him standing in the grave. Before breathing his last, the old man left this simple

request with his fellow village people, "Please help our army wholeheartedly. Only then will a new society emerge."

His last moment was subsequently called the "Zhujiadong incident". On hearing a report from Kim Ryong Yon in later days, I came to know of his death.

How could a gentle peasant, who led all his life in a simple and untainted way tilling land, be so calm just before his death in the grave, where he would be buried, and add luster to his last moment standing firmly like titan?

His last words to the effect that sincere help to our army would expedite the advent of a new world remind all of us forcibly of how important faith is for a man and the great power, a man with faith can generate.

Although the people in Changbai County aided our revolutionary army at great risk, even sacrificing their lives, they never expected rewards for their efforts. After the liberation of the country, no one made his or her existence known.

Following the country's liberation, Mrs. Ryom Po Bae moved to Hyesan with her children. But she did not inform us for more than ten years where she was living.

It was only in 1958, when I was providing field guidance to Ryanggang Province, that I came to know that she was living in Hyesan.

I met her at the railway station. Her hair had turned gray.

"Mother, your son Jong Gun and husband have already passed away... To see you today when your hair has turned grey...."

I was too choked to go on. Beaten at a police station for helping the revolutionary army, her husband Kang In Hong had coughed out blood and died.

She embraced me, tears streaming down her face. Feeling her rough hands I said with disappointment:

"I frequented your house in the bygone days, mother, as if it were my own. But it is too much. More than ten years have passed since liberation; why didn't you call on me? Couldn't you write to me even once?"

"How could you believe that I was not eager to go to Pyongyang to see you, General? But I might not be the only person wishing to see you. If we all call on you, when you are always busy, how can you run the government properly?"

The passionate people of Changbai, who rushed out of the village entrance in the past without noticing



how their shoes fell off as they saw us, returned to the liberated country and led a quiet life without making themselves known to the world.

Soon afterwards I brought Mrs. Ryom to Pyongyang and chose a house on the scenic River Taedong for her.

The Changbai people, who helped us at the cost of their blood in the days of the anti-Japanese revolution, were all people of such caliber.

Kim Se Un, as I mentioned briefly above, went to the homeland in autumn 1937 and, roaming about Unhung, Pochon, Musan and Songjin (Kimchaek City), formed underground organizations and ensured support for the guerrillas.

He later went over to Tumen and engaged in underground work under the disguise of an oxcart driver, until the day of liberation. Surprisingly, although his feet were disabled, he conducted underground activities traveling about the wide area as freely as able-bodied men. He did not talk about his performance. His activities in the homeland became known to us many years later and drew the attention of historians.

How could Kim Se Un be the only one to be so unassuming!

Most west Jiandao people were in those days members of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland; in today's terms, they would be called unassuming heroes and meritorious individuals.

The enemy built concentration villages to cut the ties between the People's Revolutionary Army and the people and attempted to remove the links of support for the guerrillas by forts, earthen walls and barbed wire; however, it failed to shut the minds of the west Jiandao people, inclined as they were to Mt. Paektu. As most of the heads of the self-defense corps, village heads and gatekeepers of the concentration villages fell under our influence, the enemy's fuss about the concentration villages was merely a derisive farce. The Paektusan Base was located farther away from the populated areas than the base in eastern Manchuria.

However, it can be said that the ties between the army and people were stronger and that the feelings between them were warmer in the former than the latter. The expectations we held for the people, when we transformed Mt. Paektu into a new strategic base of the Korean revolution with confidence in them, were confirmed. The people in Paektusan Base, endowed with unstained patriotic fidelity and a pure mind for the revolutionary army, threw the enemy into a panic through a support-the-guerrillas campaign, exceeding our expectations and imagination.

They were heroic people, who set an example for the revolutionary traditions of supporting the army and enriched these traditions. The campaign developed into a pan-national campaign, involving the people of all strata, young and old, men and women, every village and household. Supported by their campaign, we

always emerged victorious in hard battles against the enemy.

The campaign to support the army, sweeping the vast area of west Jiandao, convinced me once again of the great power produced by the organized people. Even a village on a plateau or in a valley with only three peasant households, had an organization. If we sent a messenger there with a short notice, the villagers would get out of bed and busied themselves cooking food, saying that the revolutionary army four kilometers away from there would have a meal in their village and that they should make haste to serve them warm food.

We were able to enlist organizations via a short message to call west Jiandao people to climb Mt. Paektu all at once and shout for the independence of Korea on the top of the mountain. They acted on our orders, because these people became organized from autumn 1936 in such a way.

According to a Korean proverb, beads become a treasure only when threaded in a string. All men and women in west Jiandao were as precious as beads. The organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland turned west Jiandao into our world of influence and made these beads a treasure.

What would have happened to them, if we had not rallied them behind our organizations? Those individual beads would have been broken one by one at the hands of the enemy or eclipsed in the mud. However ardent a man's patriotism may be, what could he perform on his own?

Consequently I always say that the greatest asset for a revolutionary is organization. The significance of an organization can be said to be imperishable for the revolutionaries and people in all countries, who aspire for independence. The role of an organization does not dwindle with a change of times, nor should the rallying of the popular masses around the organization be neglected, following the victorious advance of the revolution.

It is imperative to hold the masses together in an organization, when winning power, and also when building a state after gaining power, and continuing the revolution, after the establishment of a communist society, by drawing on successes gained in building this society. As revolution knows no bounds, the unification of the masses behind an organization has no end. This is the physiology of social development and a law, which all people aspiring to build a developed society should attach great importance to.

We are now exerting ourselves to rally the masses behind the organization, and will continue to do so, even after building a communist society. Furthermore, we will build an eternally prosperous and independent society on this land and make our motherland and system an impregnable fortress, by drawing on the efforts of the organized popular masses.

When the Japanese imperialists, deceiving the world through the so-called "policy of good-neighborliness between Japan and the Soviet Union" of the early 1940s, clamored that the Korean communists were

“fighting alone” to subdue our struggle, and when Hitlerite Germany talked about the “tragic termination” of communists, as they swept away everything on their way toward Moscow, I gained strength and confidence from the memory of the watermills in Wangqing and Changbai.

In the grim days of the war against the US imperialists, who boasted that they were the “strongest” in the world, and the armies of their satellite states, I kept faith in the victorious tomorrow, while recalling the watermills in Changbai. Some people might think it strange that I felt certain of victory, as I remembered the sound of watermills, but this was indeed the case.

When frequenting the villages in Changbai, I could clearly detect through the watermills the unqualified love of the people for us, their impregnable support for us and unchanging faith, even in the face of death.

During a temporary retreat, I once walked with Mr. Lee Kuk Ro along Tongno River (Jangja River) and told him about the watermills in Changbai. I stressed several times that, during the fighting on Mt. Paektu, we had fought without going hungry, as the Changbai people had hulled grain by watermills and sent it to us, that the sound of watermills had not died out, despite the fact that the enemy had burned down the villages and destroyed the watermills, and that we could repulse any strong enemy, when we relied on the people and enlisted their efforts. I continued that it was too wasteful to let this wide river flow unharnessed, whereas the Koreans in Changbai in those days had even installed watermills on small streams and made effective use of them and that we should build a big hydropower station by damming the river after the war was over.

The traditions of support for the army and the unity of the army and the people established during the anti-Japanese armed struggle became more indestructible and was consolidated even more in the great Fatherland Liberation War. The victory of our young Republic in the fight against the “strongest power” on the globe should be attributed to the fact that we enlisted the entire people and relied on the unity of the army and the people, whereas the enemy imposed mostly pure military force.

These grand traditions are being advanced honorably today under the guidance of our Party. Today, the campaign of “our village - our post” and “our post - our village”, whereby the people help the soldiers and vice versa, is conducted briskly at every corner of our country. This campaign has been popularized at a rapid rate in factories, enterprises, agricultural farms, residential quarters and schools across the country, in particular ever since Comrade Kim Jong Il was acclaimed the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army. Such a relationship between the army and the people is a source of great pride for Korea, which cannot be found in the history of the building of the armed forces of any country.

Buttressed by such power, based on the integrity of the army and the people, we do not flinch before blackmail and threat of an enemy.

I regard single-hearted unity and unity between the army and the people as the greatest success achieved in the Korean revolution.

My ears still ring with the sound of the watermills I heard during the great anti-Japanese war. With that sound, the faces of a great number of Changbai people appear in my mind's eye. How many of them died on the gallows and behind bars! How many of them froze to death or laid down their lives on the snow-capped Mt. Paektu, on their way to aid the guerrillas!

I take off my hat to them and my heart swells with gratitude when I remember their boon and virtue.

## 14.3. Lee Je Sun

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Soon after arrival in the Mt. Paektu area, we intensified the construction of secret camps and developed a wide-ranging campaign to set up organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in Korean settlements.

The Changbai area around Mt. Paektu and the Kapsan area in the homeland were selected as the first places, where the network of the ARE was to be formed. To facilitate the careful execution of the challenging task of establishing organizations, we had to pick out reliable individuals, who would help us at the risk of their lives.

As soon as we reached west Jiandao I sent off a small unit. I emphasized over and over again to the company commander Lee Tong Hak "Your main task is to discover talent. Discover reliable assistants, even if it means combing the Changbai area. Attacking the enemy is of secondary importance. Exert your main efforts to discovering talent, and attack the enemy, when the odds are in your favor or else avoid it."

Lee Tong Hak carried out this task admirably. He returned to the secret camp with Lee Je Sun. Lee Tong Hak looked very frivolous, but was in fact very meticulous. He was a peculiar man. He talked so fast that whoever listened to him for the first time ended up feeling dizzy. He always kept his men moving by his fast speech. Consequently his colleagues nicknamed him Pottaji, apparently after the word Poktakjil (pestering).

During a round of Changbai area with his company, he met a young village head, who was guiding the morning exercise of young people and children on the plateau of Ershidaogou. The village head was Lee Je Sun and the village was Xinxingcun. RI Je Sun was village head and concurrently teacher of the night school. The Xinxingcun people, both old and young, or women, called their village head "our teacher" with special affection.

To test his personality, Lee Tong Hak asked him to provide two or three days' rations for the company. The village head gathered in an instant provisions in too great quantities for the whole company to carry, and volunteered to bring them to the secret camp in person. His working skill was so admirable and he was so broad-minded that Tong Hak was immediately won over by this strange village head. He wanted to introduce him directly to Headquarters, even though he might be criticized later for rashness. So when he volunteered to carry the provisions, he readily complied with the request.

As complications could have arisen, if the enemy learned that the village head voluntarily led his villagers as they carried provisions, Tong Hak's men bound him with a rope and pretended to be escorting a dangerous criminal.

Three days later the company carrying food from Xinxingcun arrived at the secret camp. When Tong Hak tried to send all the people back about 10 kilometers from the camp, Je Sun begged him to take him to the camp.

Tong Hak tried to check him out by making a perplexed face intentionally and saying, "It's difficult. How can we be bold enough to take you into the secret base?"

Je Sun hit upon a bright idea, grabbed him by the arm and suggested:

"What about giving me a test? For example, you can set me a task, which even demands the sacrifice of my life."

Tong Hak accepted his offer; he instructed him to make five pairs of knee-high Korean socks and five pairs of leggings in three days and come back. He promised that he would take him to the camp if he returned on time with those socks and leggings and that if he failed to appear on time or came empty-handed, he would be rejected.

Je Sun returned to Xinxingcun, saying that it was an easy job and he would pass the test without difficulty. He got his wife and her mother to tear the only quilt his wife had brought with her, when she had married him, and make five pairs of socks and five pairs of leggings in one night before appearing at the meeting place.

Only then Tong Hak embraced Je Sun and introduced himself by saying that his nickname was Pottaji, kindly talking about his birthplace, before adding, "After all, I made you tear your quilt to pieces."

Je Sun passed the test, so to speak.

On my return after a round of the area around Mt. Paektu, Tong Hak told me that he had discovered an excellent young man in the village of Xinxingcun and brought him to the camp, as he wanted to introduce him to me. He then extolled him to the skies. He said that Je Sun had read the guerrilla publications without a moment's rest during some days of his stay in the camp. He was very persistent and steady; he had learned from the guerrillas how to assemble and disassemble weapons and even how to determine one's orientation in the field. Tong Hak said:

"He is clever and upright; moreover, he seems to be a man of passion, with a high zeal for the revolution. He is so sociable that he made friends with all our men within a few days. He is a man of public character."

If his opinion was not exaggerated, the general judgment of the Xinxingcun village head was favorable.

Lee Je Sun was as pretty as a woman. His smiling eyes were impressive. He looked very gentle and fragile, but was in fact an iron-willed, intelligent man with steel-strong principles, rock-solid faith and

cool head.

Born to a poor peasant family, he had undergone many hardships since his childhood. He had been granted no access to education; he had weeded others' fields for hire with his mother and had since the age of ten worked as a servant for a landlord in a neighboring village. One evening when he was 11, his mother had come unexpectedly to see him as he was making straw sandals in his room. Although he longed to see her, he did not raise his head, when his mother came in and sat on the mat. When she asked what the matter was, he merely continued making straw sandals without bothering to answer.

The pitiable mother left the room without hearing a word from her beloved son. Only then Je Sun stopped his work and followed his mother. He said in tears, "Mother, please don't come any more. If you come here, the landlord's family despise you, as if you were here to get something from them."

Knowing her son's mind, she hugged him and sank to the road, weeping sorrowfully. She promised that she would not come again, even though she wanted to see him.

He did not receive a regular education, but he acquired a knowledge of secondary education through his own efforts; he was such an earnest worker. After working as a servant until the age of 14, he attended a night school for some years and learned Korean letters from his elder brother; on getting married, he took with him the dictionary of Chinese characters to learn them by himself. Regarding it as a lifelong grudge to have failed to receive a school education, he opened, on moving to Xinxingcun, a night school for the children of slash-and-burn peasants and committed himself to enlightening others.

In his native village he had led an organizational life for some years in the Children's Association and youth league. After his elder brother's imprisonment, the Japanese police kept watch on him. Feeling personal danger, owing to the incessant persecution and oppression, he moved in the early 1932 to Kapsan where his wife's family lived. Around that time such progressive people as Park Tal had been involved actively in patriotic enlightenment in this area. Lee Je Sun organized with them a secret reading circle in Ophungdong and buckled down to studying a new trend of thought.

The circle members had been fully prepared to lay down their lives without hesitation in the righteous struggle for rescuing the country and the nation, but had been fretful, as they did not know how to fight. They had tried to establish contacts with people in every corner in search of an impeccable path of struggle and a renowned leader. They had met people, who had been affiliated with labour unions and peasant unions and some ideologists roaming about mountains, but they lacked a clear-cut line and tactics of struggle.

Lee Je Sun began following the activities of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. Since around 1934, it had been rumored in the homeland that this army unit was advancing to Changbai area. He had given up his original idea of moving to Hunchun and come to Qiangede in Ershidaogou in Changbai County. The immigrants, who developed Qiangede, later renamed it Xinxingcun.

Pochonbo was not far away from Xinxingcun in a straight line. In Xinxingcun one could see Mt. Paektu, along with Pegae Hill, Mt. Sobaek and Konjang Hill. The fact that he lived in a place, where he could see Mt. Paektu, gave Lee Je Sun mysterious comfort, a man, who had been overwhelmed by nostalgia in an unfamiliar, alien land.

However, administrative oppression and poverty shadowed the immigrants. Overburdened by farm rent, compulsory labor and miscellaneous taxes, the miserable slash-and-burn peasants did not enjoy a moment of respite to stretch out and gaze up at the sky. The landlords forced the tenants to offer them bribes on holidays and collect firewood for them. To make matters worse, the policemen in Karim-ri and Chonsu-ri in Korea across the river ordered the Korean immigrants in Changbai area to bring firewood for them. When inspecting villages, the policemen would search hen coops of peasant houses, take out the eggs and eat them. The peasants were only allowed to eat boiled barley or unpolished-millet porridge.

Not a single family in Xinxingcun, which had 60 households, had an ox. How hard they had to toil! They all pulled the ploughs to till the land. One day a young couple was ploughing in spring. They ploughed the field all day without an ox. At first the wife took the handle, while the man drew the plough instead of an ox. Then she drew the plough, but the plough stuck in the land and did not move an inch.

The man shouted "Gee up! ", as he had done when ploughing the land with an ox in his native village. Thinking that the man was treating her as a draught animal, the wife threw herself on the field and cried sadly, out of indignation. The man let go of the handle and plumped down beside her, saying lamentably, "Excuse me for the slip of tongue. When will this miserable life come to an end?"

These circumstances in Xinxingcun served as the basis, which facilitated the peasants' ability to attain national and class consciousness.

Most of the villagers were impoverished peasants, who had emigrated from North and South Hamgyong Provinces, and exiles who had chosen to leave their hometowns and motherland in search of a new theatre of activities, after involvement in the anti-Japanese movement in various mass organizations, like peasant unions and youth leagues. Kim Pyong Chol, who later worked at the Xinxingcun chapter of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and special Party branch, had also sought refuge there after working in the homeland.

In his days in the homeland Kim Pyong Chol had always told his comrades that a route, which would enable them to receive the guidance of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, should be opened, so that the peasant union could achieve success in its struggle and that the struggle in the homeland could not be victorious without guidance from the revolutionary army. It goes without saying that his opinion was supported by many of his comrades. But some of them slighted his opinion, saying that it was impossible to establish contact with the revolutionary army.

Determined that he would find guerrillas on his own, he had moved without hesitation to Xinxingcun, where his friends had been active. He was a standard-bearer and fighter, who had realized before any of



the other fighters in the homeland, the indivisibility of the armed struggle conducted overseas and political struggle in the homeland and the need for their integration, and had materialized it in a positive way, free of empty talk and had, after establishing a relationship with the revolutionary army, laid down his life, as he carried out our line.

Such Korean patriots as Lee Ju Gwan and Lee Ju Ik formed in Changbai area the Red Peasant Union of Koreans in Manchuria in the early 1930s and used it to conduct mass struggle. The peasant union, which started its activities with enlightenment, including the drive against superstition, gambling, early marriage, marriage for pay and illiteracy, gradually developed through economic struggle such as tenancy dispute and resistance against forced drought labor to anti-Japanese political struggle, refusing to lay military roads and opposing or sabotaging the construction of military establishments.

I was told that prior to our establishment of the organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in the Changbai area, the Red peasant union had provided leadership for the mass struggle conducted in Xinxingcun and its vicinity.

In a word, Lee Je Sun could be said to be as white as snow. His career was relatively simple. This provided striking evidence that he had not been tainted by the erroneous views and fighting methods of the self-styled campaigners and factionalists. We treasured the simplicity of his career. An idea or a theory implanted in an unstained brain will not become muddled.

According to Lee Je Sun, quite a few interesting points in the philosophy of life had been learned during the anti-Japanese patriotic struggle. He said that the hardest job for a man was the role of pioneer or leader. In other words, it was the toughest job, as you had to perform two or three tasks, while others were doing one and take two or three steps, while others were taking one.

In fact, his words contained a profound truth, reflecting the painful position of a revolutionary, who treads a thorny path of leading social transformation. "It must be overtaxing you to farm and perform the duties of a village head, while working for the revolution," I said.

Lee replied, smiling, "Yes, indeed. But it gives me pleasure. What would be the pleasure of living in these grim days, if we didn't take the trouble of working for the revolution?" He said that he found it extremely interesting to work among the masses and that he took the greatest pleasure in gaining comrades. When I asked, which section of the masses was the hardest to win over, he answered that it was the old people. He went on to say that if he had a large playground or public hall, it would not be a great problem to enlighten a village and even transform a sub-county in revolutionary fashion. I expressed my full agreement with his view on the masses and work with the masses.

One interesting experience in his enlightening of the masses involved the running of a "family night school". Such a night school is run with a family as a unit. He opened such a school in his family and involved all his family members. All the family attended the school every night and Lee Je Sun took to educating his wife and younger brothers. Thanks to that school, every one of his family became literate.

While talking about his work among the masses, I asked him about the other ten-household heads, who had come to the camp with provisions.

He told me that all of them were good people and that the stepson of landlord Chon was problematic. The young man had mistaken the revolutionary army as "bandits" and therefore been uneasy since his first day in the camp, afraid that the guerrillas might kill him, he told me.

I asked him in a casual manner, "Let's say that the company commander Lee Tong Hak brought him to raise funds. How do you think we should deal with him?"

Lee Je Sun, as if he had been expecting such a question, expressed his innermost thought without hesitation, "I believe that the guerrillas will not harm him. He is a landlord's stepson in name only, and is actually a pitiable young man, who is no more than a servant. He is not guilty of any particular crime."

I could not suppress my admiration for his generosity and way of thinking, as he viewed the matter in a magnanimous way, from the standpoint of a united front.

In fact his view on the stepson coincided with our view. Lee Tong Hak educated the young man in various ways and corrected his understanding of us. In the long run, the young man volunteered to join the guerrillas. We admitted him to the revolutionary army, as he had wanted. During the battle of Ershidaogou he acted as a guide. The man Lee Je Sun had shown great confidence in was killed in action in a battle, to our deep regret.

All things considered, Lee Je Sun was a man of distinctive character, who was charming to all about him. He was the very man to transform Changbai area in a revolutionary way. Once taught the necessary knowledge and methods, he could become a skilful underground worker in the future. I decided to entrust him with the task of setting up organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in Changbai area.

But he was eager to join the guerrillas.

Saying that he had made some preparations to join the army while I had been away for fighting, he begged me to put him through the admission test.

I could not help laughing at the word "admission test".

"There's no need. As Pottaji took you here after a test, you are as good as qualified for joining the army. We will admit you any time, if you so wish. But I believe that you will render a greater contribution to our revolution by doing another job."

"You say another job? What can that be?" He was puzzled.

"Rather than talking part in battle as a rifleman, you can form a big organization and help the Korean People's Revolutionary Army defeat the Japanese army. What do you think?"

"You mean that I should form an organization?" His curiosity was evident.

"Sure. Organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in every place on the Yalu, including Xinxingcun."

I stressed the importance and urgency of organizing the masses from all strata into the anti-Japanese national united front.

An intelligent man, Lee Je Sun said that he was keen to work in the underground organization, but felt he was incompetent and doubted that he was equal to such a difficult job.

"There's no need to worry. You can learn. There's no born revolutionary. Anyone can become a revolutionary, if he is determined to engage himself in the revolution, learn gradually in the practical struggle and accumulate experience. We will teach you how."

We gave him a short course. The subject of the short course was the line, character, strategy and tactics of the Korean revolution; here I gave the lectures. The lectures on the Ten-point Programme, Inaugural Declaration, and Rules of the ARE and the history of the International were given by Lee Tong Baek. As far as I remember, this was the first and last time during the entire anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle that several competent lecturers had taught the one and only student by turns in such a substantial manner.

On leaving the secret camp after the short course, Lee Je Sun said earnestly, "I came here with one mal of grain and now return with several mal of revolutionary pabulum. I will not forget your favor for my life. Now please give me an assignment. If you entrust me with a district, I will form the organization of the ARE in every village of the Koreans in that district."

We decided to entrust him with Shanggangqu area, Changbai County.

Before leaving, he asked me to write a letter of credence for him. He said that he would be able to rally a great number of masses around the ARE and further perform his work with considerable ease, if he had a letter of credence sealed by my stamp.

I wrote credentials and sealed my stamp under my signature.

Taking the credentials, Lee Je Sun promised that he would put the area entrusted to him under our influence within half a year. The fact that he was not making empty promises was testified by his results in later days.

That day he said, "I have a request to make, General, but I am afraid to do so. I will be happy in my whole life, if I try on a guerrilla uniform before leaving the camp." "That will not be difficult. Please try it on."

I readily complied with his request. I thought about the sheer earnestness of his wish to join the army, given such a request. He cherished a wish to join the army, while displaying determination to devote his all to independence on the underground front. The desire to wear a military uniform and participate in the great anti-Japanese war could be judged in effect as the highest expression of patriotism when Japan, having occupied Manchuria, was heading madly for a new world war with ambitions of swallowing up the whole of China, as well as all Asia.

I ordered Lee Tong Hak to bring a uniform from the warehouse, so that Je Sun could try it on. Lee Je Sun looked perfect in the uniform. The uniform was brought, after guessing his size; it fitted him well.

"You seem to be born to wear a military uniform, Comrade Je Sun. You look smart in the uniform. As you have tried on the uniform, let's say you have been admitted to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. From now on you are a political operative of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. Congratulations on your enlistment!"

I approached him and squeezed his hands. Lee Tong Hak congratulated him most warmly. He lifted on his back the village head, who was beside himself in the uniform, and circled round me.

In this way Lee Je Sun, who had come to our camp carrying provisions, joined our army. When sending him back to his home, we fought a small battle for his safe return. This task was carried out by a small unit led by Lee Tong Hak.

The operation for his return, which made a fool of the enemy, was interesting. As we had instructed, he went straight to the police sub-station in Ershidaogou on his way back from the mountain. There he grumbled to the police without any preliminaries, "I can't work as a village head any longer. You merely know how to make village heads work, but you don't know how to protect them. You might have known that I was captured, and yet you didn't take any measures to rescue me. I am so scared that I will have to cross back to Korea to live there. Let the other people serve you to get killed."

The policemen were at a loss. They implored him to stop saying such things and said that they were never at ease because of him and that they could not do anything, because they had not been aware of his whereabouts. They asked him to calm down and tell them where he had been detained and how he had escaped.

Lee Je Sun said that the guerrillas always took him with his eyes bandaged, and that he only knew of the place he had escaped from at dawn, but not the place he had been detained at. He explained that he had taken flight, while his guard was dozing off during a break. The police asked how many guerrillas there

were and where he had escaped and requested that he guide them to the place.

Our plan worked. The police's "punitive" force came to the valley Lee Je Sun indicated, only to end up as a mouse in a trap. The enemy inevitably trusted him. Making effective use of that trust, he, along with Kim Pyong Chol, Lee Ju Gwan and Lee Sam Dok, formed that autumn Xinxingcun chapter of the ARF. This was the first organization formed at the southwestern foot of Mt. Paektu.

He handed over the post of village head to Lee Sam Dok and, from then on set about expanding the organizational network, in cooperation with Kwon Yong Byok, concentrating on Shanggangqu area in Changbai County. For the convenience of our activity, we divided Changbai County largely into three areas - namely Shanggangqu area, Zhonggangqu area and Xiagangqu area - and subdivided Shanggangqu area into Shangfangmian, Zhongfangmian, and Xiafangmian. Following the forming of a chapter in Xinxingcun, Lee Je Sun set up ARF chapters in Zhujingdong, Yaoshuidong, Dashidong and Pinggange.

He also formed many branches under the chapters and such peripheral organizations as the Anti-Japanese Youth League, Women's Association and Children's Corps, thereby rallying broad masses of people.

Within less than half a year, he had covered the whole of Shanggangqu with a close network of underground organizations. The organizations of the ARF were set up in nearly all the villages surrounding Paektusan Secret Camp. These organizations gained the support of progressive youth, students, intellectuals and religious men and struck roots further in the government organs of Manchukuo, police organs and in Jingan army units.

The ARF was surrounded by mass organizations, involving people from all strata. The peripheral organizations of the ARF embraced tens of thousands of people. Every chapter of the ARF maintained a paramilitary corps, a powerful force capable of fighting in cooperation with the People's Revolutionary Army, when necessary.

The ARF organizations in Changbai area expanded so rapidly, that by early 1937 when we set up the Changbai County Committee of the ARF and appointed Lee Je Sun its chairman, the whole area of Changbai County became our ground.

Almost all the villages in Changbai became "our villages" and nearly all the people there, "our people". Nearly all the district and village heads in Changbai were "our people". They ran for the enemy in name only; they worked for us in actual deed.

Sub-county head, Lee Ju 1k, was one of them. When we sent an advance party to Changbai prior to our launching into Paektu area, Lee Ju 1k came under the influence of Kim Ju Hyon and became a special member of the ARF.

He opened a chemist's shop at Ouledong and practiced medicine, while working as sub-county head. Making tactful use of his posts, he provided substantial support for our work.

Lee Je Sun had already kept watchful eyes on the man, since he was arrested for involvement in the struggle against an irrigation association in the homeland. Lee Ju Ik loyally followed the guidance of Lee Je Sun and carried out his instructions and requests wholeheartedly.

In those days, if our political operatives went to the homeland or settled in the villages on the Chinese shore of the Yalu to work in safety, they needed a certificate to cross the river or a resident's card. Without a resident's card, they could not settle down in dispatched places or freely cross the Yalu, which was guarded by customs police, without the certificate.

The card and certificate were issued by the police under the endorsement of sub-county heads. The police stations only issued them to people registered on the census records submitted by the sub-county heads.

To ensure the safe and free activities of our political operatives, Je Sun and Ju Ik decided to make many "bogus residents" in Ershisidaogou, the last valley on the way to Mt. Paektu. The valley was so remote and steep that even the policemen were reluctant to visit it.

Lee Ju Ik registered on the census list the assumed names of our political operatives, active in Changbai area and the homeland; then, he visited the police station carrying with him the census list and fussed, "The rustic poor are all ignorant; they don't know anything other than their own. As they don't go outside of that valley round the year, they are not aware of the world situation and even don't know that they can only continue their existence, when they have a resident's card. What can we do other than bring them the cards? I might be dog tired but it's no use complaining. It's not easy to be a sub-county head."

The police echoed his words, saying that it was a serious problem, that the people were ignoramuses. They issued many resident's cards to the sub-county and village heads, in accordance with the census of "bogus residents". Lee Je Sun always had plenty of spare cards obtained by Ju Ik. Our political operatives got them at any time and based them-selves easily in strange places or crossed the border without difficulty.

Following the rapid expansion of the ARF network and the widening of the sphere of their work, we dispatched 30 political operatives at one time to expand the revolutionary movement deep into the homeland, by consolidating the newly-formed organizations, using them as a stepping-stone.

Park Rok Kum (Park Yong Hui), the first commander of the women's company of the guerrilla army, and two boy operatives were dispatched to Xinxingcun. Instructed by Lee Je Sun to perform the necessary formalities for their residence, Lee Ju Ik registered them on the census list under assumed names.

Lee Hun, who was a district head in Diyangxi, Shijiudaogou, joined the ARF under the influence of Lee Je Sun. On returning from the secret camp after seeing me, Je Sun soon went to see Lee Hun; he explained the Ten-point Programme of the ARE and instructed him to influence reliable young people and make preparations for admitting them to organizations, as this was the wish of General Kim.

The first man Lee Hun introduced to Lee Je Sun on receiving the assignment was An Tok Hun, who had moved to Desancun, Shijiudaogou, after participating in the peasant union movement in Yonghung (Kumya), South Hamgyong Province. In spring 1937 Lee Je Sun formed a chapter of the ARE in Shijiudaogou, headed by An Tok Hun. Its branches were set up in all its hamlets by the summer of that year. In most cases, the village heads concurrently held the post of head of the sections. The activities of the organizations were so brisk that the boys and girls in these areas sang revolutionary songs in public.

When operating on Mt. Paektu, I met Lee Hun on a few occasions. He said a great deal about Lee Je Sun. He told me that I was blessed with good men.

"You picked the right man, General. They say that Changbai is wide, but I have yet to see a man as clever and loyal as Je Sun. To see him busy with revolutionary work away from home, oblivious of happy newly-wedded life, I take off my hat to him despite myself. Thanks to him I have become your man."

When our Headquarters were situated on the mountain overlooking Diyangxi, Shijiudaogou, Changbai County, Lee Hun, with his wife, rendered us effective assistance. The mountain was advantageous, as we could go to Heixiazigou through its forests. At that time his wife would go to Changbai county town and, pretending to sell cigarettes and bean-curd, watch the movements of the enemy; when there was any strange movement by the enemy, she would make a fire with fallen leaves in the yard of her house and the sentries of the People's Revolutionary Army would inform Headquarters of the enemy movement, with the help of that signal. If a large enemy force moved, Lee Hun himself would come to us and provide detailed information.

Such patriotic sub-county, district and village heads could be found everywhere in Changbai.

The fact that Changbai became our world and its inhabitants our people constituted a tremendous success, achieved by the Korean communists in carrying out the strategic tasks of building bases in Mt. Paektu.

Thanks to faithful, daring and enthusiastic revolutionaries like Lee Je Sun, we managed to turn Changbai and the areas surrounding it completely into our own world in less than half a year, since basing ourselves on Mt. Paektu.

Lee Je Sun was a true son and faithful servant of the people, born in the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution and admirable patriot and communist of Korea, who pioneered with his life the road of revolution for the liberation of the masses.

He was an experienced and seasoned revolutionary, fully equipped with the traits and qualifications befitting an underground worker.

Just like O Jung Hwa, Lee Je Sun was exemplary in transforming his family into a revolutionary one. One should equip before anybody else one's own kinsmen and kinswomen with anti-Japanese patriotic ideas; only then can one transform one's village and furthermore the whole country in a revolutionary fashion - this was his faith and the mode of revolutionary activities. Consequently he involved his younger brothers and sisters in revolution from the days in his native village. His younger sisters helped his revolutionary work well.

After moving to Xinxingcun he also involved his wife and her mother in revolutionary work. Under his meticulous assistance and love, his wife Choe Chae Ryon grew to become chairwoman of Xinxingcun Women's Association affiliated with the ARE. His influence rapidly awakened her ideological consciousness. She was full of emotional feelings and also had a keen political sense. These merits enabled her to acquire the method of revolution instantly and adhere to revolutionary principles.

Lee Je Sun was very affectionate towards his wife, but was strict with her. Tenderhearted as he was, cracking jokes and humorous remarks in usual days, he would make a clear distinction between public and private matters in underground work and did not let out any of secrets.

Once the wife of a policeman surnamed Lee rushed to Choe Chae Ryon and said, "Oh, my dear! What do you do after taking three meals a day? Do you know what's happening in the village inn?"

Choe Chae Ryon looked at her doubtfully and said. "I don't know. How can I know about anything happening in the inn?" "Oh, how blind you are! Your man is having a good time with other women there every night and you...."

She stopped here and slipped away.

That night Choe went to the inn. She opened the door and stole a look, only to find that the inn was full of strange women and men as Lee's wife had said. In the middle she could see her husband and the policeman Lee. But it seemed there was none of the "good times" Lee's wife had mentioned. She realized that a certain secret meeting was taking place, chaired by her husband, in this spacious inn, which attracted less attention of the police. Apparently the policeman RI was a member of the secret organization.

"Then why on earth did she say they are having a good time? She probably misunderstood the secret meetings as a 'good time' only out of jealousy," she thought and closed the door of the inn in haste, with a feeling of relief.

But she could not dodge her husband's sharp eye. He gave her a hard time the whole night. Under the barrage of rebukes she realized keenly that she had made a great blunder on the instigation of another woman, that unfounded mistrust and jealousy would impair the harmony of the family and worse still destroy the family itself, and that trust was the basic foundation for the consolidation of conjugal relationship.



Although he resorted to all sorts of hard words against his wife that night, Lee Je Sun did not say a word about what he and others had been doing in the inn to prove his innocence. He had such a thoroughgoing concept of secrets. We had not established a written code of conduct for the revolutionaries in general and, in particular, for the underground operatives and activists of underground organizations; however, Lee Je Sun had in mind a law he had stipulated and observed on his own.

When fighting in Changbai area, I visited his house on one or two occasions. At one time I ate noodle made of frozen potato and slept there. Whenever I went to his house, he would hang a blind between the room and kitchen, which had not been partitioned, lest his wife should see me. So she did not realize that I was Kim Il Sung, even though she brought a table laden with dishes to me at mealtime.

On learning later through Park Rok Kum who I was, she protested to her husband in tears. "You always say that one should trust others and you didn't tell me he is General Kim Il Sung. What sort of propriety is that?"

"I could not tell the secret to any one. I did this for the sake of his personal security. Though regretful, please be broad in understanding."

This was just Lee Je Sun's type of law.

The tough character and thoroughgoing principle he demonstrated exerted a good influence on the development of her personality and the formation of her outlook on the world. On returning after meeting me at the Paektusan Secret Camp, he made this request to her.

"Many guests may visit my house from now on. Please prepare a great deal of potatoes, starch, barley, bean paste and firewood. You will have to take a lot of trouble in the future."

Choe Chae Ryon took great trouble indeed to attend to the guerrillas and underground operatives. She hulled grain everyday. She hulled so much grain that the mortar of the mill Lee Je Sun had made personally might have been worn down.

While transforming his family in a revolutionary manner, he also made his village into a revolutionary one. With Kwon Yong Byok, he formed a special Party branch in Xinxingcun. Following its formation, a large number of ARF members in Changbai area joined the Party's ranks. Xinxingcun could be called a leading village in rallying the people to organizations and supporting the guerrillas.

When they were informed of the approach of the guerrillas, the villagers of Xinxingcun baked about all perilla used to press cooking oil. They stringently economized on provisions to prepare provisions for the guerrillas. Potato, the staple product in this village, was unhandy to carry and was of little value in use. So they processed it into starch before sending it to our secret camps.

The women in Xinxingcun did not send us bean paste raw; first of all they processed it. They mixed wheat flour with bean paste, kneaded them into cakes and roasted them; these cakes were very convenient for carrying and use.

The people in Xinxingcun brought us tens of thousands of items of aid goods. They carried these supplies on their backs as far as our secret camps or bivouacs.

The Xinxingcun people were blessed with an excellent leader. Not only Rile Sun was a competent man; Kwon Yong Byok, Park Rok Kum and Hwang Kum Ok gave him effective assistance. On a visit to the village prior to the battle of Pochonbo, I was deeply moved by the villagers' warm welcome to the revolutionary army and their powerful unity. As soon as we arrived, they set up four noodle-presses and prepared noodles for hundreds of men in a short time. The speed was really amazing. That day my comrades said that the village was attractive. All of the villagers were really attractive. I later learned that whenever we went to the village, Lee Je Sun would hold an extraordinary meeting beforehand and discuss how to welcome us.

His high organizational ability and flexibility can be illustrated by the following anecdote.

In spring 1937 the Changbai County Committee of the ARF organized a demonstration to celebrate May Day in Xinxingcun. To hold a lawful demonstration at broad daylight, attracting public attention, they needed a justifiable scheme, lest the enemy find fault with him. On the plea of hunting foxes, Lee Je Sun gathered the youth and children in every village in the designated place. The demonstrators, holding a red flag, formed a line and marched, shouting "Long live the independence of Korea!" to the village of Nanyn, Ershidaogou, along the ridge overlooking the Yalu River. They shouted other slogans in between to put the enemy in confusion.

That day the pedestrians on both shores of the Yalu halted and watched with delight the rare demonstration. Thinking that the revolutionary army was making an assault, the policemen and troops in the police station of Karimchon and the border garrison on the Korean side of the river did not dare enquire into the disturbance taking place on the ridge. Only after the demonstration was over and the demonstrators had been identified to be civilians did the enemy cross the river to Changbai and ask why crowds of people had flocked.

The demonstrators answered that they had been hunting foxes.

The police queried, "Why did you fly a red flag when hunting foxes?"

"The foxes are most afraid of red. So we flew a red flag."

They deceived the police tactfully. Admittedly a red flag was needed for fox-hunting and the demonstration.

It was amazing that a crowd of hundreds of people shouted for independence flying a red flag in daylight in 1937, when the suppression of the Japanese imperialists was at its zenith. It was all the more surprising that the army and police of both Japan and Manchukuo were not aware that the demonstration was directed against them. This was a bold adventure, which could only be conceived by men of outstanding resourcefulness and daring spirit.

After the attack on Pochonbo, Lee Je Sun dispatched members of the Women's Association in Xinxingcun to that place to confirm the results of the battle and survey public opinion; he then informed us of the findings. We had not requested that he conduct such a survey of public opinion. He decided and organized this undertaking on his own, displaying his creative spirit.

From these two facts, we can see that he was a talented worker and indefatigable thinker with a methodology of his own for the revolution. He was second to none in racking his brains for the revolution and the duty entrusted to him by the times. If he had not continued such brain racking without interruption, he would not have managed to achieve such a miracle and turn Changbai thoroughly into our world in such a short period of time.

Everybody knows that people who do not meditate, have no creative spirit and that there will be no creation and innovation without creativity. When considered in a strict way, one can claim that meditation made man the dominator of the world and a powerful being, who can do anything as long as he is determined. Man, a social being with consciousness, has transformed nature, society and himself and reigned over the world with dignity through uninterrupted meditation and accumulation of that meditation.

It is because we attach absolute importance to the role of meditation in transforming nature, society and man that our Party appeals to the cadres, Party members and working people to become zealous thinkers.

Lee Je Sun was a creative man, who fully linked meditation and practice. He did not stop meditating even in court and behind bars. His meditation in court was concentrated on how he could end his life as a communist.

The only thing I can do in court is to rescue comrades by pleading guilty for them - this was the determination he made when detained in the Hyesan police station. In fact, he managed to rescue many people by sacrificing himself. When Lee Ju Ik, the sub-county head, was arrested, he told him, "Only General Kim, you and I know our undertakings. The General is on the mountain and I will not utter anything, so there will be no trouble for you, if you stick it out."

True to his word, Lee Ju Ik was released after a few days of suffering. As Lee Je Sun pleaded guilty of all "crimes", Kim Pyong Chol, head of the Party organization in Xinxingcun, and Lee Ju Gwan managed to escape a death sentence. His self-sacrifice reflects the ennobling virtue of Lee Je Sun, a communist.

On learning from Kwon Yong Byok in prison that Jang Jung Ryol had betrayed the cause, he grew

anxious that his betrayal might bring about the further sacrifice of stalwart comrades. He wanted to inform his comrades of Jang's betrayal at the earliest possible date, but he did not even have a pencil-butt. At his wit's end, he bit his lower lip with his teeth and, wetting a fingertip with every drop of blood flowing from his lip, wrote on a piece of cloth, "Jang Jung Ryol betrayed us." When he was led to the torture chamber, he dropped it in another cell. Consequently, many of his comrades could realize Jang's true nature and fought more effectively in prison.

I regret that I cannot recount here all the moving anecdotes of his struggle for seven years behind bars.

When Choe Chae Ryon visited him, she found that his face was no longer the handsome, elastic one she had known in the past, when he had been running about to form ARF organizations. His original image was gone and he was all skin and bone. Nevertheless, he was smiling calmly as he saw her through the bars. When parting, he requested her in a happy-go-lucky way to bring a world map instead of food. Choe Chae Ryon spoke later of how she had been perplexed by this uncommon order.

In my opinion, his request for a world map reflected his wish to try to imagine on the map in his own way a new world structure after the Second World War and a new, liberated motherland, which would be born out of the war and shed bright light all over the world.

This is patent proof that he did not abandon himself to despair and despondency, even after being sentenced to death, that he was picturing endlessly in his mind the radiant future of his country and the bright future of the world. He lived in the future, though his body was in the present, and imagined, even at the point of death, a new, happy life to be born in the liberated motherland. Consequently he declared with dignity that "communism is an eternal youth" to the judges, who had advised him to turn coat.

In the early 1945 Choe Chae Ryon took her youngest daughter to Sodaemun prison in Seoul. The youngest daughter, who had been suffering from a lack of breast milk, as she had been incarcerated with her mother two months after her birth, was now an 8-year-old girl. She shot a dubious look at the bearded man on the other side of the bars.

"That's your daddy," her mother said to her, pointing to the man.

The father and his daughter looked at each other with bars between them, but she failed to say, "Daddy!"

How can one expect her to call him "Daddy!" with no hesitation, when she had lived for eight years without seeing her father! She had seen many fathers of her neighbors caressing their children. But she found her father extraordinary, as he was only smiling on the other side of the bars, instead of embracing her.

Only when his hands in cuffs fondled her head, making a clinking noise, did she utter, "Daddy!" Feeling a lump in his throat, Lee Je Sun made the impossible promise that he "would come home soon." It is not difficult to imagine how painful it must have been for him to make such an infeasible promise to his

daughter, who was seeing her daddy for the first time in her life. Needless to say, he could not keep that promise.

On March 10, 1945 the enemy called him into the interrogation room and tried to persuade him to convert his faith, saying that they would repeal his sentence in that case, as it was the day of the Imperial Army of Japan. Nevertheless, Lee Je Sun did not give way to any appeasement and torture.

Lee Je Sun, who had taught at night school and worked as the head of a remote mountain village in Changbai, was an ardent patriot and indefatigable revolutionary fighter, as he laid down the prime of his life to the anti-Japanese revolution.

A man is not born a revolutionary; he grows into a revolutionary and a fighter in life and struggle. It is the truth of the revolution and lesson of history that, although the process of growing into a revolutionary may differ from man to man, every one with a sound ideology and burning patriotism can become a revolutionary if he is under correct leadership. This is the reason why we attach primary importance to the ideological in the three revolutions - ideological, technical and cultural.

This ideological revolution is a cradle, which trains people into ardent patriots and iron-willed revolutionary fighters by awakening their consciousness and organizing them, as well as the motive power, which propels the cause of independence of the popular masses and revolutionary struggle.

When he came to our secret camp - it was his third or fourth visit- I highly praised him for his efforts to build ARF organizations. He only waved his hand with an awkward face.

"Don't mention it. It owes nothing to my skill or trouble. The credentials you gave me transformed such a man as sub-county head Lee Ju Ik, into a member of the ARF. Seeing the credentials, Lee said that he would become a member of the association, chaired by you, General Kim. And the Changbai people are highly patriotic. I've done nothing special." Lee Je Sun was such a modest man.

His small bust can be found at the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on Mt. Taesong, still looking at the rising generation in a modest way. Standing alongside him you will see the busts of Kwon Yong Byok, Lee Tong Gol and Ji Thae Hwan, who ended their days on the gallows with him.

## 14.4. With the Comrades-in-Arms in Southern Manchuria

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I recall with pleasure the political and military activities on the Yalu River after building up many secret camps around Mt. Paektu, especially the days when I consolidated militant friendship and solidarity with the 2nd Division, 1st Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army through joint life and joint operations, when they called on my unit.

The cooperation between the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the Chinese communist armed units had already been deliberated at the meeting held in Yaoyinggou in March 1935. On the decision adopted at the meeting, our unit later made a second expedition to northern Manchuria and the other unit left for southern Manchuria across Xinkai Hill.

The typical Chinese armed units on our flank were Zhou Baozhong's unit active in Ningan area, Li Yan-lu' unit in Mishan area, Yang Jing-yu's unit in southern Manchuria and Zhao Shang-zhi's unit in Zhuhe area. In those days, these units conducted a brisk joint struggle with their neighbors on their own initiative.

The 1st Independent Division, which had moved to southern Manchuria from eastern Manchuria, held an emotional meeting with comrades-in-arms of the 1st Corps at Naerhong, Mengjing County in August and September 1935. This occurred, when we were conducting joint operations with Zhou Bao-zhong's unit, after crossing Laoyeling Mountains again.

The unit dispatched to southern Manchuria included Oh Jung Hup and Kim Phyoung, commanders from Wangqing.

Oh Jung Hup recalled with emotion in later days that the comrades in southern Manchuria had accorded the guerrillas from eastern Manchuria an enthusiastic reception, by erecting a gate of pine decorations, flying flags, preparing a rostrum and making a welcoming speech.

Apparently the ceremony had been spectacular. That day Yang Jing-yu made a welcoming speech on behalf of the unit in southern Manchuria and Li Xuezhong made a reply address on behalf of the unit from eastern Manchuria; their speeches were interrupted several times by the applause of hundreds of people. As far as I remember, the scene of that day was described concisely in a special issue of the People's Revolution.

When Cao Guo-an came to Heixiazigou Secret Camp, leading the main force of his division, we were not around, as we had gone out to fight battles. A messenger sent by Kim Ju Hyon informed us on the battle field of the arrival of the unit from southern Manchuria. Apparently Kim Ju Hyon, in charge of our unit's food, clothing and housing, was taking considerable trouble to give the guests a generous reception. To

see comrades from southern Manchuria as soon as possible, we left for the secret camp immediately after battles.

It was a great pleasure for us to meet the comrades-in-arms from our adjacent area. We yearned for people - this was a valuable and intense feeling, which was deeply rooted in the minds of all of us. How come we missed only one or two things, when we lived on the mountains far away from inhabited areas? We missed our home villages, kinsfolk, schoolmates, beloved ones, civilization in all its hues and shades and everything else.

But the strongest of all these yearnings was the yearning for our comrades and the yearning for people. For this very reason, the days we stayed in residential quarters were holidays for us all. In an outburst of this feeling, my comrades-in-arms and I raised a shout of joy and embraced the messenger, when we heard that the men of Cao Guo-an's unit had come to our secret camp.

As we arrived at the camp, 70-80 men from southern Manchuria rushed out of the quarters and surrounded us. We were bewildered by incessant embraces and handshakes. If a stranger had seen that scene, he might have got the wrong idea that we were receiving a welcome at the secret camp of the south Manchurian men.

Thanks to this meeting, I got acquainted for the first time with division commander Cao Guo-an. Cao Guo-an looked like a strong-willed, rigorous instructor at a military academy; this was my first impression. But after a few days of living under the same roof, my opinion changed. He was very tenderhearted and sociable. He was a self-possessed man, a dozen years older than me.

The fact that he had been born in Yongji County, Jirin Province, and graduated from Jirin Normal School, instilled in me an intimate feeling that we were from the same native town. After graduating from this school, he once taught at the Jirin Middle School No. 1. Later he attended the military and political academy in Shandong and also studied in Beijing. He said that he had become absorbed in studying Marxism-Leninism from the days in these two institutions.

Taking part in the anti-Japanese armed struggle, he worked as political commissar of the 7th Regiment, 1st Division, 1st Corps and had, since the autumn of 1934, been working as commander and political commissar of the 2nd Division, 1st Corps. Pointing at his men surrounding us, Cao Guo-an said with an awkward smile, "Please, Commander Kim, don't feel reproachful that the people you are going to cooperate with are so indecent. This is the result of my inefficient command of my unit, so please understand."

The guests from southern Manchuria, both officers, rank and file, all wore shabby summer clothes. Their threadbare military uniforms, revealing even their underwear, graphically told us of the arduous and long road his division had traversed. "Commander Kim, although we are ashamed of it, we have not yet provided our men with winter clothes," said Cao Guo-an, casting an envious glance at my men, who were wearing soft, cotton-padded coats. He maintained a sad smile on his face.

"Oh, don't. How many battles you might have fought and how much hardship you might have undergone for your clothes to have become so shabby! We looked no better than you when we returned from the expedition to northern Manchuria. We have some winter clothes in reserve, but I am afraid I don't know how much. If you don't disagree, we will give them to you to begin with and we will make new ones for the rest."

Cao Guo-an was very pleased. He said, "Then I can sleep soundly."

The division commander Cao and I exchanged our opinions on joint struggle for about 20 days, sharing board and food in the camp; during this time, I grew closer to him. We exchanged our views on the cooperation of our two units, to begin with, the management of units, education of soldiers, ways of reinforcing troops and working among the masses, guerrilla tactics, the future of the revolution in Korea and China, and also talked about our personal backgrounds.

What I thought charming about his personality was his simplicity and frankness. He was exceedingly frank and modest. The ten-year age gap did not matter in the interview with him. He did not mind the differences in age and position of his counterpart; if the counterpart was to his liking, he would even speak his inmost thoughts. He did not hesitate to tell me the ups and downs his division had suffered and its casualties.

The parent body of the 2nd Division, 1st Corps led by Cao Guo-an was the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla unit, formed by the Koreans in Panshi, and it comprised the 1st Regiment, 1st Division, which had been organized with the defectors from the puppet Manchukuo army and mountain rebels. The main area of the division's operations had been Panshi County and the areas around it.

After being restructured into a division, the unit, in accordance with the operational plan of the corps headquarters, would go on an expedition to the north of River Huifa every summer and return in winter to compensate for the loss it had sustained during the expedition and replenish its troops, before embarking on an expedition to that area next summer. It had been a regular mobile operation, conducted once every year without fail, on the plea of expanding the area of guerrilla activities. However, these systematic operations had attracted the enemy's attention and the unit's unchangeable course of activities had entered the enemy's operations map. The enemy had launched surprise attacks at vantage points, and the unit had suffered great losses on each expedition.

In summer 1936, the division lost a large number of combatants during the expedition. In cooperation with the 1st Division from eastern Manchuria, Cao Guo-an had led some of his division as far as Sansong, Emu County. On his return from the expedition, he had gathered his division in the area of Huiquanzhan in Huadian County and came directly to us via Fusong County. He added that the unit had consequently failed to drop in at the supply base of the 1st Corps, situated in Naerhong, Mengjiang County and, therefore, replace their summer clothes with winter clothes.

While groping in agony for a way to surmount the difficulties, facing his division, he had one day been



informed of the battle at Fusong county town, we had fought from Song Mu Son's small unit, which had been to Sandaolazihe, Fusong County, to obtain provisions.

Cao Guo-an told me that he had been deeply moved by their story. He had thought: While the others win victory after victory even with a newly-organized division, why should my unit fight a hard battle each time? Why should we leave for the north of Huifa every summer in a mechanical way, although we suffer a considerable loss of our force at each expedition? We might be able to draw a lesson here.

He had held a consultative meeting of the leading officers, where they had discussed several measures for ensuring a decisive turn in the military activities of the unit, including the implementation, as early as possible, of joint operations with my unit. The common view had been expressed at the meeting that joint operations would enable them to develop their strategy and tactics and accumulate useful experiences. The main proponent of this proposal was Song Mu Son and the most active supporter was division commander Cao Guo-an.

The division had left Dadonggou, Huadian County immediately in the direction of my unit. Presumably, they had fought battles not worth fighting, even though they had undergone severe difficulties. On hearing the trials and sufferings they had endured, I felt they were not their own trials and sufferings.



*Photo: Lee Hong Gwang. The Japanese mistook him for a woman and he was famous as a 'female' commander.*

In actual fact, the 1st Corps of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army, also called the south Manchurian guerrilla unit, was a major neighbor of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army along with the guerrilla unit in northern Manchuria. Since the first days of the anti-Japanese war, we had displayed great concern in the development of the guerrilla unit in southern Manchuria and exerted tireless efforts to effect a joint struggle with them. We had also dispatched many excellent Korean cadres there, who had been seasoned and trained in guerrilla warfare in eastern Manchuria. In one effort in this direction, on our expedition to southern Manchuria in summer 1932, we tried to join hands with Lee Hong Gwang and Lee Tong Gwang, by sending our representative to them. However, to our deep regret, we could not realize joint operations with them.

In the days, prior to the meeting in Nanhutou, we attached considerable importance to the cooperation with the guerrilla unit in northern Manchuria. This was why we had made expeditions on two occasions into northern Manchuria. We had conducted joint operations with the communists there and allied operations with the Chinese anti-Japanese units. Although it had caused heart-rending losses and sacrifices, cooperation with them demonstrated its validity.

Admittedly northern Manchuria was geographically nearer to us than southern Manchuria, when we fought by relying on the guerrilla base in Jiandao; northern Manchuria was located over a mountain.

In the latter half of the 1930s, when we began to fight with west Jiandao as a new theatre of our activities, southern Manchuria became nearer to us in geographical concept than northern Manchuria. The gun reports we raised everyday in the southwestern area of Mt. Paektu whetted the desire of guerrilla units in southern Manchuria to achieve cooperation with the People's Revolutionary Army as early as possible. The formation of an alliance with these units was an urgent and long-standing issue, which brooked no further delay. Cao Guo-an's division can be called the first one we carried out joint operations with on a division level, after our advance to Mt. Paektu area.

As in eastern and northern Manchuria, the guerrilla struggle in southern Manchuria had been pioneered and led by the communists and revolutionaries of Korea. In the national composition of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions of the 1st Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army active in southern Manchuria, the Koreans occupied the majority. Most of military and political cadres, excluding Yang Jing-yu, Wei Zheng-min and Cao Guo-an, were Koreans.

In a rally held in Jirin in December 1945, Zhou Bao-zhong made the following speech: The stalwart east Manchurian guerrilla army, set up in 1932 and the Panshi, Zhuhe, Mishan, and Tangyuan guerrilla armies, formed in 1933, were all organized by Korean comrades and the revolutionary Korean masses; later they developed into several corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. There were many excellent Korean comrades in the 5th Corps; the military and political cadres at all levels of the allied army, from corps commanders and political commissars to platoon leaders and instructors in each corps, included many Korean comrades.

The Panshi guerrilla army he mentioned is the south Manchurian guerrilla army, the predecessor of the 1st Corps of the allied army.

As reflected in the conventional name, the Panshi guerrilla army, the cradle of the guerrilla struggle in southern Manchuria, was Panshi area.

Apparently, when the Party Committee of Panshi County was formed, it registered 40 Communist Party members, who were all Koreans. Lee Hong Gwang organized the first armed unit with less than ten Koreans; this unit was the parent body of the south Manchurian guerrilla army. The first members of the south Manchurian guerrilla army, formed with 30 men, were all Koreans as well. Most of the heads of the Anti-Japanese Association, Women's Association, Children's Van-guards and Peasants' Committees, formed in Panshi guerrilla base, were also Koreans. Koreans played the role of pioneer, hard core and helmsman in pioneering and developing the guerrilla movement in southern Manchuria.

Cao Guo-an's division also included a great number of Koreans. The majority of the commanders, including Song Mu Son and Park Sun Ii and many from the rank and file were Koreans. This basis was to facilitate their joint operations and struggle with us.

The Korean communists in southern Manchuria dealt heavy military and political blows against the Japanese imperialists via direct relations with us or through their independent judgment, decision and

action. At times they would cross the Yalu and raid the enemy on the Korean shore of the river.

The first half of the 1930s was a period, when we were making frequent inroads into the homeland from eastern Manchuria. The small units of the People's Revolutionary Army raided Onsong County alone on four occasions in one month in January 1935. When the units entered Namsan-ri, Woipha-dong, Seson-dong and Misan-dong in Onsong County and had engagements with the enemy troops and police, the newspapers published in Seoul reported that a great force of guerrillas had raided Onsong, Hunyung and other areas in North Hamgyong Province.

In May 1935 a unit of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, after conducting political work among the masses in the area of Nongsa-dong, Samjang Sub-county, Musan County, fought a gunfight with the Japanese police on their heels, in the vicinity of Damalugou, Antu County in China, dealing them a telling blow.

Lee Hong Gwang, who had been compensating for his nostalgia, by fighting on the shore of the Yalu, availing himself of our inroads into the homeland, which had been becoming more and more frequent with each passing year, led his unit across the river and attacked Tonghungjin, Huchang County. On the night of February 15, 1935, three small units of the 1st Division, 1st Corps, led by him, encircled Tonghungjin and raided a police station and financial cooperative with two light machine-guns at the head of the units; this took the enemy aback.

Embarrassed by repeated inroads into the homeland by the People's Revolutionary Army, the enemy shouted that these were unprecedented events in the history of defending border areas.

How could the units in southern Manchuria, which had distinguished themselves at home and abroad with their raid on Tonghungjin, suffer such setbacks as those experienced by the division commander Cao Guo-an? I did not know why, but I felt upset when I saw his haggard face.

Heaving a heavy sigh, resembling a man who had given up everything, and rubbing his face with both hands, he said:

"I recently came to the conclusion that the development of joint struggle with my neighbors constitutes the only way for us to exist. I learned this lesson too late.

Frankly speaking, I regret slighting the relationship with your unit in the past, Commander Kim."

"Comrade Cao, please take a good rest for some days in our unit and recover your strength. As the saying goes, there is always a way out. We are only human beings, not God; we are apt to make mistakes. There is no need to fear temporary setbacks."

I told him about the trials we had undergone on the Heights of Luozigou when the whole of my unit had been in a critical situation, confronted by potential annihilation owing to hunger, biting cold and the

enemy's encirclement, as well as the first expedition to northern Manchuria, when we had been rescued from another unfathomable crisis caused by the cold I had caught, the heavy snow and enemy's dogged pursuit, with the help of benefactors.

The first problem, raised by the sudden, unexpected influx of many guests concerned their board. I ordered the commanding personnel of my unit to vacate the log-cabins, our men had been living in, for the sake of our guests, and make preparations for them to sleep in tents around campfires. No sooner had I issued the order than our men vacated their log-cabins, built campfires and set up tents; their uncommon, swift workmanship aroused the admiration of the guests.

My men included masterly builders of campfires. They had invented an exquisite method for building fires with logs and propagated it throughout the unit. The method was quite simple and yet queer. They piled up the logs, cut appropriately in equal length in the form of a pyramid, 5-6 logs on the first layer, 4-5 logs on the second layer, and 3-4 logs on the third layer, and put dry twigs, as kindling on the last layer of 2-3 logs; then they lit the twigs. When the campfire was lit in this way, it lasted for a long time and the wet logs burned well like dry ones without any crackling. It produced great heat to everyone's delight.

The soldiers of the 2nd Division wondered at first, if the logs could catch fire, as they were set afire in that way. But when they saw how the logs piled up in the form of a pyramid soon became blaze, they only exclaimed in wonder.

Like his men, Cao Guo-an could not hide his admiration.

"Some time ago I met Wei Zheng-min in Manjiang. Do you know what he said to me?" he asked, with a meaningful smile on his face, keeping his eyes on the fire.

"What did he say?"

"That I should learn before anything else how to build a campfire, when I go to your unit, Commander Kim. The way you build it is quite extraordinary."

The most conspicuous impression he had got in my unit was from campfire and log-cabins. He confessed frankly, that he had become aware for the first time in our secret camp that his unit could live on without difficulty, even deep in a mountain or in the wilderness, if they had campfire and log-cabins.

Next day I instructed some carpenters, skilful in building log-cabins, as well as the 4th Company, 7th Regiment to build in one day quarters for exclusive use by the 2nd Division during their stay in our secret camp, so that they would not feel awkward. The master hands at building houses in our unit felled trees and erected a big and neat log-cabin in one day. The men of the 2nd Division helped their work with animation.

On learning that such secret camps had been set up in various places of the woods on Mt. Paektu, Cao

Guo-an again became envious. He recounted that they had so far put up only at dwelling quarters, as they had thought that they could not stay in such no-man's land as Mt. Paektu and that they had hardly lived in a secret camp on the mountain. He continued that they had lodged separately in dwelling houses on their last expedition to the area on the north of the River Huifa.

As they had their "own house" in our secret camp, I ordered Kim Ju Hyon in charge of supply work, and Kim Hae San, to provide them with adequate provisions and kitchen utensils for their life and dozens of suits of uniform kept in the warehouse of our unit. The distribution of uniforms was not finished to the satisfaction of all, owing to the lack of some outfits, but as the sewing unit led by Park Su Hwan had worked in a crash drive, burning the midnight candle, the remaining soldiers could throw their shabby summer clothes into the fire on the next day. Although not a boisterous well-doing, we showed our decorum as a host.

We organized bathing and hair-cutting for the 2nd Division. In those days we used a large pot for boiling water to take a bath in the secret camp in Heixiazigou. Oh Jung Hup and his men had brought that pot after raiding a felling station in Hengshan; it had been used in the station for boiling cattle fodder. This pot was used very effectively. After improving their appearances, we gave them each a set of toiletries and a few packets of cigarettes.

Cao Guo-an called on our Headquarters and expressed heartfelt thanks on behalf of his unit. He said that he felt very guilty to receive only kindness in every particular, when they had come empty-handed and that they were at a loss as how to repay that kindness.

I replied, "It is never a debt of gratitude, for we are neighbors fighting for a common objective and ideal. If we had gone to your unit as guests, you might have accorded us such treatment. Don't think that you are receiving kindness from the other unit. You may presume that you are staying at your relative's. If you are so eager to repay our kindness, please tell me during your stay in our camp about your interesting life experiences."

He was afraid that, as a novice from the ivory tower, he had no life experience great enough to arouse my interest. There was only uncommon thing worth mentioning, he said: It concerned the knowledge he had acquired in his days in Shandong military and political academy and he would tell it to me, if it would be of any help to me.

Later on he gave lectures on several occasions to the commanders of my unit, on the tactics of regular warfare. The lectures were very profound. His lectures served as a considerable asset for understanding in depth the regular warfare tactics, employed by the enemy and completing the guerrilla tactics of our own style to cope with them.

In exchange, we told the commanders of his unit, the commanders and political instructors of the company and higher levels, about the guerrilla warfare experiences we had accumulated. As our story was woven with experiences of actual fighting, the guests from southern Manchuria heard it with relish.

I stressed to them the need to pay particular attention to loving people: We must bear in mind that the people are our strength, wisdom, and life and soul; we therefore must trust them, learn from them, rely on them and fight by drawing on their efforts; to be placed under their obligation, we must be loved by them and for this purpose we must love them in the first place; if a soldier does not hesitate to impose burdens on them, on the plea that they are living in a place he would leave behind after a night's sleep, they will regard him as a nuisance; when he lays his hand on their property and does them harm, the consequences will be irredeemable; if he loves them as his own flesh and blood, they will follow him on their own, and such a soldier will surely always be victorious.

During their stay in the secret camp in Heixiazigou the men from southern Manchuria inspected on several occasions study sessions, meetings, military drills and other daily programmes of our unit. Their reaction was very favorable; they unanimously exclaimed that it was right when others called it a student unit.

Cao Guo-an said sincerely that, accustomed as he was to roaming to areas north and south of the River Huifa like duckweed, he had not thought of building secret camps and realizing self-reliance, by basing himself on the camps and had not intended to set up a network of underground organizations in the area of his guerrilla activities, with the secret camps at the center, to expand and develop the struggle, by relying on the base comprising the secret camps and the network of underground organizations.

One evening, as he walked with me in the forest, after enjoying our unit's recreation party, he said, "Commander Kim, your unit is an army in all aspects. I can now understand why your unit wins victory after victory."

Our comrades-in-arms from southern Manchuria made persistent efforts to acquaint themselves with the daily routine of our unit. They adopted our daily routine and studied and performed exercises as we did. During their stay in our secret camp, they reinforced their unit and acquired a more rigid discipline, renovating their appearance.

"It seems that the time has come for us to fight big battles through the cooperation between our two units. Let us smite in a united effort the enemy, running amuck for 'great winter punitive operations'. Taoquanli and other areas in Changbai and Linjiang Counties have a sound mass foundation. You can obtain active assistance and support from the underground revolutionary organizations we have set up there, and thereby replenish your ranks quickly with excellent young men. When our two units conduct a war of attrition, displaying firm unity on both sides, we will be able to achieve a great result in battles, I think."

Cao Guo-an readily accepted my proposal. We decided to carry out joint operations whenever they seemed necessary.

The comrades-in-arms from the 2nd Division were very regretful to leave our camp. The commanders and men of my unit were also so sorry that tears welled up in their eyes. Before parting, Cao Guo-an requested, "Commander Kim, will you give me one of your men as my orderly?"

I found myself in the same position as I had been in northern Manchuria when Zhou Bao-zhong had requested me to send him Korean officers and men. On his request a large number of Korean officers and men, including Park Rak Kwon, Jon Chang Chol, An Jong Suk and Park Kil Song, had been dispatched from eastern Manchuria to the unit in northern Manchuria.

"I am grateful that you trust my comrades so much. Do you maintain any special relations with Koreans?"

Cao Guo-an replied, "Nothing special, but I have become attracted to Korean comrades, since my acquaintance with Lee Hong Gwang and Lee Tong Gwang. The people in Jiandao might not know fully, how we were filled with admiration when Lee Hong Gwang annihilated Shao Ben-hiang and his ilk."

Shao Ben-hiang was an evil, high-ranking officer of the puppet Manchukuo army, who had been killing people at random and plundering them in Liuhe County, like Lee To Son in Antu and Commander Wang in Fusong.

Lee Hong Gwang had smashed this unit in the areas of Sanyuanpu, Gushauzi and Liangshuihezi in Liuhe County. After annihilating Shao Ben-hiang, Lee Hong Gwang had rescued Yang Jing-yu, by displaying audacity and quick wits, when the headquarters of the 1st Corps had been surrounded by the enemy's large force near Liangshuihezi. Since then Yang Jing-yu and other cadres of the 1st Corps had loved him very much, regarding him as their savior and a symbol of bravery. Cao Guo-an told me that he could not find words to describe how the corps commander Yang and all the other officers and men of the 1st Corps had grieved for his death in battle. I decided to comply with his request.

"There is a machine-gunner I have favoured since my days in Wangqing, but I do not know if he will be acceptable to you. Kang Jung Ryong is his name. A platoon leader and machine-gunner, he is a very strong man."

I discovered that Kang was an old acquaintance of the division commander and Song Mu Son, organizational section chief of the 2nd Division. So we agreed to assign him to the 2nd Division.

On knowing this measure Kang insisted that he would not leave me; but on becoming a soldier of Cao Guo-an, I learned that he fought bravely as leader of the machine-gun platoon guarding the headquarters of the 2nd Division.

Later Cao Guo-an's unit conducted brisk military and political activities in the areas of Changbai and Linjiang Counties. Immediately after leaving our camp they went straight to Taoquanli and, after spending about a week there, replenished their ranks and searched for a suitable location for a secret camp with the help of the underground organization. At that time I issued a written order to Kjm Jae Su to activate the lower organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland to render them proper assistance.

Subordinate organizations of the ARF had been formed in many villages in Xiagangqu including Taoquanli and had given the guerrillas active assistance. These organizations were brought into action and rendered sincere help to the 2nd Division. Thanks to their support, the unit from southern Manchuria succeeded in the battle against the Jingan army unit which had swarmed into Taoquanli.

On receiving from the local people information about the enemy's movement one mid-November day, 1936, the headquarters of the division decided to attack the enemy by ambush at night and laid an ambush before dusk along the road in Taoquanli, where a fort stood. Their ambush position was only ten meters away from the last house standing at the end of the village.

Entering the village, the large enemy troops dragged the people out of the houses and forced them to reveal the whereabouts of the guerrillas. Although they knew that the guerrillas were lying in ambush within a stone's throw, the villagers feigned ignorance. They deserved gratitude. Had the secret been revealed through a moment's mistake, the whole village would have been avenged mercilessly; in this critical situation they did not divulge the whereabouts of the guerrillas at the risk of their lives.

Thanks to their self-sacrifice, the 2nd Division scored a great result in the ambush that day. Next day, on the information gained from the people, they opened concentration fire at the enemy, who were coming in a convoy of 20 trucks to collect the bodies of those killed the day before, making them shudder with terror.

After reinforcing his unit and achieving a great battle result in Taoquanli, Cao Guo-an sent me a letter, stating that he had already begun to feel the worth of his stay in the secret camp in Heixiazigou, that he could not forget my favor and would send me only happy news in the future, as well.

Unfortunately, he never realized his dream. During their advance towards Linjiang, the 2nd Division came across the enemy near the timber mill in Qidaogou, Changbai County; at this battle the division commander Cao received a fatal wound. He entrusted Song Mu Son with command of the unit for the time being and, at a safe place with his bodyguards, had his wound treated. However, a renegade reported his whereabouts to the enemy. To capture him alive, the enemy encircled his place on all sides. His bodyguards fought a life-and-death battle to rescue the division commander. Despite their desperate efforts, Cao Guo-an was killed, after receiving many bullets in his body.

When I received news of his death, I was reminded of his words.

"When decisive operations for liberating Korea begin in the future, Commander Kim, please call me. Then I will come to your side, leading my unit."

This is what he had said when parting from me. However, he could not keep that promise. He was killed in action, to our profound regret, without seeing the liberation of China, his beloved motherland, not to mention the liberation of Korea. I regretted this.



It was early in 1937 when Park Sun Il, head of the munitions section of the 2nd Division, visited our camp bringing with him a letter, reporting the death of the division commander. Writing without any reserve on his sadness about the loss of the division commander and his puzzled, impatient mind on how to command the unit in the future, Song Mu Son asked my advice on the direction of their activities.

Expressing my sympathy with their sadness for losing their commander, I wrote a fairly long letter. I stressed in particular that they should surmount in unity the crisis facing the division and that collective wisdom should be given full play in the administration of the unit. I advised Song Mu Son to build a secret camp in the mountainous area in Limingshui, as it was virtually inaccessible to the enemy; it had snowed heavily there. I also told him to focus his efforts on political and ideological work with the recruits and on their military training. Then I expressed my intention of visiting his unit after the New Year's Day on the lunar calendar.

Visiting them as an ordinary condoler and tendering my condolence was a duty and obligation I had to fulfill as a comrade-in-arms who had maintained extraordinary relations with the deceased during his lifetime. My visit, when they had been bereaved of their division commander, could prove a comfort and support for them.

As promised, I went to them after the battle at Hongtoushan. On our way, we fought a battle at Taoquanli and, staying a night at the village of Simenkaiting, dispatched reconnaissance parties to the upper reaches of Limingshui and Badaogou.

Immediately after receiving news about our arrival at Simenkaiting, the comrades of the 2nd Division rushed to the village at night, skipping their supper. I was reported of their arrival in the small hours. I called for Kim Ju Hyon and ordered him to prepare rice-cake soup for the guests; then I went outside with my orderly to greet them.

As I greeted them from a distance, the commanders rushed to me and encircled me ring upon ring. Their skins were so frozen, that I felt as if a large piece of ice had touched my cheeks whenever I hugged them.

Song Mu Son, the acting division commander, did not let my hand go, until we reached our quarters.

"Thank you, Comrade Commander. We are grateful for the encouragement you have given us when our unit is faced with a grave crisis. "

"I scarcely deserve such a praise, Comrade Song. Am I not too late?"

As in the past, he expressed extraordinary intimacy towards me that day. As I had treated Cao Guo-an, he treated me as a man, hailing from his hometown.

He had been engaged in the youth movement in a rural village called Wulihezi near Jirin, before joining the anti-Japanese armed struggle. Lee Tong Gwang had once directed the youth movement in Wulihezi.

Under his guidance, Song Mu Son and other young people there had organized Hyoksin Youth Association, and rallied young people behind this organization. In those days youth organizations, with such names as the Sinhung Youth Association and Jonjin Youth Association, had been active in Yongji County area. Song Mu Son had been a member of the organizational committee of the Hyoksin Youth Association. In spring 1928 the association had been reformed into the Anti-Imperialist Youth League by Lee Tong Gwang and later into the Young Communist League.

When we conducted the struggle against the railway project between Jirin and Hoeryong and against Japanese goods, the youth organization in Wulihezi had gone on a sympathy strike. The period when Lee Tong Gwang led the youth movement in Wulihezi coincides with the period when I guided the youth and student movement in Jirin.

Song Mu Son criticized some of the cadres of Jongui-bu, whenever he recollected his days in Jirin. When I reprimanded him that one had no right to accuse our forerunners, who had been making considerable efforts for independence, he replied burning with rage that he would feel improper if he did not go further. I asked him what made him think ill of the cadres of Jongui-bu. By way of an answer, he recounted a Jirin area meeting held early in 1928 at the initiative of Jongui-bu.

Apparently Song Mu Son had taken part in the meeting as a representative of Wulihezi. The meeting had also been attended by representatives of Shuanghezhen, Jiangdong and Xinantun. The item of the agenda was the collection of compulsory money. That day Ko I Ho had made a violent speech on behalf of Jongui-bu. He had threatened that they would even collect the money by mobilizing soldiers, as the people under their jurisdiction were not willing to pay. His speech had engendered a squabble between the sponsors and representatives. Song had made a rebuttal speech on behalf of Wulihezi. Owing to this speech he had been beaten after the meeting by the terrorists, dispatched by Ko I Ho, and fallen unconscious.

Song Mu Son was well aware of the terrorism Kukmin-bu had perpetrated in Wangqingmen. I exchanged with him my opinions of O Tong Jin, Hyon Muk Kwan and Ko Won Am. Every minutest detail of our life in Jirin had been reminisced. During his stay in the secret camp in Heixiazigou we talked a great deal about our days in Jirin.

But here in a farmer's house in Simenkaiting we did not talk about those days. We only recalled Cao Guo-an, the division commander, and discussed the destiny and future of the division.

We treated the men from the 2nd Division to rice-cake soup. A Chinese officer known as a glutton, ate three bowls of the soup, saying that he only celebrated New Year's Day that day. I was told that they had missed lunch, as they had been chased by the enemy on their way back from the raid on the timber mill in Gaolibuzi.

At dawn the commanding personnel of our unit and the 2nd Division held a meeting on joint operations in the battle on Limingshui.

I had guessed from my many years of experience that the enemy would pounce upon us around that day noon. To attract the enemy's attention, I had ensured that traces leading to Limingshui had been left behind. The enemy from Erdaogang would inevitably enter the valley on Limingshui. Furthermore, the enemy from Badaogou would probably swarm there, as the comrades of the 2nd Division had come to Limingshui, after an engagement with the enemy at Gaolibuzi.

The confluence of Beishuigu and Limingshui was the most suitable place for ambushing the enemy, pouncing upon us from both sides. I had already chosen that place, when we entered the valley of Limingshui.

I informed those present at the meeting about my view of the enemy's planned intentions on that day and stressed the need for both units to jointly lead the ambush, in order to smash the enemy's large troops. I emphasized that, as the victory of an ambush largely depended on stealth, we should have breakfast before daybreak to advance to the ambush place, and that, after the units had occupied their positions, nobody should produce smoke, talk, cough, desert his position or fire without any order. I also explained in detail what and how to shout, to agitate the enemy during the battle and also how to deal with the prisoners of war.

This was followed by the assignment of combat tasks to each unit. The information from our reconnaissance revealed no particular change in the enemy's movements. On my proposal the two units, ready to start, gathered in one place and held memorial services for the division commander Cao Guo-an. Song Mu Son and I made speeches in his memory.

Limingshui is a river, which flows to the west from the watershed on Sidengfang Mountains in Changbai County and joins Badaogou River. Simenkaiting was a village situated on the upper reaches of this river. About six kilometers down the river there was a village of about 15 slash-and-burn Korean peasant households. This was Limingshui village.

The units occupied their positions before daybreak and dug out trenches. The steep slopes around them were covered with deep snow and the Limingshui was iced over. It was bitterly cold, but the spirits of the combatants soared. Having heard that battles commanded by me always ended in victory, the comrades from southern Manchuria predicted from the moment they had received the combat order that the battle would be a great victory.

I deployed the main force on a mountain ridge near a confluence of the river. The ridge with dry fields reclaimed from wasteland was convenient for firing down on the valley. I located the command at the center of the ridge and deployed in ambush the 7th Regiment and the guard company of my unit in front of the command, the 8th Regiment on the left and the 2nd Division on the right.

I made sure that a shock force of 60 to 70 valiant fighters lay in ambush on a low ridge across the valley. The high mountain standing opposite those two mountains was steep and covered with thick woods, which the enemy could not escape through. The ground opposite the position, where we were lying in

ambush, was flat and about 100 meters wide; it was a suitable place to mow down the enemy through concentration fire.

To keep watch on and contain the enemy from Erdaogang and Badaogou, I dispatched an interception party of one squad to each direction. The relay post, used to receive flag signaling from the interception parties, was placed on the mountain at the back of the command. The combatants, lying in the trenches, waited for the enemy; however, it did not turn up until lunch time.

"They aren't coming?" Paek Hak Lim, bored, asked me in whisper, his teeth chattering. "Don't be so impatient. They will come for sure."

Frankly speaking, I, too, was shivering with cold and my teeth chattered.

The combatants took out frozen corn cakes and ate them lying on the snow. For lunch I ate a frozen corn cake Paek Hak Lim took out of his knapsack. It was so cold that our hands would stick to the frozen iron when we touched it. The enemy did not appear until after 2 p.m. It is not easy to lie on the snow in the biting cold of February for 8-9 hours, not just 1 hour. But we had to endure hardships worse than this to gain victory. If they suffered mortal defeat in that place, the enemy would not dare provoke us any more.

It was around 5 p.m. when a signal of the enemy's appearance was transmitted from the interception party on the southeastern hill in the direction of Badaogou. I saw through binoculars that an advance party led by a puppet Manchukuo army officer was marching ahead followed slowly by the main column commanded by a Japanese instructor.

I sent my orderly to each unit again with the message that I would allow the advance party to pass through and only give the firing order, when the tail of the main column entered our ambush range and that no one should fire at will.

On the appearance of the enemy, the weather became inclement. The sky became dark with inky clouds. But for the snow, the desolate land might have been plunged in dead darkness. The cold north wind from the river blew against us. The enemy could not open their eyes fully owing to the snowstorm.

As soon as the main column of the enemy entered our ambush range, I fired a signal shot. At last 400 rifles and several machine guns let loose our indignation. Then I told Han 1k Su to blow a bugle ordering our men to charge. The enemy were, figuratively speaking, like a rat in a trap.

The battle results were excellent; we killed or wounded over 100 enemy troops, made two companies surrender and captured 150-odd rifles, including three light machine-guns, and a large amount of ammunitions. Only the scouts in the front of the column could save their lives.

While we were mowing down the enemy from Badaogou, the enemy from Erdaogang, scared at the uproarious gunshots ringing from the valley, stopped marching in front of the mountain ridge, where our

interception party was deployed. The interception party hailed fire at the crowded enemy, who were hesitating about what to do. The enemy fled, leaving behind their killed and wounded colleagues.

I made sure that the wounded enemy soldiers were carried into the households in Simenkaiting, given medical treatment and meals before being returned to their homes with unhurt POWs. As far as I remember, at this time the well-known anecdote occurred, the anecdote about a POW from the puppet Manchukuo army, who said that he should be treated as a meritorious man for helping the guerrillas, as he had offered six rifles to us, having been captured by us six times.

Owing to the battle on Limingshui, the enemy in Badaogou lost their main force for the "great winter punitive operations". Their much-vaunted spirit of annihilating the guerrillas flagged and all their talk about "great winter punitive operations" ended in nothing. In the long run, we put an end to the enemy's "'great punitive operations", through the victory in the battle on Limingshui. This battle awakens exceptional memories. The men of the 2nd Division fully recovered their spirit. I stayed with them to provide necessary advice on the future activities of the division and discuss with them the best ways of protecting themselves with the help of the ARF organizations in Taoquanli and Tianshangshui.

As I had instructed, they set up a secret camp deep in a valley in Taoquanli and spent quiet days, until the advent of warmer days, while conducting political studies and military drills. I was told that the underground organization in Taoquanli provided them with large quantities of supply goods, such as cotton cloth, hemp-cord sandals and long padded socks.

Around mid-May, when new grass was coming up, I held a reunion with the 2nd Division on a hill a little way to the west of the village of Limingshui. Having spent their time in comfort in a secret camp, they all looked healthy and sound.

Nevertheless, I was embarrassed by the fact that the Korean comrades in the division would not leave me. They called on me and beseeched me to allow them to join my unit.

I only managed to persuade them, when my throat had become hoarse: When we formed an allied army with the Chinese comrades, we considered that it would be more advantageous to win the support and assistance of the Chinese people, than fight with an army of pure Koreans; although your unit belongs to the 1st Corps, please regard it as a detachment of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, as more than half of its force are Koreans; if all of you join my unit, who will fight with the enemy on all sides?; we can successfully fight against the enemy in Mt. Paektu area, only when the 1st Corps, including you, fight with the enemy in southern Manchuria, the 4th Division with the enemy in eastern Manchuria and our comrades in northern Manchuria with the enemy there; unless you detain them in every corner, they will all attack the main unit to wipe it out; that is why we are sending excellent military and political cadres we have trained with so much care to the guerrilla units in northern and southern Manchuria and yet you insist on going with us; how embarrassing it is!; we have left even our parents, beloved ones and children to win back the country, so let's put personal feelings to one side and concentrate on victory in the great anti-Japanese war; after winning back the deprived country, let's live together, looking back on these days with pride.

To be frank, I sent reinforcements to the comrades in southern Manchuria to help them whenever they requested; I did this on more than one occasion.

The people we had sent to southern Manchuria were, without exception, stalwart, brave men. Lee Tong Gwang and Lee Mm Hwan had also been selected in eastern Manchuria and dispatched to southern Manchuria. As Cao Ya-fan, who was entrusted with the heavy duty of division commander in March 1937 succeeding Cao Guo-an, was so envious of Kim Thaek Man, my orderly, that I sent Thaek Man to him.

Son Yong Ho, who was chief of the general affairs section of the 1st Corps, had been, since his days in Jirin Normal School, my friend and a member of the Ryugil Association of the Korean Students I had organized. He had a special aptitude for music and sports. He was well-built and looked handsome; so he had commanded great popularity among the girls in Jirin.

He had been a member of the normal school team in high jump and a violinist. Later he had been associated with the Young Communist League, before being arrested by the police; he had experienced hard times in Sinuiju prison for some time. After his release, he had striven to transform Wulihezi, Yongji County, in a revolutionary way and had the following year gone to Panshi County in southern Manchuria to work as editor-in-chief of the Anti-Japanese Youth Daily, the organ of the county Party committee. Since the winter of 1937 he had worked as head of the general affairs section of the headquarters of the 1st Corps.

I saw him again at Nanpaizi in winter 1938. At that time he was very glad to see me and said that he wanted to be beside me. But to my regret, I received a sad report three or four months later that he died a heroic death during a battle near Fuerhe.

I displayed the most concern to the 2nd Division, 1st Corps, in southern Manchuria, which was active in an adjacent area. They visited us at the time of joint celebrations of the guerrillas and people to commemorate victory in the battle at Pochonbo (June 4, 1937) and shared the joy with us. The battle on Jiansanfeng (June 30, 1937) was fought through cooperation between the 4th Division and the main unit led by me, and the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps.

The 2nd Division of the 1st Corps, as well as my unit, conducted a joint struggle for some years in the southwestern area of Mt. Paektu. One can sometimes find enemy police documents and newspapers in the latter half of the 1930s carrying my name and Cao Guo-an's side by side; this should be understood as a reflection of the history where the revolutionaries of Korea and China launched, shoulder to shoulder, the thorny path of joint struggle and joint operations.

Whenever I look back on the days, when our revolutionary struggle was winning one victory after another, I am reminded of the comrades-in-arms in the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps; the intimate faces of Cao Guo-an, Song Mu Son and Park Sun Il. The mere mention of their names stirs up my deep

emotions, as they appear before my mind's eye through the snowstorm.

## 14.5. Samil Wolgan

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Throughout the passage of time man has always acknowledged the impact publications have on human life. Some people even assert that the whole world, apart from some uncivilized countries, was dominated in the past by a few volumes of books. History has already proved the great role played by publications in transforming and developing society. I think it is no exaggeration to say that, as long as man moves the world, he will be motivated by publications by conscientious intellectuals, who speak in the name of justice and truth, as well as by the pioneers of the times.

We refer to such a publication as an educator, propagandist and organizer of the masses. A revolutionary publication can also be called an excellent means, linking the leader, party and masses by a single tie.

When publishing the newspaper Iskra, Lenin gave its first issue a banner headline, "A spark will flare up." This aphorism aroused the sympathy of the whole world. The spark mentioned in the banner headline later flared into the flames of the October Revolution and spread throughout Russia.

I can truly say that publications exerted a great influence on me along the road of revolution.

There is another world-famous proverb. "The pen is mightier than the sword." When we published Saenal, Bolshevik and Nong-u, we realized the real worth of publications and pinned as much hope on those publications as on the rifle or sword.

A publication is a powerful weapon in the revolutionary struggle. The range of this weapon is infinite.

When we made an appeal from Mt. Paektu through such publications as Samil Wolgan and Sogwang, not to forget the motherland and compatriots in the homeland, it was heard by the guerrillas and people in northern and southern Manchuria. There is probably no other form of propaganda and agitation in the world more powerful than publications in their ability to quickly disseminate among millions of the masses the same ideology and fight slogans at the same time, rally them and give them organizational and ideological training.

During the anti-Japanese armed struggle, our men used to call oral propaganda "mouth gun", propaganda through art performance "drum gun" and propaganda through publications "brush gun" or "letter gun" in a plain language.

Oral and artistic media have a relatively quick effect and strong appeal, compared to the message of a book. However, the latter has a lasting effect and is free of geographical limitations.

As the enemy was gagging the press and resorting to bayonets and truncheons to suppress, without exception, any words and actions they considered "seditious", the organizational and propaganda



activities, aimed at providing unified leadership to revolutionary organizations, had to be conducted in a secret, illicit manner. This situation compelled us to seek the form of propaganda and agitation most suitable for guerrilla warfare, and pay due attention to firing the "brush gun", which we thought the best means. Consequently, after the establishment of the Paektusan Secret Camp, we set up a printing shop there and started publishing Samil Wolgan, the organ of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

At the time of founding the ARF in Donggang, we also discussed the launching of its organ. To unite the masses from all walks of life in the anti-Japanese national united front and develop the great anti-Japanese war by nationwide efforts, we had to make effective use of the "brush gun" in particular, along with the "mouth gun" and "drum gun".

Our political activities for the national united front in the first half of the 1930s had assumed by and large regional characteristics. Our effort for the united front had not gone beyond the bounds of Manchuria and the northern area of Korea in most cases. However, the ARF had planned to fly the flag of the anti-Japanese national united front in the whole of Korea, China proper, Japan, the Soviet Union, the United States and all other places overseas, where our compatriots were living.

For this purpose, we frequently dispatched our operatives to various places, albeit in limited numbers to our regret. As we left in northern Manchuria quite a few military and political cadres experienced in the united front movement in eastern Manchuria in the early days of the guerrilla struggle, we experienced a dearth of workers.

Publications provided an important way of compensating for the shortage. I was sure that if a paper loved by the masses was published skillfully and distributed here and there, each issue could take the place of an operative.

But we were unable to start publishing the paper in time for inevitable reasons. We had fought many battles and moved frequently in those days. We had always been surrounded by the enemy and had been forced to march dozens of miles a day carrying loads on our backs. The enemy had not permitted us any time to launch a publication.

Only once the Paektusan Secret Camp was built and a printing shop was set up there could we start the Samil Wolgan, the magazine of the ARF. The Samil Wolgan was a popular political and theoretical magazine, aimed at contributing to the ideals of the ARF to win national independence, by mobilizing the 20 million compatriots.

After racking our brains to choose a title appropriate to the mission of the ARF, we chose Samil Wolgan.

Samil (March 1) referred to the anti-Japanese March First Popular Uprising. The uprising was a momentous independence movement of the Korean people, who offered nationwide resistance against the Japanese aggressors.

Therefore, the title, Samil Wolgan, incorporated the will of the nation. It represented our strategic intention to adhere to the Juche line of the Korean revolution and, based on Mt. Paektu, expand and develop the armed struggle throughout Korea, and also signified the launch of an all-out resistance through the general mobilization of the whole nation.

Although Samil Wolgan was launched as the publication of the ARE, it also assumed the function of the mouthpiece of the Party Committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and at the same time assumed and fulfilled the mission of a popular political magazine, serving the whole country. Therefore, it had to be a pan-national magazine read and loved by the soldiers of the KPRA and the communist revolutionaries, as well as the national bourgeoisie, religious believers and the soldiers of the Independence Army.

We organized the editorial staff of the Samil Wolgan mainly with members of the Secretariat and appointed Lee Tong Baek, owing to his journalistic experience, as editor-in-chief.

Under the charge of Lee Tong Baek, the editorial staff began preparing the first issue. They debated in detail the direction of editing and practical matters for publishing the magazine. They studied the publications from the homeland in depth to explore the ideal journalistic style.

In those days bans or suspensions of newspapers and magazines were widespread in the press world in the homeland. Magazines, imbued with the slightest patriotic elements, were all suppressed and banned and there were few magazines to refer to.

The editorial staff studied some magazines from the homeland for reference purposes only, with no intention of copying or making them their standard. They always explored everything in a fresh and creative way.

We decided to make the Samil Wolgan a popular political and theoretical magazine, imbuing its content with the idea of patriotism and great national unity, and featuring an editorial in each issue. We also decided to establish regular columns for news of the independence movement of our nation, victories from various parts of the anti-Japanese national revolutionary front, questions and answers, major national and international events, literature and art.

The manuscripts would be obtained mainly from the writing staff in the KPRA unit the Secretariat belonged to, and also through other units of the KPRA active in various places and ARF organizations. To collect manuscripts, we appointed special correspondents of the magazine in important places in eastern, southern and northern Manchuria and encouraged contributions from a wide range of subscribers.

Lee Tong Baek thought about ways of making the editing of the Samil Wolgan a concern of the readers themselves, enabling the people from all strata to write for the magazine regularly and offer advice to

help enrich its content and steadily improve its editorial style. After an earnest discussion he worked out rules governing contribution.

I read the rules and found them very interesting. Everyone would on reading them feel like taking a pen and writing something at a stretch, even if he had little literary talent. The rules said, at the heading, that contributions would be welcome, to obtain sound arguments and excellent views from patriots from all strata, and then defined the number of words according to the manuscript content, the method of contribution, preferential treatment for enthusiastic contributors and other details.

We sent down the rules through organizations and introduced them in the first issue under the caption, Contributions are welcome. Soon after the rules had been sent down, a great amount of writings were contributed from various places. I can still see clearly the old man "Tobacco Pipe", who was beside himself with those contributions. I, too, read nearly all the manuscripts with delight.

In a congratulatory message, the chief of staff of Yang Se Bong's Independence Army expressed its hearty welcome for the founding of the ARF. The news of the meeting between Lee Tong Gwang, representative of the ARF in southern Manchuria, and Park, representative of the compatriots residing in Shanghai, was also quite impressive.

The representative from Shanghai, who had worked for independence for some years in Beijing, Tianjin and other places in China, came to southern Manchuria, on hearing of the founding of the ARF and proposed the formation of a united front at home and abroad on the axis of the ARF, the article read. This provided an excellent occasion to expand the organizations of the ARF in the vast area of China proper. Soon after receiving the manuscript, we dispatched a skilful political operative to Lee Tong Gwang.

In this way the editorial staff of the Samil Wolgan, in its preparations for the magazine, played the role of communications section, rendering a direct contribution to expanding and developing the network of the ARF.

A letter sent by a district committee of the ARF, while making a congratulatory banner to encourage the KPRA, also included a moving story. It read, "Out of heartfelt sympathy, we patriotic compatriots each contributed one or two Jon or one won from our humble purses. The total sum gathered so far in this way is 8 won 71 Jon, which is too small to buy other military supplies. Therefore, we decided, with the unanimous opinion of all patriotic compatriots, to make a congratulatory banner and send it to you....

I ensured that all letters, overflowing with sincerity, were carried in the inaugural number.

As the manuscripts he had been fretted about, during preparations for the publication of the magazine, had appeared in plenty, "Tobacco Pipe" worked with great animation. One day he came to Headquarters, beaming with satisfaction, and produced a dozen sheets of blank paper in front of me, saying, "Manuscripts are ready except the inaugural message and the editorial, which are most important and must be prepared before we start compilation. I am afraid that you will have to write them as the

Chairman of the ARF. Here is the paper."

"Then what will the editor-in-chief do? You mean that I must take your place when you, a renowned writer, are still alive? No, I can't do that. The editor-in-chief must write the inaugural message."

Partly, as I was under the pressure of work, and more importantly because I wanted to give that faithful literary man, who had gone through so many ordeals, an opportunity to give vent to his pent-up sorrow of national ruin and shout to his heart's content the passionate words he had been wanting to say to his 20 million compatriots, I entrusted the inaugural message to him.

However, I volunteered to write an editorial under the title Recollections of the March First Movement. As I was faced with a great deal of pressing business, I could not finish the manuscript quickly enough. When I happened to find time to write it, I received a report that an enemy spy had been captured or that an enemy "punitive" force was swarming into our secret camp; I had to go out onto the battlefield.

I missed most of all in those days Kim Hyok and Choe Il Chon. Kim Hyok, the editor-in-chief of the Bolshevik, and Choe Il Chon, the editor-in-chief of the Nong-u, who had been my bosom friends in my days in Kalun and Wujiazi, had been talented writers, forming two pillars.

The writings of Kim Hyok, a poet, had been vigorous and passionate, like an overflowing, great river, whereas those of Choe Il Chon had been highly intellectual and keenly analytical, as well as rich in national tone. Kim Hyok had occasionally edited in the Bolshevik revolutionary songs he had personally written and composed. I still recall, of his works in the Bolshevik, Curse to the Capitalist Society and Anti-Factionalism. The former was a song, which criticized scathingly the exploiters, expressing hatred for the capitalist society, while the latter was a satirical song, which sharply exposed the true color of factional flunkies, who attempted to found a party with the help of others, carrying seals engraved in potatoes.

Had Kim Hyok and Choe Il Chon been alive, they would have been extremely helpful to "Tobacco Pipe".

As I had done with the scripts of The Sea of Blood and The Fate of a Self-Defense Corps Man, I had to write the inaugural documents of the ARF and the editorial on the March First Movement during any spare time between fierce engagements with the enemy.

The most difficult problem remained even after the last stage of the preparation for the publication of the first issue of Samil Wolgan: the acquisition of printing equipment. At that time we had only one old mimeograph. We also lacked ink, roller, stencil and paper.

The workers of the printing shop solved the shortages by themselves. When ink was running short, they burned birch bark under a hood made of tin-plate and scraped the soot gathered on the plate. They left the soot immersed in oil and mixed it with ink manufactured in factories, before using it. When the roller was worn out, they boiled a mixture of glue and resin and poured it into a mould to make a roller; when

the stencil pen became dull, they made it with a matting needle.

Their strenuous dedication to the Samil Wolgan deserves prominent mention as a prototype of self-reliance and fortitude.

Their efforts bore fruit at long last. The inaugural number of the Samil Wolgan was published on December 1, 1936.

That day "Tobacco Pipe" brought me the first copy of the inaugural issue and said, "If there is anything worthwhile I have done in my fruit-less life, it is the publication of the Samil Wolgan. Although you are busy, General, please listen to the first cry of the Samil Wolgan."

He passionately read out loud the first part of the inaugural message:

"Ever since our Korea has been occupied by the brigandish Japanese, and the ruined 23 million white-clad nation became the slaves of Japanese imperialism, our life and human rights have become worse than those of dogs or hogs."

The Samil Wolgan evoked a splendid response soon after publication. The response of the guerrillas and people to the inaugural issue was great. ARF organizations in various places sent us messages, congratulating the publication of the Samil Wolgan and written requests for increased circulation. Some people subscribed for the next issue on behalf of their organizations.

When we were trying to find ways of obtaining the equipment, needed for publishing the Samil Wolgan, after making a list of the necessary items, Park Tal obtained two new, highly-efficient mimeographs from a man studying in Japan. I was told that they had brought them on a cart as far as Kapsan by concealing each of them in potato sacks from the railway station in Tanchon, where the mimeographs had arrived, and had taken them to Ophung-dong, the seat of the printing section of the national liberation union, late at night, after lying in hiding for a whole day on a mountain, owing to strict police surveillance.

Park Tal had intended to send both of them to our secret camp. But I instructed that we only receive one of them and that the other be left at Kapsan for the printing of the mouthpiece of the Korean National Liberation Union. The union was publishing its mouthpiece under the title of Hwajonmin (slash-and-burn peasants).

The mimeograph was very efficient. As it was several times as efficient as the old one, we could publish hundreds of copies for succeeding issues.

The popularity of the Samil Wolgan exceeded our wildest hopes. In my opinion, the readers were keen on the magazine, because the style of its edition was fresh, but mainly because its content was permeated with the idea of a national united front. In other words, the magazine reflected most keenly and impeccably the historic task facing the nation. It was up to the Korean revolutionaries, first and foremost,

to counter the fascist offensive of the Japanese militarists by rallying the people from all walks of life solidly behind the anti-Japanese national united front in preparation for a popular resistance.

The publishing of Samil Wolgan occasioned rapid expansion of the ARF network. The number of volunteers for the People's Revolutionary Army and supporters and sympathizers for our cause quickly increased. Even the gunners of the "brush gun" were amazed at its effectiveness.

Park In Jin once said to Kwon Yong Byok that the Samil Wolgan had been extremely helpful in embracing all the Chondoist believers in the area north of the Machon Range in the network of the ARF within a short period of time.

The man, who rendered the most distinguished service to publishing the magazine was, needless to say, Lee Tong Baek. He had taken much trouble when the ARF had been formed; however, his work here is incomparable to his efforts to start and publish the magazine. He literally lived his remaining days with Samil Wolgan.

In my life of 80 years I have never seen a man, who economizes on paper like Lee Tong Baek. He kept even a piece of paper as small as a tree leaf and put it to effective use, by writing fine characters on it when needs be. When he saw a man rolling tobacco on a blank paper where letters could be written, he would scathingly criticize him for wasting paper. He always smoked with a pipe. Apparently he began pipe smoking to avoid wasting paper. Whatever the motive, his pipe did indeed enable him to save much paper. Otherwise, he might have wasted thousands of pieces of paper in his lifetime.

Lee Tong Baek, editor-in-chief of Samil Wolgan, wrote a diary; he never missed a day, collected with assiduity documents within his reach and kept them carefully in his knapsacks, saying that he should write the history of our anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, when the country was liberated. He was killed in the secret camp in Yangmudingzi in a surprise raid by an enemy "punitive" force.

The enemy shot "Tobacco Pipe", along with the weak and old, who had failed to escape, and set the secret camp on fire. A great number of documents, photographs and diaries he treasured were all burned away with his body.

The thought of the historical documents, which he regarded as the most precious present he could make to the liberated motherland, reduced to ashes in an instant, still rankles in my mind. If only his diaries could be found in his big knapsacks, how glad our younger generation would be!

When I went to the secret camp in Yangmudingzi later, I recovered his remains at the site of the burnt straw-thatched cottage and buried them in person. But I failed to find the pipe he had loved so much in his lifetime. As everything burned to ashes, nothing remained as his memento in this world. Only one thing remained uncharred of the outstanding, old revolutionary intellectual: his unfading image enshrined in the memory of anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans.

A few years ago the trees, bearing slogans he had written, were found when the Paektusan Secret Camp was explored. I felt as if I were seeing once again the editor-in-chief of the Samil Wolgan and therefore stood in front of them for a long time. Lee Tong Baek was one of the most conscientious, revolutionary and well-informed intellectuals I met in the days of the anti-Japanese revolution.

The progressive representatives of intellectuals in all nations and ages have played no small role in social revolution and transformation. The role played by Korean intellectuals in the development of the revolutionary movement in modern days is very great. Despite their various limitations, they rendered contributions to the national liberation movement and communist movement in our country through different channels and methods.

Lee Tong Baek was one of them. He was a representative of the revolutionary intellectuals who, after treading the most general and universal path, which could be traversed by intellectuals in our country in the 1920s, joined the ranks of the armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists. He had been an irresolute, wavering intellectual and became a true revolutionary intellectual serving the most active armed resistance.

Kim Yong Guk was another literary man in the publishing circle in the KPRA in the days on Mt. Paektu. He joined our unit through the good offices of Park Tal and Lee Je Sun, after working in a Red peasant union in the homeland.

As a soldier, he was not ranked A category; however, he was a talented individual with an unsurpassed writing ability. Seeing his stencil writing, everyone would exclaim that it looked like typescript. He used to write a dozen stencils in one night and yet his writing was regular as if it had been typed; this always earned him praise from "Tobacco Pipe".

Liberalistic tendency and forgetfulness could be called his fault. He was so forgetful that on one march he left his rifle at a spot where we had a break, and went on another eight kilometers, before remembering it and going back to pick it up, saying, "How forgetful I am! My rifle!" He was severely criticized and punished.

When the punishment was removed, I asked him, "Your rifle is as dear as your own life and you have left your life behind. How can you write with such an absent mind?"

Kim Yong Guk replied brazenly, scraping the scruff of his neck, "Almost all the world-renowned literary giants were so forgetful."

"Tobacco Pipe" and I burst into laughter at his reply.

A passionate writer, Kim Yong Guk would write a poem or a story, whenever he had a spare moment. Several of his works were carried in Sogwang, the newspaper we launched in 1937 as the mouthpiece of the KPRA. I still have a dim memory of the words of a song comprising four or five stanzas, carried in

the first number of Sogwang, which read in part, Other woman's man went to the revolutionary army and my man went to the Self-Defence Corps. Publishing the text of the song, he stated that it should be sung to the tune of Arirang.

The second, third and fourth issues of Sogwang carried in a series a short story he had written. He was editor-in-chief of Sogwang. The young and talented writer was shot by a sharpshooter of an enemy "punitive" force in autumn 1938 when he went with Kim Ju Hyon to collect honey for the weak and wounded, and departed our company so early to our regret. Sogwang, a weekly political paper, carried on many occasions materials for political and military study of the guerrillas. The Tasks of the Korean Communists I had written was also carried in the weekly.

Another conspicuous man among the zealous writers for Sogwang was Lim Chun Chu. Lim actively helped Kim Yong Guk edit and publish the weekly.

Jongsori (The Bell Tolls?Tr.) was a weekly paper of the KPRA, launched at the beginning of political and military studies in the secret camp at Matanggou. It mainly carried materials, which would help political and military studies and moral education. Choe Kyong Hwa was editor-in-chief of Jongsori. Although he had not received higher education, he managed the publication of the weekly in a skilful way, although this was a difficult job. I think he was successful, because he had always studied hard to acquire a multilateral education. In the days at his hometown he had studied a guide to university education on his own.

No one found his stories tedious, even if he had heard him telling them the whole day. Even a dime novel which readers would use to read themselves to sleep, became a masterpiece once recited through his mouth. The art of speaking was his greatest talent and fortune. Consequently we persuaded him to make speeches for agitation on many occasions. The audience would hang on his lips.

Choe had been deeply engaged in a student and youth movement in his hometown, before taking refuge in Changbai from the pursuit of the enemy. In Changbai he had been absorbed in mass enlightenment as teacher at a village school. Needless to say, he soon had joined the ARF. After establishing contact with the organization, guided by Kwon Yong Byok, he had worked as chief of the organizational section of the party branch in Shiqidaogou and as political worker in charge of the Songjin (Kimchaek City) area; as he could not continue underground work owing to a momentary blunder, he had joined the guerrillas.

When he joined, the women guerrillas all whispered that a handsome man had joined the unit. But I was charmed by his talent and personality more than by his appearance. He was unusually talented, with distinct literary and drawing ability. Most of the illustrations carried in Jongsori were drawn by him. He was a lecturer at political study sessions and a fighter in the vanguard of battle. During the battle of Jingantun in early 1938 he volunteered for the charging party and achieved a breakthrough in the enemy's defense. At that time he was fatally wounded and breathed his last.

I grieved over the loss of such an excellent comrade-in-arms as Choe Kyong Hwa the whole night,



writing the memorial address in tears. We held a solemn ceremony in his memory in the bitter cold.

Choihyol (Iron Blood), the mouthpiece of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, was a weekly paper in the form of a field bulletin, it was launched in anticipation of large-unit circling operations at the end of 1939. As such talented writers as Lee Tong Baek, Kim Yong Guk and Choe Kyong Hwa had already passed away, we had to assign its editing and publishing to beginners.

With a view to training him on the job, I entrusted Kang Wi Ryong with the task of publishing Choihyol. Kang was in charge of the party branch and youth league in Headquarters. At first he declined, asking me to give the assignment to another person as he could not handle this task. However, he was compelled to receive the assignment and did the work pretty well with the help of his comrades.

Like Samil Wolgan and Sogwang, Choihyol was dedicated to editing positive materials. Typical materials introduced Lee UI Sol and the battle story of a recruit, who had captured a Czech-made machine-gun of a new model by killing the gunner with a bayonet; they were carried in the first number of Choihyol.

Towards the end of political and military training in the secret camp at Baishitan, we instituted a system of conferring a red sash of honor to young guerrillas, who distinguished themselves in battle, in order to encourage bravery and boost morale among the young guerrillas. Soldiers, who were conferred the sash, would wear it on holidays or on an auspicious day of special importance for our unit.

The special issue of Choihyol, published on the occasion of the review of the study, carried articles on the review and news of the institution of a new system of commendation, inciting the interest of its readers.

In this way our revolutionary publications were not only an excellent source for propagation and educator of the reader masses; they also inspired the soldiers to heroic exploits, helped them in the struggle and acted as an intimate companion in their daily routine.

Samil Wolgan and other publications we put out during the anti-Japanese revolution featured the most important characteristic; they were not published under the auspices of a few talented people, but were instead written, edited and printed with the active participation of a broader readership.

As in all other undertakings, we regarded it as an iron rule to enlist the masses and rely on them to launch publications.

As far as I recall, this happened when we were staying in Nanpaizi.

One day, while taking a stroll in the secret camp, I found a woman soldier sitting alone in the forest and writing something on a book with all her heart. She was so absorbed in her work that she did not notice my presence; she was writing the letters with much difficulty, wetting the lead with the tip of her tongue.

When I asked what she was writing, she answered that it was propaganda material for some rural villages.

I was much surprised to read what she had written. It was quite a liberal and polished style for a drop-out of a primary school. The material titled Appeal to the Korean Youth in Manchuria was logical and its argument was convincing. So I touched it up a little and made sure that it was carried in Samil Wolgan. Apparently the magazine had a considerable impact on the readers.

In this way even an ordinary cooking-unit soldier, who had not attended primary school properly, became a contributor to our publications. Thanks to the active participation of the masses and their support, we were able to publish such publications as Samil Wolgan, Sogwang, Jon gsori and Choihyol, in difficult conditions, where we had no source of regular supplies, and we laid a solid foundation for the traditions of revolutionary publications. Our country today has instituted a system of conferring the Samil Wolgan Prize as the highest award on officials in the mass media, who have rendered distinguished service. Had Lee Tong Baek been alive, the No. 1 prize would have been conferred on him.

I want to ask mass media staff not to forget the first generation of the revolutionary publishing circle, who have passed away without even being conferred a medal.

## 15.1. The Indomitable Fighter, Park Dal

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Park Dal never wore military uniform and never fought together with me in the same unit. I met him only a few times in Mt. Paektu area. He came to see me several times, but missed me on a few occasions, as I was absent.



*Photo: Park Dal (Park Tal).*

It is not easy to understand a total stranger inside out after only a few interviews. However, as the saying goes, even a great wall can be built in one night; my first meeting with him considerably deepened our mutual understanding.

Park Dal, like Lee Je Sun, was a man of integrity; he was not infected with any unsound trend despite the rough and tumble of life. He never belonged to any faction and was never haughty, adopting the air of an ideologist. Park Dal did not resemble Kim Chan and An Kwang Chon, the demagogues I had met in Jirin.

He was simple and good-natured like mountain folk, but was also good-mannered and well-informed. At the very first interview I could easily see that he was a man of weight. He had his own critical view of the various movements of the past and also displayed concern on how to shape the nation's future. He had been to Hungnam, Tanchon and Jiandao in search of a leader who would break the outdated methods of the movement.

While Park Dal was groping for his leader, we were taking every effort to find capable revolutionaries in the homeland.

We set ourselves the following major strategic tasks to carry out the Juche-orientated line of the Korean revolution: To build in the homeland a reliable secret base, which would serve as strategic guidance for the armed struggle and the political struggle as a whole and prepare a strong political and military force for the earliest possible mass resistance to liberate the homeland by our own efforts.

The creation of a strong political force in the homeland meant expansion of the ARF network and unity of the broad patriotic masses from all strata of society under the banner of the anti-Japanese national united front and, at the same time, the establishment of a strong network of party organizations in the homeland and the preparation of an elite force, capable of leading the anti-Japanese revolution to a great upsurge, centered round the armed struggle. This was, in effect, the key to our success in all political and military activities on Mt. Paektu.

Our struggle to expand and develop the revolutionary movement in the homeland did not start from scratch. In the homeland certain organizational foundations existed, which could serve as our foothold for developing the revolution, as did political forces hardened by Japanese military and police repression.

Labor unions, peasant unions and other mass organizations of different classes, which had sprouted throughout the country like bamboo shoots after rain, the tested fighters who would lead these organizations in the anti-Japanese struggle, the masses of people who had been trained, seasoned and grown stronger in repeated failures, twists and turns, the lessons of struggle, which were recorded with heart-rending sorrow and tears of blood, whenever they experienced frustration and loss - all these served as reliable assets for further developing the revolutionary movement in the homeland, based on the new strategy and tactics.

Respecting the successes and experiences gained in the revolutionary movement in the homeland, reorganization of previous movements and their development as required by new circumstances - such was our attitude and policy towards the revolutionary movement in the homeland.

Since the late 1920s and early 1930s we had dispatched excellent political workers, who were trained in the DIU and the Korean Revolutionary Army, to the northern border area and deep into the homeland, to ensure that they made some advance preparations for laying political and military foundations.

Any promotion of the revolutionary movement in the homeland onto a higher stage required a full-blooded political and military advance into Korea of the KPRA, which emerged as the leading force of the national liberation movement and communist movement of Korea, as well as its positive support for the struggle in the homeland.

In actual fact, the revolutionary movement in the homeland, which had experienced repeated failures and frustrations, was awaiting a new line and leadership. The top echelons of the movement were confused, owing to factional strife. However, the progressive elements, rank and file were ready to risk their lives in support of a new line and leadership. The fighters, who had been enthusiastic about rebuilding the party, were groping for a solution, reflecting in prison and the underground on their failures.

We had to take practical measures, which would meet such requirements. The foremost measure involved unification of the anti-Japanese armed struggle and the revolutionary movement in the homeland. In other words, it meant realizing our leadership to the revolutionary movement in the homeland. To this end, we had to find stalwart revolutionaries like Lee Je Sun, and quickly expand through joint efforts with them the ARE network and rouse the whole nation to the sacred anti-Japanese struggle.

Park Dal was the right man on the list for the task.

Lee Je Sun had recommended Park Dal to me.

"Park Dal is a man who can stand even on the edge of a sword, if he believes he is acting for the right cause. He is also an excellent theoretician. In an argument with a pompous thinker from Tanchon with bouffant hair, he humbled that man. If we want to control North and South Hamgyong Provinces, we must see him."

I was very pleased to hear this. But I could hardly believe all he said before I met Park Dal. How often we were disappointed with famous men, whom we had met, after hearing about their high reputation!

Many famous people, whom I had met regardless of their ideas and principles, had no definite views of their own and lacked originality both in thinking and practice.

Park Dal was not a first-rate figure, unlike An Chang Ho, Kim Jwa Jin, Lee Chong Chon, O Tong Jin, Son Jung Doh, Sim Ryong Jun, Hyon Muk Kwan, Hyon Ha Juk, Ko Won Am, Kim Chan, An Kwang Chon, Sin Il Yong or So Jung Sok whom I had met in Jirin. He attracted only the attention of the local police or secret service at best.

However, such a simple man as a woodcutter became a great man, who rendered distinguished service to our revolution, as well as my intimate friend and comrade, whom I still recall. Lee Je Sun said that his real name was Park Mun Sang. His neighbors used to call him Park Dal, because he was as hard as a birch tree, so Park Dal became his nickname and later on his formal name.

Park Dal was born in Toksan Sub-county, Kilju County, North Hamgyong Province. Apparently his family was not poor, judging from the fact that his father owned a sardine factory in Myongchon, but he was merely a primary school dropout. He married at the age of eleven and at sixteen got a job with his father's factory as a salaried accountant. No doubt his father wanted him to be a self-made man at a tender age.

He was so ashamed of his early marriage that he could not tell his friends about it. If he found his wife alone at home, when he came home for lunch, he just walked up and down the room, without daring to ask her to serve him a meal. His father was manly and kind-hearted, but he liked wine and women and kept a concubine. Apparently Park Dal's mother was left out in the cold by his father and he sympathized with his mother very much.

"I hate most of all a man with a concubine," said Park Dal one day. "I experienced the bitterness of polygamy, perceiving the agony my mother was suffering under the roof of my father who had a concubine."

He said that it was a laudable event that we abolished the polygamy system after liberation.

The misfortunes his mother had suffered owing to the polygamy system constituted the cause of his life-long bitterness. Learning a lesson from the life of his mother, who had hardly enjoyed the love of her husband and led a lonely life, Park Dal was unfailingly loyal to his wife, who was five years older than

him, avoiding drinking and any relations with other women.

Next came stingy fellows: Park Dal hated all stingy fellows regardless of their sex, job and position.

"Whenever I see a miser, I lose my appetite for the whole day."

When I met him at Juul (Kyongsong) in 1957, he had recovered his health to such an extent that we could chat like this. Listening to him, I perceived that he disgusted individualism and egoism more than anything else.



*Photo: Park Dalh in chains.*

He was a man of great benevolence. In plain words, he was overflowing with kindness. In every potato harvest season, he invited passersby to his house. He stimulated their appetite by saying that this year potatoes were as delicious as honey. And he told them to come and taste them tugging at their sleeves. He used to tell his wife to make potato-cakes and send them to his neighbors, who had not cultivated potatoes.

I think that if a kind-hearted person like Park Dal had been rich, he would have become a great philanthropist. He was poor, but he spared nothing for his neighbors.

After primary schooling, Park Dal taught himself classics and lecture courses for secondary school. His diligence in studies is fully attributable to the fact that he read Tongui Pogam while serving a prison term as a crippled man in Sodaemun prison.

The policemen were surprised during a search of his house, following the "Hyesan incident". They discovered a heap of socialist books such as Ten-Point Program of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, Inaugural Declaration of the ARF, The Fundamentals of Socialism, The Theory of Social Evolution, The Basic Knowledge of the Colonial Issue, Proletarian Women's Movement, Declaration on the Struggle against Unemployment, A Dictionary of Socialism, Wang Ming's Speech at the 7th Conference of the Comintern, The 15th Anniversary of the Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, Theses on the Korean Issue and The Basic Knowledge of a Party Member.

His house was full of nothing but books.

When I met him first, Park Dal said that he had learned nothing particular and was extremely ignorant. He asked me to teach him all the basics, as if he were illiterate, but this was merely an expression of his modesty; in fact, he was considerably well-informed about the revolutionary theory of Marxism in

general. However, he did not flaunt his knowledge and did not try to outrival others with knowledge. Moreover, he had no ambitions to assume "leadership". He was a frugal man lacking all worldly and social ambitions. I think this reflected the inherent nature of Park Dal as a true man, real patriot and genuine revolutionary.

He always considered himself a student and consequently expected someone to lead him forward. While organizing the Kapsan Working Committee, he limited its range to a local area of Kapsan and clarified its tentative character through the name of the working committee. The committee started its work on the premise that, if the Korean Communist Party was founded, it would obey the party and change its name as it deemed appropriate. Park Dal organized the Kapsan Working Committee with the intention of launching a movement within the local area by his own efforts, pending the emergence of a leader, who would direct the anti-Japanese struggle.

His efforts to organize the Kapsan Working Committee did not go smoothly. In those days, some people engaged in the social movement in that area capitulated, afraid of military and police repression. They justified themselves by trying to attribute their acts to the absence of a central body of the party.

"We should not," they claimed, "stimulate or encourage the anti-imperialist struggle, which is occurring spontaneously in Kapsan County. We must wait until the Korean Communist Party is organized and advances a new line and leads the struggle in Kapsan, based on that line. Such actions indicate loyalty to Marxism and Leninism and respect of centralism."

Park Dal criticized such attitude as an escape from the revolution. He said that they should transform the spontaneous grouping in Kapsan into an organized movement and try to make it a nationwide movement and that when the Korean Communist Party is founded, this would provide a favorable condition for the party leadership to direct the struggle in that area. The Kapsan Working Committee was organized through an uncompromising struggle against those who were sitting idle, merely waiting for a favorable opportunity or trying to escape from police surveillance to other areas to save their own skins.

To protect the Kapsan Working Committee from possible enemy suppression, Park Dal named its subordinate organizations differently, for instance, Political Fellowship Association, Advance Association and Anti-Japanese Association. To enlighten the masses, he did not hesitate to exploit such government-approved organizations as the Promotion Association and Self-Defense Corps. When night school, athletic meetings, morning exercises and the like were organized in the name of these organizations, the policemen, who did not know the truth, were satisfied, thinking that the country folk in Kapsan were becoming loyal imperial subjects.

Every time he convened a meeting of the heads of the subordinate organizations of the working committee, held once a month, he organized a football match. They gathered people and started the game, and then did all they had to do behind the scenes, holding meetings and giving assignments to their members. Ancestral sacrifices, marriage ceremonies, birthday parties and sixtieth birthday parties were also used as opportunities to hold a secret meeting of members and heads of the organizations. The use of

legal events provided favorable conditions for camouflaging the organization and making its activities more vigorous.

Working committee members worked skillfully with Japanese policemen and their stooges to exploit to the full the possibilities of lawful activities. On the instructions of the working committee, most of its members entered Japanese-patronized organizations and the lowest administration bodies, working there as "activists".

This constituted a very daring new approach, compared to the ways of the Singan Association<sup>16</sup>, the general federation of labor unions, the youth union, the Red labor union and Red peasant union, which had adopted an openly hostile attitude of unconditional confrontation with the Japanese army, police and their stooges.

Such camouflage tactics, which were gentle in appearance but sturdy in spirit, introduced by Park Dal for the first time among the fighters of the homeland, yielded great results.

Pretending to obey the enemy meekly, while serving in their police stations and Self-Defense Corps or working as village head, district head and other important posts of government and public offices, the Rural Promotion Association, fire-fighting team, school cooperation and forestry cooperation were good in many aspects - in disarming the enemy ideologically, collecting information about the enemy, breaking up the forces behind the enemy and drawing them to our side and preventing the enemy from initiating the people.

Park Dal was an excellent revolutionary, who was chairman of the Kapsan Working Committee and in charge of political and dispute departments of this committee. He also openly held important posts in enemy-controlled public bodies. He was vice-chairman of the Rural Promotion Association in the First District, Sinhung-ri, Pochon Sub-county, head of Ilsin Village School Association of the First District, vice-commander of the Self-Defense Corps and fireman of the fire-fighting team, Taeosichon-ri, Unhung Sub-county.

The very fact that 63 people of the first batch of those to be imprisoned on charge of involvement in the "Hyesan incident" were Self-Defense Corps members, indicates how flexibly they used Japanese-patronized offices and organizations. These people included individuals, who held different posts such as head of the general affairs section of the Promotion Association, head of five families of the Self-Defense Corps, a councilor of the forestry cooperation, a member of the highland agriculture guidance section, general representative of the slash-and-burn field surveying, trainee of a short course for elite youth, a member of the educational affairs section for village schools and councilor of an intensive-course school.

Deftly combining such legal methods with illegal struggle, the Kapsan Working Committee advanced the slogans to suit the reality of rural communities, that is, a reduction in farm rents, the free reclamation of slash-and-burn fields, and the rejection of labour draft, usury and compulsory cultivation of flax and



wheat, and launched dynamic struggles to materialize these slogans.

They seemed to be engaged exclusively in economic struggle; however, the rejection of the compulsory cultivation of flax or wheat was a serious political slogan. The peasants of Kapsan area opposed the cultivation of flax, because this crop was used as a raw material for the production of munitions. They frustrated flax cultivation by boiling their flax seeds before planting or spoiling the crop, planting them sparsely, so that they shoot out many stalks and branches.

Lee Je Sun's recommendation was enough to convince me of the need to join hands with Park Dal.

We discussed how to meet him and appointed Lee Je Sun as the liaison man responsible for contacts with the homeland.

Lee Je Sun carried out his assignment promptly. A messenger conveyed Lee's report that Park Dal asked us to send a KPRA representative directly to him. For some reason, he did not come straight to the secret camp to see me, although he welcomed our interview. On the basis of this fact, I believed him to be a prudent revolutionary. His caution and carefulness fanned our confidence and curiosity in him.

We needed a sincere, self-possessed and prudent revolutionary. rather than a frivolous thinker, who cools down as quickly as water boiled in a small pan or is swayed by every wind.

In accordance with his request, we dispatched Kwon Yong Byok, an experienced party worker, to Kapsan. At that time I sent the following letter to Park Dal through Kwon.

To my comrade patriots in the homeland who are fighting Japanese imperialism

Comrades who are fighting in the homeland the Japanese imperialists, our villainous enemy! We are fighting, arms in hand, the Japanese and Manchukuo armies and police in the wilderness of Manchuria, in order to liberate our country.

We sincerely want to join hands with you and pour all our strength in the struggle against Japanese imperialism to liberate the fatherland.

I send our representative directly to you, hoping that you will have a frank discussion with him.

Yours sincerely

Kim Il Sung

When Kwon Yong Byok was going to Kapsan, Lee Je Sun accompanied him. As I recall, they met Park Dal in December 1936. Through Kwon, Park Dal learned that the Association for the Restoration of the

Fatherland had been founded. Kwon also explained to him the major activities of the KPRA.

Apparently Kwon had a great impact on Park Dal, who had ardently hoped to have relations with us. On return Kwon said that Park had the nickname of "blank look", because he did not show his feelings easily, but he had nearly wept for joy on reading my letter.

"He suggested an immediate interview with you, General. He said that if you would allow him, he would come any time."

His report whetted my desire to see him. I decided to meet him in our secret camp and instructed Kwon Yong Byok to take the necessary measures for the interview.

Park Dal, on his part, made preparations to visit me. This meant arrangements to cross the River Yalu safely. The bloody atmosphere in those days made it almost impossible to cross the river illegally. He mulled over ways of crossing river, and then called on policeman Kim at the police sub-station in the village of Khunungdengi, under the jurisdiction of Hyesan Police Station.

"Mr. Kim, have you heard any news about Changbai?" Park Dal asked, as if something awful had happened. Kim and the other policemen looked, wide-eyed, at him.

"What news?"

"As the bandits frequent Changbai area, many people are moving to other places, selling their cereals at low prices, I was told. I must buy a few cartloads of beans to earn some money. Please issue a pass for me to cross the river, if you also want to benefit from the deal."

The policemen, listening to him with relish, agreed, asking him to bring some beans for them in exchange for the pass. He got the pass more easily than he had expected. In this way, he crossed the River Yalu safely and came to Lee Je Sun's house.

It was nearly dawn when Lee arrived with Park Dal at Headquarters.

As Lee had said, Park looked ill-balanced for the small head on his broad shoulders. He did not stand out and resembled a rural woodcutter. I thought that Lee had described him correctly. However, I felt his eyes had a rare quality, when he was looking at me. "I have been anxious to see you, General."

These were his first words of greeting; although simple, I could feel his true heart. I don't know why, but I was moved by his blunt words.

Ever since imprisonment in Kilju, he had dreamed of a meeting with us, he said. He appeared in Kilju to expand the organization, while avoiding enemy surveillance. As he was working in the construction site of a paper mill, he was arrested by the police and imprisoned. One day he found in a bundle of waste

paper a newspaper, which carried an article about our unit's defeat of the enemy, after advancing to Changbai area. Since then, he had always thought of us. After release from prison, he came to Kapsan. To get in touch with us, he went on a peddling tour, visiting most of the villages on the River Yalu.

"Indeed, it is a great fortune for me to meet you General."

Overjoyed, he grasped my hands again and shook them enthusiastically.

"I am also glad to meet you, Comrade Park Dal. You are the first representative from the homeland to visit us, since the Korean People's Revolutionary Army's advance on Mt. Paektu."

"I don't think I am worthy of a representative. I am only a country bumpkin.... Champions of some causes in big towns like Kilju, Songjin and Hamliung didn't even glance at me when I was there."

He seemed to be trying to behave like a "Kapsan country bumpkin". But I found great character in his modesty.

"There is no reason why only big towns should produce a great man. I have heard from Lee Je Sun that the Kapsan Working Committee did a lot of work in the anti-Japanese patriotic cause. The presence of people in their right minds in the homeland provides great encouragement to us.'

I offered a cup of hot water, telling him to warm himself, but he only sipped a little, hastening to report the situation in the homeland. He was an admirable man, full of ardor. My talks with Park Dal started in real earnest in the following morning. This time we conversed a lot. Our talk began from Park's explanation of the situation in the homeland in those days and the movement in Kapsan area. The gist of his explanation of the homeland situation went as follows:

Things in the homeland are on the decline. Apparently, the movement for the rebuilding of the party has lost vigour and the peasant union movement is on the wane. The fighters took refuge in different mountains, unable to endure enemy suppression. Can they rise up again? No, they can't. Even if they muster courage and stand up again, they have no line. They cannot fight blindly and consequently use their brains only to sustain their lives. Some people continue their struggle with courage, but fail to shake off factional habits.

The Shanghai and Russian groups still exist and there are also the South Hamgyong Provincial group and North Hamgyong Provincial group; what is worse, in the same South Hamgyong Provincial group the Hamhung, Hongwon and Tanchon groups appeared; they are exhausting their energy, always blinkering, arguing back and forth and holding empty talks, only to confuse the masses.

"The greatest difficulty in the revolutionary movement in the homeland concerns the absence of correct leadership. In other words, there is no line capable of convincing everyone, nor is there a man who can formulate such a line. Consequently, when the peasants' uprising broke out in Tanchon, they sent a man

to the Comintern for advice and guidance, but received nothing. So whom should we turn to?"

What he meant, in short, was that the most pressing matter in the revolutionary movement in the homeland was to resolve the problem of line and leadership.

Another important issue of debate was the mission and character of the KPRA.

Park Dal assumed a serious look, begging me not to mind him asking a presumptuous question.

"Among the revolutionaries in the homeland now, rumor has it that General Kim Il Sung is a Korean, but is fighting for the Chinese revolution and that his is an army of Koreans, but belongs to the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army. How should I understand this? I want to hear your own explanation." As Lee Je Sun said, Park Dal was a straightforward man. I had to explain at length.

"It is only natural that the revolutionaries at home have such doubts, as the press calls the army under my command the 6th Division of the 2nd Army Corps of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army. However, if they consider my unit as thoroughly a Chinese army unit, this is absolutely wrong and contrary to facts. The NAJAA means, as the name shows, an allied army of various anti-Japanese guerrilla units, fighting in the northeast area of China. It comprises the Chinese guerrilla units under the leadership of the Communist Party, the Chinese anti-Japanese units of the National Salvation Army and the Korean anti-Japanese guerrilla units, led by Korean communists.

It is an international allied army united for cooperation in the anti-Japanese war. The common enemy is Japan, the common purpose is to liberate their countries, their common fighting theatre is northeast China, the friendly feelings between Korean and Chinese peoples, formed historically and the commonness of their fates - all these factors have brought the armed forces of the communists and other patriots of the two countries into an alliance.

As the allied army system is, in essence, the product of voluntary participation, the independence and originality of each national army are respected. Our KPRA assumes fully the character of the national army, which seeks national liberation and is fighting independently, concentrating its efforts on the Korean revolution, while helping the Chinese revolution under the name of the allied army.

All our compatriots in Manchuria know that our army is the national army of Korea, seeking to liberate their country and free their nation since the early days of its founding. We call our army the anti-Japanese allied army, where the majority of the inhabitants are Chinese and the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, where many Koreans live.

"Referring to the principle of one party in one country, some people Once disputed the Korean revolution, which the Korean revolutionaries were fighting for, and even tried to violate and trample upon the independent character and rights of our national army.

Afterwards, the Comintern advised us to break away from the NAJAA and fight independently, pointing out that the Koreans' fight for the Korean revolution does not contradict the principle of one party in one country. However, we decided to remain in the NAJAA. If we separated, it would weaken the Chinese people's support for us and cause inconvenience to our activities. The Chinese also did not want to divide the allied army by nations.

We can say proudly that the allied army system we maintain now is a good example of anti-imperialist joint action, as the product of inseparable relations between the comrades-in-arms of two countries, which are fighting a common enemy. As long as our right to independence is not violated and the Chinese do not refuse, we will maintain this system in future. If possible, we want to establish an anti-Japanese allied army with the Mongolian national army or the Soviet army and fight in cooperation with them."

After hearing my explanation, Park Dal smiled broadly, brightening the room.

"That means my disappointment has been unfounded. If your guerrillas belonged to the Chinese army, we wouldn't expect anything, would we? But now I feel that my courage has been redoubled!"

"Then, I am also happy. For that matter, you can trust the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The Japanese army is strong, but never invincible. We are going to expand the liberation war into the homeland, based on Mt. Paektu. The liberation of the country is only a matter of time. We are building up our strength to liberate the country. You must remember that the Kapsan Working Committee, led by you, is a part of this strength."

Another important topic of our talks concerned our united front policy and the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

Park Dal admitted the need for the anti-Japanese national united front, and expressed his full support for all the measures, which had been taken to expand and strengthen it, as well as the aims of the Ten-Point Program of the ARF. He said that in terms of the universality and greatness of its aim and its colossal force, the ARF was fundamentally different from the Singan Association or Kunu Association, former nationalist organizations, the fruit of cooperation of the left and right wings.

However, this does not mean that he supported all our measures and policies. He held a different view about the name of the ARF and some provisions of its program.

"I firmly believe that as communists we are fighting for national liberation and that our ultimate goal is to build a communist society. However, the name of the ARF and its ten-point program seem to have regressed to a nationalist level, departing far from such a communist program. In other words, I might say that only the immediate objective is exposed and the ultimate goal is abandoned."

Apparently he was afraid that we might be censured for abandoning the ultimate objective of our struggle

and had regressed to the point of adopting opportunism or compromising with a reformist movement, rather than sticking to a form of positive struggle. Apparently he was not free of a dogmatic way of thinking, as old man "Tobacco Pipe" had been in his early years.

So I explained to him: A few communists alone cannot carry out the revolution. Only when the broad masses make an all-out effort can the revolution emerge victorious. As you know, under Japanese imperialist colonial rule, not only workers, peasants and communists, but also the nation as a whole are groaning under tyranny. In this situation, we must rally all the forces interested in the independence of Korea, behind the anti-Japanese national united front.

You disagree with the name of the ARE, but in fact it is a proper name, acceptable to any strata of society. Some people now think that the name of an organization must include the word "revolution" or "Red", but this is an expression of left-wing deviation. We included the word "fatherland" in the name of the nationwide united front to demonstrate clearly that it is not an organization for any one class or strata, but rather for the whole nation.

Park Dal said that he had frequently met the people of Songjin, Haksong, Kilju, Tanchon and Pukchong to change experiences with them and that they were apparently doing underground work in a crude and rough manner. When the peasant union members gathered in a wrestling ground in Tano festival in Songjin, for instance, they made themselves conspicuous by wearing red bands around their heads and sitting in a circle, he said. In this way they displayed their difference from non-organization members. When the wrestling match proceeded unfavorably for their side, they made one player after another challenge the other side, whether or not they were likely to succeed, in order to overwhelm their opponents by numerical superiority.

When they were not a match for the other side, they caused trouble on purpose, in an attempt to demonstrate the power of the Red peasant union. Plainclothes policemen on the platform took such opportunities to mark off the hardcore members of the union and this supplied a clue for arresting its active members or detecting underground organizations.

In those days, left-wing deviations were revealed in some local areas in relation to Hyanggyo. Hyanggyo was an organization of influential people in those areas, which made sacrifices to Confucius, the father of Confucianism, and it smacked of feudalism. It granted its members the title of Jangui or Kyogam. They addressed each other Jangui or Kycgain to show their respect. Needless to say, it was not worthy of encouragement, because it boosted feudalistic Confucian morality, but there was no need to oppose it openly or try to abolish it in a day.

However, some young men, who had been poisoned by leftism, acted blindly on the pretext of opposing feudalism, burning or tearing the Jan gui hats of their grandfathers, and were therefore shamefully hit on the head with tobacco pipes by old men. Old men denounced that communists were a band of villains, who knew nothing of the three fundamental principles and five moral disciplines in human relations and ignored their elders.

Only the Japanese imperialists fished in troubled waters. When Hyanggyo made a sacrifice to Confucius, they let the county headman take part in the ceremony and bow before the spirit. They wanted to show that communists opposed their ancestors, but the Japanese government respected them. The enemy used Hyanggyo organizations slyly in this way to oppose the communist force.

"Let me remind you once again. Use of pompous words such as 'Red' or 'revolution' in naming an organization does not ensure success in whatever the organization does and does not guarantee its revolutionary character. ARE organizations may be formed under different names to suit the situation in every local area and the level of consciousness of the masses. Organizations should be built to suit reality, in such a way that workers form a labor union, peasants create a peasant union and young people set up an Anti-Imperialist Youth League or Young Communist League.

We were informed that the Promotion Association, a government-controlled organization, was formed in different places in the homeland comprising many people. If we are to win over the people from all strata of society, we should infiltrate such an organization. If we revolutionize its members working there, we can gradually change its character, in conformity with the Inaugural Declaration of the ARE, I think. What is important is not external appearance, but rather content. If an organization is favorable for our revolution, we should not be Particular about its name."

On hearing this, Park Dal showed his repentance.

"From what you said it appears that there is a problem in the mode of our movement." Through my talk with him I discovered a blind spot and limitation in the way of thinking of fighters in the homeland. The most serious mistake they had committed in thinking and practice concerned, in a nutshell, their dogmatic view of nationalist and communist movements. Their rejection of the nationalist movement in general was a left-wing deviation, inherent in the pompous communists and dogmatic Marxists, who gulped down Marxism-Leninism, instead of chewing and digesting it.

I emphasized once again that there was no greater cause than national liberation for the Korean communists and said that the communist movement could not exist apart from the nation and that such a communist movement was not necessary.

"Our concept of the nation includes workers and peasants, as well as the people from all walks of life, who love the country and nation, creative labor and the future of the liberated homeland. This is precisely the standard for the general mobilization of the nation and criterion for membership of the ARF. By this standard we must mobilize as many people as possible for the freedom and independence of Korea. The general mobilization of the nation, based on the thought that we must and can achieve the independence of the country on our nation's efforts, rather than by outside forces, is the only way of saving the destiny of Korea."

Park Dal was a man who had committed many faults in thinking and practice, but he recognized his dogmatic views liberally and accepted our principles with modesty.

I suggested that he reorganize the Kapsan Working Committee into a subordinate organization of the ARF and change its name to the Korean National Liberation Union. Park Dal readily agreed to my proposal.

We had a long discussion about the task of the KNLU in the expansion of the ARF network in the homeland and detailed ways of implementing it. We also talked, warming ourselves by the campfire built outside. During his stay in the secret camp we debated the expansion of party organizations in the homeland, support for the KPRA, infiltration in enemy organs, protection of revolutionaries in the homeland, liaison methods and place, the secret code and selection of liaison men and many other problems, and reached complete agreement in all matters.

I gained the deep impression from my interview that he was straightforward, informal and sincere in his attitude towards the revolution. He was the type of man, who unhesitatingly says that he likes what he really likes and dislikes what he dislikes. Some people often pretend to like what they hate and say that something is good, which they really think is bad, reading another's face and acting according to the circumstances. Most people should say that a thing, which is black, is black and that a thing, which is white, is white, displaying determination and courage to say only the truth, even if they may somewhat hurt other people's feelings. However, such people are few and far between. A man, who says that something black is white and vice-versa reading his superior's face or flatters him, speaking differently according to the situation, is a treacherous man and not a faithful man. Truth cannot thrive on the tongue of a treacherous man.

By contrast, Park Dal did not hesitate to say that he disliked what he really hated. Frankly speaking, I was charmed by his attitude. I think personal charm never comes from what is complicated, gorgeous, talkative and vociferous. Simplicity, plainness, artlessness and frankness are the essence of personal charm.

Jong Jun Thae, first Chairman of the State Planning Commission of the Government of the Republic, was an intellectual of petty bourgeois origin and cadre, who had undergone serious political persecution by factional elements, but always said only the truth before me. In terms of economic policy he only said what was possible and never made out that what was impossible was possible. When he was afraid that I would gain the wrong conception on production figures owing to a distorted report, he waited in my office for four or five hours to inform me of the actual situation. With his help I was able to gain a correct understanding of the whole aspect of the national economy and give a proper guidance to economic work.

In the old days, the first criterion for the selection of an official was noble birth, the second criterion handsome looks and third criterion gentle manner of speech, I was told.

Consequently, people of obscure birth, small build and crude manner of speech found it difficult to pass state examinations with honor, no matter how qualified they were. My maternal grandfather said:



"People must be promoted according to their ability and personality, not by family connections, property, appearance or manner of speech."

Park Dal reminded me of this saying. He was quite simple in appearance, but was upright, candid and artless, free of ostentation. To borrow the expression of people today, he was a man enshrined in my heart.

"Please trust me. I will fight for the liberation of the fatherland following your ideas, General, even if my body is torn into a hundred pieces. Don't worry about the Party Working Committee in the Homeland and the Korean National Liberation Union."

He said this as he left. As promised, he returned home with a cart of soybeans he bought in the Lee Je Sun's village and distributed them to the policemen.

In January 1937, the leadership members of the Kapsan Working Committee convened a meeting under the chairmanship of Park Dal to reorganize the KWC into the KNLU and adopted the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF as the KNLU programme. At the meeting, they also debated measures to implement the line of the anti-Japanese national united front.

Serious discussions were held on immediate practical matters - the expansion of the range of the organization from the Kapsan area into the province and all the country, strict precautions against the infiltration of factional elements, strict secrecy, education of members, publication of the union organ, etc.

The reorganization of the KWC into the KNLU was an epoch-making event, which was extremely significant in the history of the ARF movement. The KNLU became a springboard for expanding the ARF organizations into the homeland.

Since the reorganization of the KWC into the KNLU, a change occurred in way of thinking and working by communists of Kapsan area.

On the KNLU organ Hwajonmin, they carried articles, which explained our line and distributed them to its subordinate organizations. In Kapsan and other areas of South and North Hamgyong Provinces, our lines and policies were disseminated quickly and the ARF subordinate organizations grew rapidly. Flames of the anti-Japanese struggle rose higher than ever before.

In May 1937, I met Park Dal again. Owing to the advance of Choe Hyon's unit into Musan area, the situation in and around Kapsan became grave. The border area was rigorously guarded. This time, too, Park Dal coaxed police to allow his journey and thereby left home lawfully to visit us.

We talked long about the situation in the homeland and their work.

His report on the movement in the homeland satisfied us all. The work to expand the ARF network was making headway at a high speed, thanks to the tireless efforts of the vanguard fighters of the KNLU. The ARE network already stretched into the Kapsan area and other areas of present Ryanggang Province and far-off Songjin, Kilju, Tanchon, Hongwon and other important east coast areas. Their methods of struggle were improved considerably.

We showed Park Dal two light machine-guns we had captured in battle. I still recall him vividly as he touched them with joy.

During my interview with comrades from the homeland, I felt that they were narrow-minded; when they raised questions they considered only the internal aspect of the movement, lacking an ability to consider the matter in an international scope. Therefore I had to spend many hours to expand their views, so that they could approach the Korean revolution in relation to the international situation, ranging from our relationship with the Comintern, the Chinese and Japanese Communist Parties to international events. This was essential to invigorate their work in the homeland.

The international situation in those days was very fluid. While the Spanish Civil War raged in Europe, the occupation of Ethiopia by Italy kept Africa astir. Italy's occupation of Ethiopia was, in a sense, a greater point of issue than the Spanish Civil War. Admittedly, the Spanish war had assumed an international character, but it was merely a civil war.

However, the occupation of Ethiopia by Italy constituted a big power's aggression against a weak nation. What mattered here was that the so-called big powers, such as Britain and France, encouraged the invasion and, worse still, the League of Nations took no effective step, leaving Ethiopia to fall victim to invasion.

The invasion of Manchuria by Japan and the appearance of the Nazi regime in Germany served as the international background of Italy's brazen act of aggression. As soon as he took power, Hitler started building a great German Reich. Capitalist powers such as the United States, Britain and France entertained apprehensions about the appearance of the Hitler regime, but sympathized with his anti-communist policy and compromised with him liberally to use the German armed forces, as a bulwark against the communist forces. Encouraged by this, Hitlerite Germany annexed Saarland in January 1935 and, in March of the same year, annulled the military provisions of the Peace Treaty of Versailles. restricted its army to 100,000 soldiers, and no ship of 1,000 tons and over was allowed, to say nothing of tanks and military aircraft. However, fascist Germany unilaterally repealed these provisions and announced the "law of the organization of the national army" to effect conscription, in order to create a regular army of 36 divisions or 550,000 soldiers. Goring openly declared organization of the Luftwaffe. All these moves of Nazi Germany became a major factor in encouraging Italy's invasion.

To find a pretext for the invasion, Italy provoked armed clashes against Ethiopia. In the strained situation, where Italy was making full preparations for a large-scale military invasion, Ethiopia brought the case to the League of Nations as its member state.

However, the League of Nations neglected it. Britain and France, which had played a leading role in the league, did not want to offend Italy on the question of a colony, unless it conflicted with their interests. Ethiopia asked repeatedly for arbitration. Rumour has it that the Ethiopian Emperor appealed for help for his country, shedding tears at a session of the League of Nations in Geneva. Ethiopia even sent a note to the United States, which was not a member state of the league, requesting that it exercise its influence, but the United States, which was pursuing isolationism by enacting a Neutrality Act, was dumb to that matter.

In October 1935, Italy attacked Ethiopia without declaring war.

Despite the active resistance of the army and people, Ethiopia was defeated. The League of Nations applied no effective sanctions against Italy and connived at the supply by Britain and France of weapons to Italy behind the formally declared economic sanctions. As the saying goes, birds of a feather flock together.

The prestige of the League of Nations had disappeared.

Anyhow, it came as no surprise that the League of Nations, which had always served the imperialist big powers as their tool of aggression, should take sides with the stronger. Already in its initial stage, the league had openly supported the redivision of colonies in the form of the "distribution of mandated territories" and openly pursued an anti-Soviet policy. Men of conscience of the world still vividly remember how shamelessly the league backed the Japanese imperialists' invasion of Manchuria.

The League of Nations failed to check fascist Germany's occupation of Saarland or the armed intervention of Germany and Italy in Spain. It did not even issue a statement denouncing their aggression. The League of Nations, which had emerged as an international organization with a mission to maintain world peace, subsequently tolerated Germany's invasion of Austria and Czechoslovakia; in fact, it helped and encouraged the invasion.

The rapid development of the international situation, where the arbitrariness of the fascist and militarist forces was growing rampant, and the impotence of the League of Nations, clearly taught the communists that they should launch the struggle for national liberation independently, based on their own forces.

In the days when I met Park Dal again, the Japanese imperialists' invasion of China proper was a matter of time.

The "Huabei incident" made northern China virtually the subject of Japanese imperialism. Following the "Huabei incident", Japanese imperialism further stepped up the expansion of armament and war preparations. In August 1936, the Hiroda Cabinet defined basic national policy as strengthening Japan's position in east Asia and at the same time, extending its influence to the South Sea. It had an all-out plan to launch a full-scale invasion of China and push northward against the Soviet Union, while biding her

time to advance southward.

Park Dal and other communists from the homeland considered very seriously our appraisal of the international situation.

On the premise that the Japanese imperialists would start a war against China in the near future, I instructed the revolutionaries in the homeland that they should unite their forces firmly to cope with this event and exploit the prevailing situation skillfully in order to launch an active anti-Japanese struggle.

"Japan's move is alarming. Sooner or later it will ignite a greater war against China. This will create favorable conditions for our struggle. They may well plunder and strangle our people, as never before to fight a war. But many gaps may be revealed in their home front. The further Japan expands its front, the more freely we can fight in the vast area. So Comrade Park Dal, you must make full preparations to cope with the new situation on your initiative.

"You must lead the KNLU properly to enlarge the anti-Japanese forces and get them ready even for revolt."

Before he left the secret camp I gave him a special assignment to draw a sketch-map of Pochonbo and reconnoiter the frontier guard of the Japanese in detail. Park Dal carried out this assignment with credit. The sketch-map of the town he drafted and his information gave us great help in the battle of Pochonbo.

Six days after the Pochonbo battle we sent a liaison man for Park Dal, but I could not meet him, because I left for Mt. Jiansan in a hurry in command of my unit. After the crushing defeat in Pochonbo, the government-general of Korea convened an emergency meeting and 'decided to concentrate the Hamhung 74th Regiment, the Japanese army unit stationed in Changbai County and the police forces from the home-'land, as a preparation for a large-scale "punitive" operation against us.

In July that year, I again sent for Park Dal. But, that time, too, our meeting did not take place, because he had been arrested by the enemy. Lee Pyong Son alone called on me and reported his arrest and the revolutionary movement in the homeland.

I requested that Lee establish contact with the communists, working in Myongchon and Songjin, so that we could meet them. I assigned him to another task of organizing paramilitary guerrilla units in the homeland.

These tasks were conveyed to Park Dal on his release from prison.

In June 1938, when the enemy's suppression of the organizations in the homeland was intensified, Park Dal searched the forest around Changbai for over a month to meet us for our advice to save the grave situation.

At that time I was working around Linjiang and Mengjiang, so I heard of his news much later.

The Japanese police made a frantic search for Park Dal and other hardcore members of the KNLU to arrest them.

The Korean police officer Choe Yun of Hyesan police station mobilized even plainclothes policemen, Self-Defense Corps men and firemen to track down Park Dal. Park Dal and Kim Chol Ok were arrested by the enemy in September and October 1938, owing to the betrayal of Kim Chang Yong, Kim Chol Ok's cousin. Lee Ryong Sul (Lee Kyong Bong) was also arrested later.



*Lee Wha Rang - Photo: Members of the Kapsan Operations Team under arrest in the aftermath of the Pochongbo raid (= Hyesanjin Incident). Park Chung Yul, 1st from right was a distant relative of mine. All men seated were beheaded but Park Nok Gum, far left standing, was spared. She was killed in action in 1940. Park Dal, the team leader and another relative of mine, was driven insane by the Japanese torture and Park Kum Chul, another leader, held high positions until purged in 1957.*

The brutal enemy subjected him to inconceivable torture. They wanted to know our whereabouts and the list of the KNLU members. However, no cruel torture could reduce a man of iron will to submission. The enemy first condemned him to death and then sentenced to life imprisonment owing to a lack of sufficient evidence. The human killers destroyed his body beyond recovery. His backbone was broken and leg bone was crushed. However, he maintained his spirit, never vacillating. As a crippled man he miraculously endured the hardships of seven or eight years of prison life, which our posterity can hardly imagine.

One day immediately after liberation I received a report that Park Dal had come out of Sodaemun prison. After he left prison on a stretcher, he stayed in Seoul for a while under the care of his wife. Doctors diagnosed his case as myelitis. Later, Choe Ung Sok, a doctor of medicine, examined the patient and diagnosed the case again as spinal tuberculosis. He received treatment in Seoul University Hospital.

I sent the head of the Secretariat of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea to Seoul to bring Park Dal to Pyongyang.

In former days, Park Dal was a virile man as hard and strong as a birch tree, who could cover scores of miles overnight. However, when he appeared before me on another's back that day, he was a crippled man of a miserable figure, who retained no trace of his younger days; the torture had caused paralysis in the lower half of his body and reduced him to mere skeleton. As he had lost all his flesh, I felt as if I

could lift his small body in one hand.

However, Park Dal hugged me tightly and shed a shower of tears. He said that he had nothing to regret as he had seen me while still alive. The doctors, who examined him, pronounced the diagnosis like a death sentence. No doctor said that there was any possibility to save him. When he came out of prison, he was already shadowed by death.

I provided him with a residence next door to mine and made detailed efforts to revive him. I made sure that all famous medicines were obtained for him and that famous doctors were exclusively engaged in curing him. When I was going to and coming from the office, I frequently inquired after the patient. One day I heard that there was a milk cow in Usanjang, Nampho and instructed an official to fetch it to provide Park Dal with milk. After a war of three years, I had a building in Juul recreation center named "Park Dal house" exclusively for his medical care. While he recuperated in Juul, his favorite vegetables were sent by air from Pyongyang.

"I must recover as soon as possible to help the General...."

He always made such comments, worrying about me. He made strenuous efforts to recover from his bad state, but his condition went from bad to worse, despite all the devoted care of the medical workers.

But I marveled that he always thought about how to help the Party and the revolution, although he was in such a bad condition that he could not move his body.

I remember in 1949, when he was recuperating in Usanjang recreation center, how he found that the apples in orchards in the surrounding country had been damaged by harmful insects, because they were not enveloped. Park Dal motivated the workers of the recreation center and the deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly from south Korea staying there to make apple envelopes. He himself made them in bed, with a piece of plank on his chest.

Another thing happened, when he was receiving medical treatment in Juul after war.

Park Dal visited a nearby village on his wheel-chair, which I had made specially for him, and found many dead ears of rice in the field; the field was not planted with the variety of rice recommended by the Party. He put some of the dead ears of rice in an envelope and sent it to us, reporting that the Party's agricultural policy was not being carried out precisely.

At a meeting I criticized local officials, asking why they were ignorant of reality, when Park Dal, even a bedridden cripple, was torn at their failure to carry out Party policy properly and reported the fact to the Party Central Committee. Afterwards, the chairman of the North Hamgyong Provincial Party Committee called on him to criticize himself, I was told.

Aware that he would never recover and would not live long, he began to write in his bed for the

education of the younger generation.

As soon as I learned of his determination I called on him and beseeched him not to overdo things.

Park Dal said, grasping my hands tightly:

"I have lived so long, thanks to you, General. Only when I help the revolution, even a little, can I live long with an easy mind. I was arrested by the Japanese police, without carrying out my duty as a member of the Homeland Party Working Committee and the head of the KNLU, so, as a useless man, I am living at the state's expense. But I want to do something, out of a desire to fulfil the revolutionary duty you assigned me in bygone days. Please, don't dissuade me.

And he continued:

"Ostrovsky went blind, but wrote a novel for the revolution. Why should I not write at least, when I have my bright eyes. Naturally, I cannot produce a masterpiece because I am not good at writing."

With the help of his faithful wife, Hyon Kum Son, who served as his hands and feet and his nurse through her life, and the medical workers, Park Dal began to write reminiscences *The Fatherland Is More Valuable Than My Life* and the autobiographical novel *The Dawn*, which describes the struggle of the communists in Kapsan area, during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. His writings, whose every word was smeared with blood, touched the people's hearts, as it reflected his ardent loyalty to the revolution, as indicated in his books.

He received written impressions on his books and letters of thanks from a lot of readers. Encouraged by the letters from readers that his books became their companion in life, Park Dal wrote one article after another.

One day he measured his bed, examining it from various angles, and showed his wife a piece of paper, where figures were written. He said that if a small desk was made for him, he would put it across the bed and use it to write. A few days later a carpenter made it with all his care and sent it to him.

Feeling the legs of the desk, Park Dal said to his wife.

"It's a nice desk. Darling, take good care of it. I will write using it after some relaxation."

However, Park Dal never used it. The heart of the man, which was throbbing with his unfailingly loyalty to the Party and revolution, the fatherland and people, ceased beating. Hearing of his death, the whole country mourned.

We held a meeting of the Presidium of the Party Central Committee in Park Dal's house, an unprecedented event, and decided to accord him a state funeral.

As the hearse left his home, I was among the funeral procession. I wanted to see him off even at this moment, because I had always regretted that I could not accompany him far, seeing him off, when he left me on Mt. Paektu. I shed tears so much that my handkerchief was wet through. I lost my appetite, as I had done when Kim Chaek died. If I had seen him even once walking on his own feet in the liberated homeland, I would not have felt so grief-stricken.

Afterwards, we made sure that the house in Unhung-ri, Pochon County, where Park Dal lived before liberation, was restored to its original state and that his bust was erected in front of the house. I think that this was the first bronze statue to be erected in our country in honor of a revolutionary.

Park Dal was a fighter, who had fought indomitably for the revolution to the last moment of his life although he had lost his wings in the fight against the enemy.

Park Dal was an honorable representative of the revolutionaries in the homeland, who was the first to link the revolution in the homeland with the anti-Japanese armed struggle, after the KPRA advanced to Mt. Paektu; he was our plenipotentiary in the homeland, who did more work than anyone else and experienced many hardships for us.

Thanks to the efforts of such fighters as Park Dal, we were able to found the Party and build a prosperous sovereign state within a short span of time in such a complicated situation after liberation.



## 15.2. Homeland Party Working Committee

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The creation of our own communist party was the unanimous desire of the Korean revolutionaries and one of the most important strategic tasks, which the young communists had set themselves, when they had started the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

Throughout the armed struggle against Japanese imperialism, we carried out an independent line of founding a party by expanding and consolidating its basic organizations with the fine vanguards, who had been trained in the practical revolutionary struggle.

The Korean People's Revolutionary Army, the main force of the anti-Japanese revolution, became the leading force in founding the party, charged with its organizational and ideological preparations. The work of founding the party had been organized and carried out on a full scale, with the KPRA Party Committee gaining momentum in its leadership function and role; it became a powerful motive force, which offered strong political backing to the armed struggle and, at the same time, strengthened party leadership over it and its mass foundation and effected a great upswing in the overall Korean revolution, centered on the armed struggle.

In the second half of the 1930s, the building of party organizations, promoted by the communist vanguards, who were directly engaged in the anti-Japanese armed struggle, formed the main stream of the communist movement in our country and represented its fully orthodox nature.

Our founding of the party progressed with difficulty, owing to complicated processes from its outset, due to the peculiar situation of our revolution and the various attendant problems.

The Korean communists had to undergo great pains and undertake long roundabout course, a direct way for others, paying extremely dearly on their way to founding their own party. Owing to our peculiar situation of living in an alien country, we were forced to undergo trials and agony, which were not experienced by the communists of other countries, in addition to the hardships common to the resistance fighters of colonies in the course of founding parties.

As mentioned before, the Comintern had withdrawn its recognition of the Korean Communist Party in 1928, authorized that it should be reorganized and called on the Korean communists active in Manchuria and Japan to join the party of the country of their residence on the principle of one party for one country.

Some of them had regarded it as an inevitable fate that the Korean communists could only accept and adopted the passive attitude of joining a foreign party, obedient to the trend of the times, looking forward to a favorable phase. Others, displeased with the subjective conduct of the Comintern, had continued their activities as before for some time against this decision, without transferring their party membership to the party of the country of their residence; as they had been engaged in sporadic activities out of their

habit, they could not, however, keep up their existence for long and had all given up.

It is probable that communists join a foreign party for a short time, if need be. As the communist movement is a national movement, as well as an international movement presupposing class solidarity, it is not Strange for communists, the performers of the movement, to join a foreign party organization for a time and transcend their nationality.

When the headquarters of the Comintern were situated in Moscow, quite a few leading figures of communist parties and political exiles from other countries, who had been staying there, registered themselves temporarily at organizations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and led their party life there, while maintaining membership of their own parties. The point at issue was that the Comintern had deprived the Korean communists of their parent organization and thereby forced them into the disgraceful state of having to live in a rented room.

For this reason we had regarded the conduct of the Comintern as unreasonable from the start. However, we had not made any desperate attempts, straining our every nerve, such as acting against it or abandoning the movement itself. We had accepted the measure of the Comintern as a temporary step and steadily worked to found a new type of party by our own positive efforts.

Above all, we had sought ceaselessly for ways suited to the specific reality of our revolution within the framework permitted by the principles put forward by the Comintern, while stepping up preparations to found an independent party. The founding of the Society for Rallying Comrades, which consisted of vanguard fighters of the DIU, can be regarded as a starting-point in this undertaking.

Until the first half of the 1930s, when the main force of the KPRA was active in eastern and northern Manchuria, our efforts to found a party had hardly reached the depth of the homeland.

Admittedly, during those years we had already formed several basic party organizations in various places of the homeland, such as Onsong and Jongsong along the River Tuman. But the main theatre of activities of new-generation communists to form party organizations, had still been eastern Manchuria. We had expanded our party organizations in close relations with the party organizations of all counties in Jiandao, concentrating our efforts on consolidating the Party Committee of the KPRA, and trained hardcore elements, who would be needed to form party organizations in the homeland on an extensive scale in future.

It was at the Doaggang meeting held in May 1936 that we deliberated the policy on the party's founding in all particulars and debated measures for its realization, guided by the spirit of the Nanhutou meeting. The meeting raised for debate the task of laying down, on a full scale, the organizational and ideological groundwork for founding a party in the homeland and consulted, as a measure to this end, the matter of organizing the Homeland Party Working Committee and expanding vanguard party organizations, comprising the hard core of the revolutionary struggle.

The meeting emphasized on the whole that the building of party organizations should not be confined to the guerrilla army or be conducted only in the areas of northeast China, and that the organizational and ideological foundation for founding a party should be laid down even in the depths of the homeland. Noting that up until then basic party organizations had only been formed in some border areas along River Tuman, the meeting also stressed that from now on party organizations should be built in wide areas of the homeland and that in order to provide unified guidance to preparations in the homeland for founding a party, the Homeland Party Working Committee should be established.

In order to intensify party guidance over the anti-Japanese national united front movement, which was expected to develop throughout the country, a Homeland Party Working Committee urgently needed to be established.

To make sure that this committee, entrusted with such an important mission, met with reality, we had to ensure an open-minded exchange of opinions with communists active in the homeland, who were familiar With the situation of Korea.

Park Tal's visit to our secret camp offered us a good chance to exchange our opinions on this issue. The building of party organizations constituted one of the main topics of our conversation.

After deliberations on the matter of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, I held a serious discussion with Park Tal for several hours on the formation of party organizations in the homeland.

When I expressed my intention to set up organizations of the ARF and also communist party organizations in the homeland, Park Tal asked me with great surprise what kind of communist party organizations I had in mind. I took his question as a matter of course. It appeared to have sounded rather strange to Park Tal, when I had told him of my intention to build communist party organizations in the country, where no communist party existed, where all attempts to rebuild a party had come to naught and the pathetic efforts and passion of the fighters consumed to that end had remained only as sad memories behind bars, and where the freedom of association had been banned by law long ago.

When I replied that I meant organizations of our communist party, the communist party of Korea, he asked once more.

“What is the opinion of the Comintern about your intention to form communist party organizations in Korea? I mean, has the Comintern approved this move?”

"It is our own business. Why do we need the Comintern approval in this matter? We do not need to obtain the approval of the Comintern, with regards to the formation of our party organizations in the homeland, do we?"

Park Tal tilted his head dubiously.

"The communist party of each country, as a branch of the Comintern, is duty bound to be guided and regulated by it; consequently, how can we dare form our party organizations without the Comintern approval? Do you think that the Comintern will permit our own way of handling this matter?"

Park Tal was certainly impeded by a dogmatic way of thinking.

"Revolution is naturally an undertaking, to be done of one's own free will, not at anyone's dictate or someone else's approval. Tell me, Comrade Park Tal, did you start the revolution at the request of somebody else? And did you form the organization in the name of Kapsan Working Committee, with someone's approval?"

"Did Marx ask for anyone's approval when he organized the League of Communists? What about Lenin when he organized the Bolshevik Party?"

Dumbfounded, Park Tal made no reply.

"Marx and Lenin founded parties without anyone's approval; it does not stand to reason that we cannot do so. The Comintern already set a task for the Korean communists to rebuild their party in its theses, adopted in December 1928. We are going to form our party organizations in the homeland as stated in the theses; who will dare dispute this fact? The Comintern cannot criticize it, either. In this matter, approval or ratification is out of the question. The matter is related to the sovereignty of the Korean communists. We can deal with our own affairs among ourselves; there is no need to ask outsiders how we should handle our own affairs, is there? Surely we are the masters of the Korean revolution?"

Only then did Park Tal agree that his thought had been quite superficial, and expressed his full support for our stand and suggestion.

"I've been the victim of really foolish notions. I hadn't thought that we ourselves are the masters of the Korean revolution and considered that the Comintern decides on the revolution in each country. By the way, General, if party organizations are formed in the homeland, who will they belong to? Where should they expect guidance from?"

The party organizations in the homeland will be affiliated to and guided by the Party Committee of the KPRA. Under the present peculiar situation, where there is no communist party in Korea, the Party Committee plays the role of General Staff, assuming leadership over the whole Korean revolution. Its activities are firmly protected by armed force.

The barbarous rule of the Japanese imperialists, via their gendarmerie and police, has removed all possibilities to rebuild the party in Korea. Most fighters, who had been on the run for rebuilding the party, have been incarcerated now. Only the Party Committee of the KPRA, secured by force of arms, is staying clear of the enemy's claw. This is the reason, why it acts as leader over the Korean revolution as a whole.

"The role of the Party Committee of the KPRA as General Staff of the Korean revolution is the natural outcome of the development of the communist movement in our country. History required us to take up this mission. The Homeland Party Working Committee to be organized in future will be protected by arms by the KPRA."

"I have nothing more to ask now." Park Tal beamed with a smile.

We immediately turned to discuss practical matters, related to the formation of the Homeland Party Working Committee.

This discussion also began with questions from Park Tal. He seemed to put questions first, before thrusting himself into an argument.

"The homeland is now abuzz with controversy about the matter as to which of the two should be organized first, a party or mass organizations. The Hamhung group insists that the construction of a party should be given priority, while the Tanchon group and Hongwon group stick to the opinion that mass organizations should be formed first and that a party can be founded next only through practical struggle."

"What do you think, Comrade Park Tal?"

"Unfortunately I don't have my own opinion. By common knowledge, a party seems to be the first to be founded. But I am not sure."

Park Tal was thinking that the source of this controversy was the December Theses of the Comintern. The original title of the theses was Theses on the Tasks of the Korean Peasants and Workers. In this document, the Comintern urged the Korean communists to engage in positive work among worker and peasant organizations, make every effort to acquire fighters within the new and old national liberation organizations, including Singan Association, concentrate every concern on making much account of the ideological unity of the party and try every possible way to rebuild the Korean Communist Party at the earliest date, strengthen and develop it. Some communists, however, were confused, as they thought of the theses as suggesting simultaneously the construction of a party and mass organizations.

"In my opinion," I said, "this question cannot stir up a controversy. Priority should be decided by specific conditions and situation. The December Theses matter little to this question. It will be all right to form either a party organization or a mass organization first, depending on regional conditions. Even if only three people are qualified for party membership, they can organize a communist party circle. But if no one is eligible for party membership, a mass organization may be formed first, where communists can be trained to form a party organization later.

As a matter of course, since both party and mass organizations are related to each other, you must not

artificially separate one from the other. You must not forget, however, that no matter which one is given priority, the communists must direct all their energies to training the reserve force of the party among the popular masses. As long as there are vanguard fighters, who are qualified for party membership, a party organization can be formed at any time."

Park Tal asked me what would be the function of the Homeland Party Working Committee I planned to organize.

I explained to him in detail:

The Homeland Party Working Committee is a regional leadership organ, which will offer unified guidance over the revolutionary struggle in the homeland and deal with the formation of party organizations there. As there is no General Staff, performing the function of giving unified leadership to the movement in the homeland, it has not yet overcome two major vulnerable points - dispersed character and spontaneity. To rally the patriots and communists, active in dispersion in the homeland, into a single force, and help them establish direct relations among themselves, there should be a leadership organ capable of this work. Such an organ is provided by the Homeland Party Working Committee.

When this committee is formed, we plan to include you, Comrade Park Tal. You will represent this committee in the homeland. I want to meet face to face all of the fighters, scattered over all parts of the homeland, but time does not allow. I want you, Comrade Park Tal, to meet on your return home the campaigners active in North and South Hamgyong Provinces and other regions first and step up preparations for rallying them into homeland party organizations.

On hearing such words, Park Tal betrayed a serious expression on his face.

"I hardly deserve such trust. I am afraid I am not equal to it. I am still poor in many respects."

Park Tal's frank confession consolidated my trust in him.

At that time we convened a meeting of the KPRA Party Committee, where we organized the Homeland Party Working Committee; I was chairman, and Kim Pyong and Park Tal were members. Park Tal was appointed field executor of this committee, entrusted with the task of forming party organizations in various areas of the homeland including Kapsan.

He supported our methodology for forming basic party organizations first in the homeland before organizing a party central organ later on their basis and declaring the founding of the party.

After the meeting Park Tal requested that I tell him of all the points, which I wanted to mention with regard to the work method of campaigners in the homeland, which he could refer to in his work.

I expressed my opinion that first and foremost the exile's method of work should be eliminated.

"Comrades, working in the homeland, are now acting in an exile's way. This method is utterly destructive. They are hiding in mountains during the daytime and stealthily moving to meet people in the dark. Consequently, the members of organizations are loath to meet them, owing to their fear of the enemy's surveillance. You cannot expand organizations in an exile's way.

"In future people engaged in underground activities in the enemy's area, should gain the maximum possibility of legal action, while working on production sites. They must get rid of the working method of exiles immediately."

Park Tal heard me out and blushed.

"To tell you the truth, I also worked in that way. We only thought of frontal confrontation, unaware that a roundabout method should also be applied."

We chatted for some time, foregoing our formal talk. I asked him to tell me why someone like himself, who was disgusted at the old customs, was having his hair tonsured at a time, when it was trendy for everyone to look stylish and civilized, wearing kid shoes, dressing one's hair in foreign style and holding a cane in hand.

He replied that he had once been engaged in a labor union movement. Whenever he had been brought to a police station, the policemen there used to seize him by the hair and hit his head against the wall. He had been so annoyed that he had had his hair "cut to its root". I felt this "haircut" an expression of his wit. He said that he would change his tonsured head into modern style or get a crew cut, if I asked him.

"There is no need. You did it for your own needs. Consequently, I don't think you should have to return to the original state just now."

"If you, General, do not object, I will keep it as it is. How can I be sure that I will not be called by the police station again?"

In fact, he subsequently experienced many ordeals at police stations and prisons.

I asked him if he was ready to sit a police exam, if it was beneficial to the revolution. He looked at me in perplexity, his eyes wide open.

"You don't plan to make me a policeman, do you?"

"If the revolution so requires, you should become a policeman. But I don't intend to make you, Comrade Park Tal, a policeman. I don't mind if you wear a police cap or not. It is important that you improve your reputation among those in the police sub-station by doing such a job."

Park Tal beamed with satisfaction.

"I have been on somewhat friendly terms with policemen, but I never thought of sitting a police exam. On my return home, I will try."

True to his words, Park Tal took the exam next spring. Before taking the exam, he first called on the chief of the police sub-station and made a ridiculous remark.

"Sir, I want to become a career policeman. What do you think? Am I cut out for it?"

Unable to control his excitement at hearing this, the chief stood up abruptly.

"Are you serious?"

"Oh, yes! I am so eager to become a policeman that I've called on you, haven't I?"

"Yes, indeed. If you work well, you can even become chief of this substation."

"How dare I take your post? That would be impudent?"

"No. If Park Tal wants to be reformed into a faithful Japanese subject, I am ready to offer my chiefship to you for the sake of the Empire of Japan, although I may not be able to hold it any longer. I highly appreciate your ambition. Please take the police exam."

Park Tal openly took the exam, letting people know that he would become a policeman, but wrote poor answers to the exam. Consequently, he took the exam, but failed. He played skillfully as we had asked him to. Even the Japanese, in an account of his personal record, added to a secret document another clause, "Voluntary application for police exam at Kapsan police sub-station, South Hamgyong Province, in March of Showa 12 (1937), and failed."

Thanks to the police exam, Park Tal gained the confidence of the Japanese. A policeman Kim working at that sub-station went so far as to vouch for Park Tal on several occasions, saying that he had even sat for a police exam. In this way, thanks to the backing of the policemen, Park Tal did all he wanted, pretending to be loyal to them.

The formation of the Homeland Party Working Committee was extraordinarily significant, in maintaining our independent policy for party founding and pushing ahead with the building of party organizations in the homeland.

It did not mark a mere continuation or repetition of the movement to rebuild the party, which had been conducted in several ways after the dissolution of the Korean Communist Party. The formation of party



organizations, promoted in the homeland under the guidance of the Homeland Party Working Committee, was an out-and-out independent movement and struggle to rebuild the party and form party organizations, which essentially differed from the party-rebuilding movement directly sponsored by the Comintern and the movement to rebuild the party, which the Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern) attempted to achieve through the Red labor union movement.

In the 1930s, the Comintern had begun to show its attention to some extent to the national liberation struggle in Korea, particularly the party-rebuilding movement. This was because Japanese militarism was gaining ground in the Far East with the passage of time, a force no less dangerous than fascism in Europe.

Within the Comintern Kuusinen and some other people advanced their self-opinionated ideas on the problem of reconstructing the communist party in Korea. Typically, they proposed the organization of a national revolutionary party of Korea, which was discussed following the Comintern's Seventh Congress. As far as I remember, the Comintern's intention with regard to the organization in Korea of the national revolutionary party, aimed at anti-Japanese struggle, was pointed out in detail in Yang Song's article on the anti-imperialist united front in Manchuria, which he had contributed to Communist International.

He wrote in his article that the standing phase of Jiandao required the Chinese Communist Party to admit more Chinese and Korean revolutionary workers and peasants as members to expand its organizations and also establishment of the national revolutionary party of Korea, that this party's most important task should involve the struggle against Japan and for Korea's national independence and that this new party must be founded by none other than the communists.

He went on to say that this party must be an anti-Japanese united front party in nature. It can be said that this claim represented the opinions of the Comintern and Chinese party officials who had been working in the Comintern. However, we settled the problems of forming party organizations and a united front in Korea on our independent judgment and decision.

We dealt with both of them simultaneously, but did not mix them with each other, as a party could never represent a united front, and a united front organization was not precisely a party.

In those days, some independence campaigners tried to form a political organization similar to the Kuomintang in China, encompassing all political forces on both sides, right and left, under the name of the one and only party of the nation.

We organized the Homeland Party Working Committee and pushed ahead with the formation of party organizations. At the same time, we formed the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland as an anti-Japanese national united front organization, and achieved in this way great unity for the whole nation.

Naturally, the Comintern attempted in various ways, even before then, to rebuild the party in Korea.

Theses on the Tasks of the Movement of the Revolutionary Labor Unions in Korea (the so-called "September Theses") published in September 1930 by the executive bureau of the Red International of Labor Unions under the leadership of the Comintern, set the formation of revolutionary labor unions as a major prerequisite for the rebuilding of the communist party. Relying on the September Theses, the Korean communists had attempted to organize revolutionary labor unions (Red labor unions) and, used them as a mass base to promote the rebuilding of the communist party.

In October of the following year, the secretariat of the Pan-Pacific Labor Union, situated in Shanghai as a subordinate organization of the Red International of Labor Unions also advocated in its Urgent Appeal to the Korean Supporters of the Secretariat of the Pan-Pacific Labor Union, known as the "October Letter from the Pan-Pacific Labor Union", the organization of revolutionary labor unions and the rebuilding of the communist party with them serving as its mass base.

These documents of organizations, affiliated to the Red International of Labor Unions, along with the Statement of Opinion on the Korean Communist Movement of the executive committee of the Comintern, known as Kuusinen's statement of opinion, published in May 1931, directly dealt, in content, with the rebuilding of the communist party in Korea.

In June 1934, the Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party was made public in Moscow in the name of the initiators' group of the Korean Communist Party, which should also be viewed as a part of efforts to rebuild the communist party in Korea.

Despite Japanese imperialism's continued atrocious colonial rule over the Korean people and its suppression of the revolutionary movement, which became extreme as time passed by, the communists active in the homeland carried on the party rebuilding movement unremittingly in various forms. The communist party incident in North and South Hamgyong Provinces, the formation of the Korean communists' union, the meeting to hear the report to the Comintern on the rebuilding of the Korean Communist Party, the preparatory committee for the rebuilding of the Korean Communist Party, and the like, which had taken place in various regions of the homeland during this period, represented some examples of the party rebuilding movement.

There was also a party rebuilding movement, which had taken place with China as its base. The M-L group and Seoul-Shanghai group organized the preparatory committee for the rebuilding of the party, the central cadres' committee for party rebuilding, the party rebuilding union and the adjustment committee for party rebuilding, and conducted the party rebuilding movement with the Jirin area of China as the center of their activities.

In Japan, too, such a movement took place with Tokyo serving as its base.

It could be claimed that the movements of the Red labor unions and Red peasant unions, which swept the whole country from the end of the 1920s to mid-1930s, constituted parts of the movement to rebuild the

party. The main goal of the struggle by these unions, which had been lawful in their early stage and subsequently assumed the illegal form of an underground movement, concerned the rebuilding of the communist party.

The movement to rebuild the party, launched in the homeland and abroad, was mainly confined to the upper class, which had not been free of the old form of former movements, flunkeyistic tendencies and factional conceptions. Despite these limitations, we strove, drawing on the successes, which had been scored by former movements to rebuild the party, to build party organizations of a new type in the homeland. In other words, we made painstaking efforts to get in touch with the networks of the Red labor unions and Red peasant unions of the bygone days and organize our party cells there.

Late in May 1937, we held at the Paektusan Base the second session of the Homeland Party Working Committee, where we adopted measures to enhance the HPWC's function and role and intensify its leadership to the work of building party organizations and the revolutionary movement in the homeland. The meeting reviewed the result of the building of party organizations, following the formation of the HPWC and debated in a serious atmosphere tasks and ways to build party organizations in the homeland.

At the meeting I stressed opposing the worship of great powers and dogmatism in the building of party organizations and in party life, and pointed out some ways to admit communists scattered in the homeland into party and other various revolutionary organizations and establish a proper party organizational leadership system to suit realities, where party organizations were increasing in number.

The deliberations and decisions of the meeting marked a clear milestone in stepping up the advance of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army into the interior of Korea and developing the creation of party organizations and the revolutionary struggle in the homeland.

We subsequently dispatched a political workers' group, entrusted With the mission of helping the work of party organizations in the homeland. In summer and autumn 1937, the political workers' group, consisting of Kim Phyon, a member of the HPWC, Kwon Yong Byok, Jong Il Gwon, Kim Ju Hyon, Ma Tong Hui, Kim Jong Suk, Paek Yong Chol, Lee Tong Hak, Choe Kyong Hwa, Kim Un Sin, Lee Chang Son, Lee Kyong Un and Lee Pyong Son, was dispatched to various areas of northern Korea; it conducted the work. of building party organizations and work with the population there. This group was called the Pukson political workers' group.

It directly helped build party organizations in the homeland, by making the areas of northern Korea revolutionary.

We assigned the members of this group districts for their political work. In those days we called such areas political districts. We divided them into political districts No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4 and No. 5. Kim Phyon had discussed the size of political districts with me and set it. Political districts ranged from the east to the west coast and their numbers were given accordingly.

The members of this group could conduct organizational and political work either directly in the area under their charge or indirectly, by dispatching excellent workers they had trained.

One detachment of this group, headed by Lee Tong Hak and guided by Lee Je Sun, went to Unhung Sub-county, Kapsan County, in early 1937, to create favorable conditions for laying the groundwork for building party organizations in the homeland; they scattered hundreds of declarations and appeals, inculcating anti-Japanese patriotic ideas and advocating Korea's independence in rural villages there and conducted propaganda among the population, before quickly returning to their unit.

The detachment headed by Ma Tong Hui, and another led by Ji Thac Hwan, both in charge of Samsu County area, also advanced into the homeland one after the other and conducted political work in a superb and prudent manner, stirring up public sentiment in the area north of Machon Range (Ryongbuk).

We dispatched a young orderly to Park Tal for his convenience in work. His name was Son Jang Bok.

I instructed Son Jang Bok that he should, on entering the homeland, enroll in the family register at the Japanese government office and behave like a man born and bred in Korea. Park Tal took Son Jang Bok to the police sub-station and slyly told the police chief: "Mr. Chief. Congratulate me, please."

The police chief looked at both of them in turn, agape. The chief had been fairly kind to Park Tal since the latter had sat the police exam.

"What makes you so happy?"

"Well, I've earned a younger brother for nothing."

Park Tal proudly pulled forward Son Jang Bok who stood back hesitantly, and talked uproariously in the sub-station.

"Until now I regretted that I had no younger brother. And my father gratified my desire." "Do you mean, then, that this boy is your sworn brother, your father has approved for you?" "What do you mean by sworn brother? He is my half-brother my father begot out of wedlock, when he was living in Kilju. After his mother died, this boy wandered about as an orphan. Hearing of his half-brother living in Kapsan, he called on me here. So, I have decided to take care of this boy."

"Oh! You mean your father earned such a son for nothing? Your father seems to have a knack of making profits."

At the chiefs remark, the policemen burst into laughter. Feeling pleased, the police chief had all the procedures done smoothly without cavilling at anything.

Park Tal had Son Jang Bok entered in the family register in the name of Park Yong Dok. Ever since then

Son Jang Bok started his under-pound activities.

Some days later, however, an unexpected incident happened, damaging the activities of the underground organizations in Kapsan. There was a burglary at a farmhouse in Taejung-ri, Unhung Sub-county, Kapsan County. The burglar got away with 20 won, pretending to be a man from the mountain, in an attempt to conceal his crime. In those days the guerrillas were called the "mountain people" and political workers from the guerrilla army were called "men from the mountain".

The burglary coincided with the moment, when Park Tal had been to Taejung-ri to guide the work of a subordinate organization of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. Owing to this coincidence, Park Tal was taken into custody by the police on the suspicion of being the "man from the mountain". At that time, the police, aware as they were that Lee Pyong Son from Kilju had been frequenting Park Tal's, attempted to arrest him as well, but failed because the suspect went missing.

Lee Pyong Son had been involved in the case of the Red peasant union in Kilju and had come to Kapsan the previous year, together with Kim Yong Guk. After Kim Yong Guk had joined the guerrilla army, Lee Pyong Son worked at a lumber station in Pochon Sub-county, while guiding the organizations of the national liberation union in that area. On that day the Japanese police raided Park Tal's house, mistaking Son Jang Bok for Lee Pyong Son. Once they had confirmed that Son was not Lee Pyong Son at this age, the police returned.

In those days we dispatched many political workers into Changbai and the homeland, but could not meet the demands for political workers with only the soldiers of the KPRA. To meet the demand for all political workers needed, we required one regiment of political workers. But the guerrilla army could not conduct only political activities, away from military actions.

We selected members of the underground organizations in the area of Changbai, boasting rich experience in political work, and others who were prepared and experienced in work with the masses in the past, when they had been affiliated to revolutionary organizations in eastern Manchuria, and sent them to the homeland. At the same time, a number of political workers from the organizations of the ARF in Changbai County, too, were dispatched by Lee Je Sun to the homeland.

The work of dispatching political workers was mainly dealt with by Kim Phyong, a member of the HPWC.

Kim Phyong was then political commissar of the 7th Regiment. A talented political worker and military officer in charge at the Headquarters of the KPRA of the activities behind enemy lines, he had rich experience in underground activities. In both the first and second half of the 1930s, he helped me a lot in my work. Kim Phyong was a political-military officer I loved and trusted most during the anti-Japanese revolution.

As a matter of fact, he was later arrested by the enemy due to a turncoat's betrayal, went through trials

and left some blots in his political life; but he remained faithful to me. As he was fully involved in the affairs of the Headquarters and the Party Committee of the KPRA and was in direct charge of these affairs, when we were strengthening our ties with the revolutionaries in the homeland, extending the armed struggle into the homeland and accelerating preparations for popular resistance, he knew more than anybody else what had happened then. In addition to military affairs, the facts related to secret political activities included quite a few details, which had been open only to him.

His recollections of all the details, events and chronology were mostly exact. I think his records rendered a great contribution to enriching the revolutionary history of our Party. It would have been better for Kim Phyong, if he had fought to the last in the guerrilla unit and greeted the day of national liberation. I still remember Kim Phyong, who helped my work as faithfully as he could at the time of our struggle on Mt. Paektu.

The political workers, dispatched to the homeland, engaged in labor unions, peasant unions and other existing organizations, as well as individual communist circles, making tireless efforts to promote the building of party organizations and expand the network of ARF organizations.

Thanks to their remarkable activities, the "wind of Mt. Paektu" seized the people in the homeland inexorably: their influence ensured they had a correct understanding of the KPRA. Many people came to Mt. Paektu to join the KPRA.

As another measure for building party organizations in the homeland, we organized a homeland party team, comprising hardcore elements trained in the KNLU. Historians call this team, headed by Park Tal, a "troika". It aimed to act as the basic party organization and, at the same time, as parent body for building party organizations in the homeland.

What I found peculiar about Park Tal's methods of work to expand party organizations and increase the ranks of party members was his formation of nameless party organizations. These organizations lacked any official title, but in actual fact they were organizations of party members, who were working in a secret way. Such organizations were also formed inside the ARF.

Building nameless underground revolutionary organizations is a peculiar way of building organizations, when the enemy's suppression reaches its extremes.

According to this method, no title was given to an organization and no meetings of members were held; instead members were seen individually to be educated, learn the ways of struggle and be assigned duties, so that even if one of them was arrested, the others could be free of harm.

After leaving us and returning to Kapsan, Park Tal devoted his whole heart and soul to the work of building party organizations in the home-land. Guided by our policy, he turned the areas of Kapsan and Samsu into a seedbed for building party organizations in the homeland, and used it as a steppingstone to gradually extend his activities to other counties and provinces.

We chose this region as the most suitable seedbed for building party organizations in the homeland, because we had taken into account the special socio-economic conditions of the region.

Samsu and Kapsan had been known before anything else as regions for exiles. The Korean proverb "Although I may be sent to Samsu and Kapsan" was derived from the fact that this region had been notorious for exiles. The descendants of noblemen, who had been ruined and exiled to this region, owing to the persecution of the feudal governments during the Lee dynasty, turned to be either slash-and-burn farmers or mine workers, living on the last rungs of the social ladder.

The vagrants, who had thronged into the Kaema Plateau, in search of a living after the "annexation of Korea by Japan", also settled in this region, all doing difficult slash-and-burn farming, chopping off stumps with pickaxes and setting fields on fire. The composition of the population in this region can be analyzed to have been based on good backgrounds, in the light of class origin.

The mysterious nature of the highlands convenient for guerrilla activities had been transformed, from the 1910s, into the battlefields for Righteous Volunteers and Independence Army soldiers, fighting with matchlocks in hand with the ideal of defending the country with their lives, into the safest of shelters in Korea, embracing the social movement campaigners. The social movement campaigners, who had been deprived of their right to legal activities, had gathered here from nearly all parts of northern Korea to take refuge. Men of great ambition had flocked to this region from the interior of the homeland and also from faraway regions, such as north and west Jiandao and Siberia.

According to Park Tal, in the mid-1920s, four anti-Japanese movement campaigners, who had been guiding the student strike at the Pyongyang Sungsil Middle School, moved to Samsu and Kapsan and organized a circle studying socialism, comprising slash-and-burn farmers, thereby launching the socialist movement in the area.

Later, all those who had been engaged in the movements of labor unions and peasant unions in various regions along the east coast before taking refuge there, joined their hands with the four campaigners in organizing a youth union, peasant union and vanguard union. For these reasons alone, Samsu and Kapsan were fully equipped with the requisite conditions to serve as the seedbed for building party organizations in the homeland.

The Kapsan Working Committee was initially formed as an organization without any particular name. Starting its work from May 1934, the organization admitted Lee Kyong Bong first, and then Kim Chol Ok, Sim Chang Sik and others and fought against the coercive cultivation of flax, superstition and early marriage. About two years later, when the members discovered each other's identity, they named their organization Kapsan Working Committee.

On the basis of such experiences we gained in building party organizations in the homeland, I later formalized this method in my article on how to manage the work of party branch organizations, and in

the first half of the 1940s instructed comrades, who were to be dispatched to the homeland, to conduct their work by applying this method.

After liberation, one member of such an organization recollected as follows: “I joined a certain organization, but I didn't know its name and the contents of its work, because they were kept secret from me.”

A revolutionary, hailing from Kapsan, said that Park Tal had given him a secret book, telling him to read it with precaution; therefore he had read it and had only run errands for Park Tal. However, for this very reason, the Japanese judicial organ sentenced him to a heavy penalty and imprisoned him until the day of national liberation. These people were probably members of organizations lacking any particular name.

After turning Samsu and Kapsan into the seedbed for the formation of party organizations in the homeland, Park Tal selected hardcore elements trained in these organizations and began to dispatch them to adjoining counties and provinces. Park Tal had authorized them to lay down the foundations for forming party organizations in the areas of their activities.

True to our policy, Park Tal organized the work thoroughly, so that the delegates took appropriate jobs. When the delegates received certain jobs in designated working places, their identity in the society could be legalized and they could carry out their assignments with credit. In this way they could get rid of the work method of exiles and establish a strong foothold among the popular masses.

Park Tal sent five or six operatives to Musan County alone.

Chae Ung Ho, chairman of the Anti-Japanese Association of Sondok-dong, Pochon Sub-county, a subordinate organization of the KNLU, was dispatched to Musan County; keeping in close touch with the political workers, he conducted the fund-raising activities to acquire supplies for the guerrilla army and the work of rallying the masses around organizations, and also stepped up the preparations for organizing a paramilitary corps. Even after the “Hyesan incident”, he took refuge in the areas of Yanji and Helong and went in and out of Musan area, perseveringly rallying the forestry workers into revolutionary Organizations.

Park Tal sent Lee Ryong Sul, the chief of the youth department of the KNLU, and Lee Pyong Son to the southern counties of North Hamgyong Province. Through them our policy on the revolutionary movement and the building of party organizations in the homeland was transmitted to Ho Song Jin, one of the leaders of the Red peasant union movement in Songjin. I was told that Ho Song Jin, who had vowed to fight to the last to uphold our lines, had been as far as Kapsan to meet us but returned in vain. At that time we were in the areas of Linjiang and Menjiang in a bid to remove the aftermath of the “expedition to Rehe”.

While promoting the building of party organizations and extending the organizational network of the ARF, Park Tal also went to great efforts to strengthen the military force of our revolution.



We instructed Park Tal, through Lee Pyong Son, who had called on our secret camp, to organize a paramilitary corps with the members of homeland party organizations and hardcore young members of the ARF.

Park Tal used the Self-Defense Corps as the first step in preparations for organizing the paramilitary corps. In those days the Japanese imperialists were expanding the Self-Defense Corps on a large scale under the pretext of “defending the home village”. They even supplied them with weapons and trained the corps men. Park Tal believed that the paramilitary corps men, if all of them were admitted to the Self-Defense Corps, could master weapons and win the favor of the enemy and turn their guns on the Japs, by rising up all together at the time of contingency.

Consequently, Park Tal, exploiting his position as deputy chief of the Kolchigi Self-Defense Corps, admitted to the corps almost all the paramilitary corps men, whose age coincided with the admission age set by the enemy and helped them occupy key positions there.

He also made painstaking efforts to implement our policy on the formation of the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army of Northern Korea (AJGANK).

Proceeding from the need to rapidly extend and develop the armed struggle in the area of northern Korea, we proposed the organization of the AJGANK with members of the homeland party organizations as its core. The wide plateau, north of Machon Range, spreading from Musan and Kapsan to Pujon Range, was an ideal region suitable for guerrilla warfare.

In those days I instructed the comrades active in the homeland as follows: You must organize the AJGANK; I will select, with special care, excellent guerrilla army soldiers, who can be the leading force of your unit and send them to you; using them as your core, you should expand your unit and train the soldiers.

I appointed Choe Ii Hyon of the 7th Regiment as commander of the AJGANK and Park Tal, as its political commissar.

If the unexpected event had not occurred, where Park Tal and most of the other leading cadres of the KNLU were arrested and imprisoned, the formation of the AJGANK would have been completed smoothly as planned.

The members of the homeland party organizations gave every assistance to the detached corps, headed by Kim Ju Hyon in its activities, when it was dispatched to the homeland. Despite the threatening atmosphere, where the Japanese hangmen were making wholesale arrests of members of homeland party organizations and of the KNLU, Park Tal did not abandon the struggle. He made every possible effort to maintain underground the basic party organizations and organizational network of the ARF, which had already been formed. Kim Phyong informed me in detail of the trials suffered by members of the

homeland party organizations and of the KNLU owing to the “Hyesan incident”.

No sooner had I got the information than I sent Ma Tong Hui and Jang Jung Ryol to the homeland. This rescue measure, however, came a Cropper, as both Ma Tong Hui and Jang Jung Ryol, who had been wandering here and there to look for Park Tal, were caught by the enemy.

Next time I dispatched Kim Jong Suk, imbued with rich experience in the activities inside the homeland, to Taejinphyong. Park Tal who had been working in Tanchon, Pukchong, Hongwon, Sinpho and other regions on the east coast to expand organizations, returned to Taejinphyong and was reviving the organizations there, which had been in a fix. Kim Jong Suk had encountered many difficulties and hardships before meeting Park Tal, and reported to me the results of the meeting.

On receiving the report, I sent a liaison team, headed by Paek Yong Chol, to the Kapsan area. Paek Yong Chol had been engaged many times in activities in the homeland, while fighting in the guerrilla army. He had built a secret camp in Ouledong area and had been working in various regions to obtain provisions. However, later on he had been recalled to the unit, after the arrest of Ma Tong Hui and Jang Jung Ryol.

Ever since the first day when Paek Yong Chol’s team entered the homeland, it was chased by the police. Indescribable hardships accompanied the team, before it contacted the party of Park Tal, Kim Chol Ok and Lee Ryong Sul. I gave Park Tal and his men, who had followed the liaison team to Mt. Paektu, the task of reviving the revolutionary organizations, which had been destroyed and ensuring a fresh upswing in the revolution in the homeland, and sent them back to Kapsan.

On return to the homeland with Park Tal and his men, Paek Yong Chol worked in Soksin region; during his work he was confronted by the Japanese police. Shot in his belly, he held his slipping bowels to keep on fighting the enemy until he was caught. The Japanese police made him sit on his knees inside a hollow and forced passersby to throw stones at him to bury him alive, telling them that he was a "communist bandit". The struggle to rescue Park Tal and the homeland party organizations entailed a lot of effort and sacrifice.

To arrest Park Tal, the enemy set off informants and turncoats everywhere and combed every bill and mountain, causing a stir.

Park Tal, as a member of the HPWC, contributed greatly to the building of party organizations and expansion of the anti-Japanese national united front movement in the homeland, thereby helping us a lot. He was virtually the kingpin in building party organizations in the homeland.

Kim Phyong, Kwon Yong Byok, Kim Jong Suk and other political workers also played a large role in stepping up the building of party organizations in the homeland. They formed party organizations and firmly rallied the communists in various areas of northern Korea, such as Sinpha, Phungsan, Rangnim, Pujon, Hungnam, Sinhung, Riwon, Tanchon and Hochon, and Changbai, surmounting manifold difficulties and trials.

Thanks to energetic activities of the vanguard fighters of our party, party organizations grew rapidly in wide areas of the homeland. Revolutionary organizations were formed one after another in many coal and ore mines, factories, rural areas, fishermen's settlements and towns in South and North Hamgyong Provinces such as Kapsan, Sinpha and Phungsan, in western Korea such as Pyongyang and Pyoksong, and in Yangdok area. In quiet areas, which had been astir with the movements of Red labor unions and peasant unions, they launched again the movements of revolutionary labor unions and peasant unions.

The reorganization and reform of former labor unions and peasant unions coincided immediately with the formation of party organizations. The network of party organizations and the ARF stretched over even to the area of central Korea, including Seoul and to the boundaries of Kyongsang and Jolla Provinces, far beyond the area of northern Korea, and expanded as far as Cheju Island and Japan, across the Korea Straits.

The creation of party organizations in the homeland was promoted via close links with similar projects in the areas of Changbai and Linjiang. Party organizations even gained root in the Korean settlements in Changbai, Fusong and Linjiang. They were also expanded in the areas of eastern and southern Manchuria. During the building of party organizations, which gained momentum throughout the whole country and on a nationwide scale, the communists, who had been active in dispersion, were rallied organizationally and the party leadership further intensified over the Korean revolution as a whole.

A strict party organizational system was established throughout the country, whereby all party organizations worked under the unified guidance of the Party Committee of the KPRA. Following the establishment of a well-organized party organizational leadership system, ranging from the Party Committee of the KPRA, the highest leadership organ, to the cell, the basic organization, an epochal change was effected in laying down the organizational and ideological foundations of a party.

This marked another great achievement in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, and a political victory of no less significance than the victory we had won in military operations launched on the Yalu and Tuman, after basing ourselves on Mt. Paektu. Our bloody struggle to build party organizations became a powerful impetus, hastening the day of national liberation and also provided solid foundations, for accomplishing the founding of an independent party.

The Korean communist movement, slighted and scorned, owing to factional strife and lack of theory and practical ability, began to blaze its trail dynamically amidst the flames of the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

## 15.3. Fighting at the Foot of Mt. Paektu

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Our advance to Mt. Paektu transformed the eastern frontier region (Dongbiandao), particularly the northern part of the region where Changbai was situated, into the most "unruly zone", causing a great headache for both the Kwangtung Army and the puppet Manchukuo public security authorities.

The Japanese and the puppet Manchukuo army and police focussed all their efforts on the eastern frontier region. Newspapers constantly reported on the boisterous developments in Changbai. The area around the foot of Mt. Paektu, previously regarded as a peaceful zone, was thrown into utter confusion.

Since the early days of their occupation of Manchuria, the Japanese aggressors had accorded considerable attention to public security in this area, in order to turn Manchuria and Korea into a strategic base for their domination of Asia.

The eastern frontier region constituted an administration area, emerging after the division by the Beiyang government of northeast China into the three provinces of Liaoning, Jirin and Heilongjiang, including ten regions. It is a vast area covering some parts of today's Jirin and Liaoning Pnwinces. Bordering Korea with the Yalu River in between, it was one of the major areas to attract the special aUention of the political and business circles, as well as that of Japan's military and puppet Manchukuo in the light of the ideal of the "integration of Korea and Manchuria" and economically owing to its inexhaustible mineral and forest resources.

However, the enemy was inevitably alarmed, as we had taken complete control of the northern part of this area and continued military and political activities along the Yalu River. Surprised, the Kwangtung Army drew up a "general programme for ensuring public peace in Manchukuo", on the pretext of taking measures to instigate a lasting public peace in the Manchurian area, including the eastern frontier region. On this basis, the puppet Manchukuo government put forward the "outline of a three-year plan for ensuring public peace", which defined the northern part of the eastern frontier region (Changbai, Linjiang, Fusong, Donggang, Human, Jinchuan, Liuhe, Tonghua and Jian Counties) as the most important place for special operations.

It set up an "eastern frontier region rehabilitation committee" as a central organ, an "administrative office for the rehabilitation of the eastern frontier region" and a "special association for the maintenance of public peace in the eastern frontier region" in Tonghua. It also established "Tonghua punitive command" headed by Sasaki, the highest advisor to the military authorities of Manchukuo and launched "large-scale winter punitive operations" aimed at securing public peace in the northern part of the eastern frontier region.

Japan's military nerves were most irritated by gunshots raised everyday in west Jiandao by the Korean People's Revolutionary Army units, the network of secret camps set up in various places on Mt. Paektu under the cover of the army's operations and the revolutionary base of a new type, centering on the

underground liberation front.

Tokyo had already ordered Army General Minami, the Governor-General of Korea and the supreme ruler of the colonial Korea, and Army General Ueda, the commander of the Kwangtung Army and de facto supreme ruler of Manchuria, to discuss emergency measures for annihilating the anti-Japanese armed forces and promoting public peace. As a result, a notorious meeting, called "Tumen conference", was held in a secret room of the detached building of the Japanese consulate in Tumen, a small customs town on the border of Korea and Manchuria.

We can see from this fact how Minami, former commander of the Kwangtung Army and ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Manchukuo, racked his brains in panic, together with Ueda, to work out measures to "mop up" the Korean guerrillas soon after his appointment as the Governor-General of Korea.

The secret talks between Minami and Ueda were followed by a meeting between their seconds - Tojo, the provost marshal of the Kwangtung Army, and Mitsubashi, police department head of the Government-General of Korea.

The talks adopted the so-called "three-point policy" aimed at stifling the anti-Japanese armed forces; intensifying security over the border area, launching large-scale joint "punitive" operations and establishing concentration villages in west Jiandao. Detailed measures were discussed between Tojo and Mitsubashi for intensifying their joint action.

The essence of the "three-point policy" was the "large-scale winter punitive operations" in 1936; its main target was Mt. Paektu, where our Headquarters were situated. The "large-scale winter punitive operations" differed from former operations, in that they represented joint operations of the Japanese troops sent to Manchuria from Korea and the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria. Their tactics involved new methods of combining encirclement by large forces with searches of the mountain valleys and ridges, as if combing them with a fine-tooth comb. They Bought in this way to wipe out the anti-Japanese armed units within the Winter of that year.

Acting on the basis of this sinister objective, the Government-General of Korea set the "maintenance of public peace and the tightening of the guard over the border" as its primary task, reinforced the border garrison. Japanese army units stationing in Korea, special border garrisons and the police units on the frontier were ordered to the front en masse.

The Kwangtung Army, too, prepared for the "punitive" operations with the utmost interest in the eastern frontier region.

Various "punitive" troops were committed en masse to the border area along the Yalu and Tuman Rivers around Mt. Paektu: the police units in the southern part of Korea moved to the mountainous areas in the north; the Kwangtung Army units in Qiqihaer also started moving southwards to Mt. Paektu; the units

under the 19th Division of the Japanese army in Korea also crossed the Yalu; the Japanese and Manchukuo police units and the puppet Manchukuo "punitive" troops thronged around us.

The police sub-stations were increased in great numbers along the Yalu. Checkpoints were posted at various places and telephone lines were laid across the river. From this time onwards the enemy forced the wives of policemen to take shooting practice. The wheels of cannons and carts carrying military supplies rolled along the lanes in the backwoods of Mt. Paektu, which ox-carts, sleighs and horse-carts traveled on with difficulty, and disorderly footprints of warhorses were marked in various places in forests.

From the early winter of that year "punitive" troops spread all over the forest of Mt. Paektu. The enemy searched thoroughly the forests of Mt. Paektu, saying that "these 'punitive' operations constituted the final actions to establish public peace." A fresh decisive campaign between the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the Japanese aggressor army was near at hand at the foot of Mt. Paektu.

The odds were against us. First of all the enemy was incomparably superior in strength. Worse still, its main force comprised crack troops supported by the air force. The enemy was mobilizing administrative, economic, police and all other efforts, while we had nothing to enlist in our support, apart from secret aid from the people.

In the light of military common sense and experience, an attack was inconceivable in such a situation. However, we put the enemy on the defensive by deploying a new strategy of our own, based on attacks far beyond the established practice and common sense. In November 1936 we convened a meeting of military and political cadres of the KPRA in the Heixiazigou Secret Camp to review the KPRA's military and political activities after the Nanhutou meeting and discuss ways of frustrating the enemy's "large-scale winter punitive operations" and consolidating the Paektusan Base.

Our basic strategy revolved around the following: To defeat the enemy's numerical and technical superiority by means of our ideological and tactical superiority.

Exploiting the highly elevated ideological preparedness of the soldiers, we applied positive and active tactics of allurement and ambush, surprise attack, impregnable defense, cutting off the enemy's retreat to crush its forces piecemeal, and appropriately combining large unit and small unit operations. In this way we won every battle.

Confronted by our adroit military operations, the enemy suffered heavily from the very first stage of the "punitive" operations. In the early days, when units of the KPRA launched into areas on the Yalu River, the enemy estimated that we would be unable to pass the winter there, as the other Chinese anti-Manchukuo forces had failed to do so. But this was a pure miscalculation.

The more they intensified "punitive" operations the deeper we went into the forests without flinching, and the brisker the military and political activities we conducted around Mt. Paektu and the border area on the

Yalu, by deploying elusive tactics. We thereby put the enemy on the defensive and consolidated the newly-built Paektusan Base.

The battles at the edge of Heixiazigou, Hongtoushan, Taoquanli and Limingshui are perfect examples of the numerous battles we fought that winter, when we gave the enemy a terrible blow.

At the entrance to Heixiazigou we fought a defensive battle forestalling the enemy's raid on our secret camp.

After tasting the bitterness of failure at the outset of its "large-scale winter punitive operations", the enemy stepped up military operations and also sent a large number of spies to track down our Headquarters.

When the enemy's "winter punitive operations" began, I could be found mostly in the Heixiazigou Secret Camp in command of the main force.

One day Oh Jung Hup, who had been on guard duty at an outpost with a few of his men, returned to the camp with suspicious characters in peasant clothing. We examined them and discovered that they were enemy spies. They had been approaching our secret camp, stealing their way through the woods, only to be captured by our men who had been watching their movements. Assuming an air of innocence, they had claimed they were coming to the revolutionary army, unable to endure Japanese repression and had asked to see me. Their appearance was so suspicious that we conducted body searches, only to discover a sharp-edged, small axe in one of the men's trousers. The axe was a lethal weapon made by the enemy's secret service.

The investigation revealed that one of them was a confirmed spy, who had served the enemy for some years under the guise of a peddler while the other was an innocent peasant who had acted as a guide under pressure. They had set out to ascertain our exact location and give a signal to the "punitive" forces, following in their wake, combing the forest. The spy confessed that the enemy had organized a combined "punitive" force of Japanese and Manchukuo troops, with one body approaching Heixiazigou from Erdaogang and the other advancing towards the guerrilla camp via the northwestern part of Majiazi, Shiliudaogou, and that they planned to launch an attack immediately, when they were given a sound signal. He also said that their attack would receive air support from Hoeryong.

His confession confirmed information collected by our reconnaissance party. However, the enemy had not yet completely encircled us. Ascertaining the location of Headquarters through its spy, the enemy planned to send the Japanese "punitive" force from the Ranam 19th Division and the puppet Manchukuo army "punitive" force from Erdaogang to Heixiazigou to surprise our Headquarters and main force and eradicate the "source of its anxiety".

The situation was very critical and not in our favor. As the enemy was closing in and simultaneously carrying out searches, we decided to strike the enemy at a vantage point near the camp, slip away and

strike again on its way back, under cover of night at Sanpudong.

There was a deep valley in the south of Heixiazigon, with a bottleneck at the approach of the enemy's main force. Both sides of the valley were so steep that even wild animals skilled in climbing cliffs could not get a grip. It was an ideal trap to catch the enemy and destroy it.

I instructed the 2nd and 4th Companies to lie in ambush on the heights in the northwest and northeast and arrange a decoy in the dead end of the valley. I placed several men there and ordered them to build fires and make noises feigning the main force. Then, I dispatched a decoy party to harass the enemy in its position the whole night and then withdraw at daybreak leaving the traces of a large force.

As dusk fell, the decoy party infiltrated the enemy's position. It was biting cold that night. But I ordered the ambushes not to create a fire lest their presence revealed.

To lure the enemy into the position of our main force, the decoy Party climbed towards the decoy position, leaving disorderly footprints along the valley, as if a large unit had passed. A few minutes later, smokes from several campfires coiled up from the decoy position and boisterous singing resounded. This was all a prearranged feint.

The attention of the enemy, which entered the valley in pursuit of the decoy party, was attracted to the noise and fires in the decoy position. The advance party was a mounted patrol. The patrol halted for some time and murmured over something looking at the decoy position, and then, one of them on a black horse raced out down the valley. Two other horses followed suit.

About half an hour later the mounted patrol entered the valley again followed by long infantry columns. Each column was led by a mounted officer, wearing a long glittering sabre on his waist. They were from the Ranam 19th Division. The officers of the Jingan army walked with the rank and file. Pack-horses carrying disassembled mortars on their backs brought up the rear of the last column. The enemy was approaching from another valley. They intended to form an encirclement. The enemy's strength was at least five times as great as our force of 100 men.

One key to victory in this battle concerned the need to gain time. We had to strike the first heavy blow before the enemy completed its encirclement and slip away to another position. We decided to deliver a preemptive attack, with the signal of the gunshot of executing the spy. With the signal shot, the enemy was instantly thrown into utter confusion. Most fell before the attack signal was given. Guns charged with shells were lying, scattered over the battlefield. The valley at the entrance to Heixiazigou turned into the enemy's graveyard.

After searching the battlefield we slipped away under the cover of darkness. The reconnaissance party informed Headquarters of the movement of the enemy's reinforcements which had been in pursuit, guided by the remnants. They were making preparations for camping at one place as dusk fell, just as we had anticipated. I ordered Oh Jung Hup to raid the enemy's camp at night. He organized a raiding party of one



platoon. The night raid did not require many men.

As he approached by stealth the enemy's camp with the raiding party, he captured a sentry who was dozing under a tree and interrogated him briefly, as they might harm peasants who were carrying loads under the enemy's coercion, if they raided them hastily without full knowledge of enemy disposition in its camp. The prisoner had a loose tongue. He confessed that the Japanese troops occupied the center of the camp and the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers were sleeping around them, with the peasants located at the outermost circle, as they had been regarded as shields. He added that only puppet Manchukuo army soldiers stood guard and that the Japanese soldiers from Korea were fast asleep' with their wet shoes drying beside campfires.

O Jung Hup divided his party into three-man groups and disguised them as patrolmen. They went deep into the middle of the camp passing the guards in safety, giving the countersign. Each group abruptly opened fire on the tents of the Japanese soldiers.

The enemy in the tents, awakened by the gunshots, ran helter-skelter; they had no time to put on their shoes. Many officers and men fell, screaming at the bullets they shot blindly. The camp resembled a stirred hornet nest. The raiding party slipped out of the battlefield, exploiting the confusion of the enemy. The enemy exchanged fire among themselves throughout the night, causing wholesale death. Nearly all those who narrowly escaped froze to death. They could not endure the bitter cold of Mt. Paektu, running off without shoes or fur coats.

The survivors cut the heads of the dead soldiers and took to flight, carrying them in sacks on horse-carts, as they could not carry hundreds of corpses scattered over the camp site. After the battle at Heixiazigou we fought successful battles in several places near Yalu. On November 20 we raided the town of Shisidaogou in Changbai County, a base of the enemy's "punitive" forces and destroyed a few days later the enemy stationed in Shangcun in Taoquanli, Shisandaogou. Some small units conducted political and military activities around Shiwudaogou and Shijiudaogou.

The enemy was so frightened at the battle near Heixiazigou and subsequent battles that it did not venture to approach our camp on Mt. Paektu for two or three months. However, this did not mean that it had abandoned its efforts to effect "punitive" operations. It schemed to renew "punitive" operations by gaining time. We remained vigilant. The whole unit was put on the alert to prevent any infiltration by enemy spies. We also adopted new tactical measures to foil enemy moves. The situation at the foot of Mt. Paektu remained quiet for some time.

Mound this time I called Lee Hun, district head of Shijiudaogou, to the camp and taught him the directions and methods of underground work; around this time I also had a talk with the people from Shiqidaogou, who brought supplies to the secret camp. Interviews with Park Tal and Park In Jin, the publication of the tentative regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, rapid expansion of the ARF organizations - all these events are still associated in my memory with the winter of late 1936 - early 1937 in the Mt. Paektu area. I recall fondly An Tok Hun, a peasant in Shijiudaogou, Changbai County.

I met him around the time when mythological legends about me were widespread in the area of Changbai County. Everyone believed that if Kim Il Sung touched a pinecone, it would turn into a bullet. An Tok Hun, displaying an unusual curiosity about such strange stories, showered us with perplexing questions as soon as we entered his house. Fortunately, he talked only to Kim Phyong who was sitting at the fireside as he had mistaken him for the unit commander. Therefore I had no need to involve myself in their conversation. Their conversation was extremely amusing.

"Is it true that the General can anticipate future events, much farther than three days ahead?" This was the first question An Tok Hun asked Kim Phyong.

"Yes, of course," answered Kim Phyong with a blank face.

An Tok Hun nodded his head in satisfaction. Then he asked again, "The old men in the upper village say that he keeps his eyes open when he has something to do and shuts them when there is nothing to do. May I believe it?"

"Yes, you may. The General closes his eyes when there is nothing to do, but whenever he opens his eyes, a great event happens."

"And is it true that he employs the art of compressing the distance?"

"Yes, it is. The General acts with supernatural swiftness and flies freely everywhere, appearing now in the east and then in the west."

"Rumour has it that General Kim is Protean and outshines legendary Hong Kil Tong, and that is true."

Each question was absurd and the answer was no less absurd, but as the host and guest were so serious about their exchange I merely listened to their question-and-answer session without even thinking of stopping them. To my surprise, Kim Phyong, who was usually so candid and simple, did not feel ashamed or awkward about giving such absurd answers. An Tok Hun asked him how many times he had met General Kim and whether the General was staying in the village at that time.

He again answered immediately that he saw him frequently and that the General was staying there at that very moment.

When the host left for a few minutes, I reproached Kim Phyong mildly for speaking such nonsense.

Kim Phyong said with a smile, "If the people believe in a legend, we trust say that the legend is true. The people claim that there is a mysterious General sent from Heaven to our Korea, owing to their desire to see a General who will win back their country. If they believe that such a General exists, they will be confident that the deprived country will be won back and will turn out more courageously in the holy anti-

Japanese war.

"Our compatriots have begun to think that our nation has a General, well-versed in the Divine art, no matter how the Japanese swagger about now, that they should not be scared by the Japanese brigands, and that they can surely liberate Korea if they fight, following General Kim. This does not imply worship of you alone, Comrade Commander. This reflects absolute trust in and expectation from our Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The people want this to be true, so why should we deny these facts and thereby discourage them?"

Hearing Kim Phyong, I made up my mind to live up to the people's expectations and trust by conducting more audacious and adroit military operations.

True to his words, the people gained great strength from the legendary stories about us. Deriving their confidence from the words that there was a General in Korea who put the Japanese into tight corners, a large number of sturdy young people vied with one another to join the People's Revolutionary Army. To be candid, we benefited greatly from those popular legends.

Later An Tok Hun also joined the People's Revolutionary Army. He fought as bravely as any other soldiers, but fell in battle in Mengjiang. Lee Chi Ho never forgot the heart-rending experience of burying him with fallen leaves and snow.

In 1937 the enemy began to attack our secret camps again.

As the enemy's attempts to stamp out the anti-Japanese armed forces, which were making frequent appearances in Manchuria and the northern frontier of Korea proved abortive, the Japanese Emperor, in compliance with the requests of the military, dispatched Shidei, his aide-de-camp, as special envoy to inspect for a month the border areas on the Yalu River, where their "peace maintenance" efforts had been ruffled by the brisk guerrilla activities of the revolutionary army and, also discuss with Minami, Governor-General of Korea, Ueda, commander of the Kwangtung Army, and Koiso, commander of the Japanese army in Korea, the measures to intensify the "punitive" offensive against the People's Revolutionary Army. By imperial order, the aide-de-camp flew from Tokyo to the region over the Yalu River. His trip led to an intensification of the enemy's "punitive" operations.

The enemy's surprise "punitive" operation against the Hongtoushan Secret Camp synchronized with Shidei's inspection of the frontier region. The supply personnel of the revolutionary army were busy preparing for celebrations of the New Year's Day of 1937 by the lunar calendar. Our main combat force was out in the Diyangxi and Heixiazigou Secret Camps, advance operational bases, and I was in the Hongtoushan Secret Camp with my guards. I left the camp two days before New Year's Day for serious reasons.

First of all I dropped in at the Duoguling Secret Camp, situated in a valley between Hongtoushan and Hengshan, to console Kim Jong Bu, and proceeded to the rearmost secret camp on Mt. Paektu, where my

interview with Kim Il-sung took place, the interview reported by the magazine Samcholl'i.

The Hengshan Secret Camp, which was also called the rearmost camp on Mt. Paektu, included a log-hut, where sick and weak Children's Corps members recuperated, a hospital with Ri Kye Sun, Park Sun U and other infirm and wounded people, under medical care, Park Yong Sun's weapons repair shop, and Park Su Hwan's sewing unit. Wei Zhieng-min, who was suffering from a heart disease, was recuperating there. Around that time the personnel of the Secretariat, including "Tobacco Pipe", were also working in that most distant site.

After acquainting myself with the work and living conditions of the people in the secret camp and taking appropriate measures, I held a meeting of the Party Committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, involving some military and political cadres including Kim Phyong and Kwon Yong Byok.

The meeting reviewed the military and political activities of the KPRA's main force after the meeting of the military and political cadres at Heixiazigou and discussed the immediate tasks for defeating outright the enemy's "large winter punitive operations". The meeting elaborated particularly on the matters of the combat units' tactical and strategic moves to the areas of Taoquanli, Limingshui and Fusong and the timing of operations to launch into the homeland. The matters were debated in greater detail at a meeting held in Xigang at a later date. The meeting went on to discuss the establishment of the organizational system under the Party Committee of the KPRA and organized the Changbai County Party Committee with Kwon Yong Byok as its chairman and Ri Je Sun as its vice-chairman, and the ARF's Changbai County Committee headed by Lee Je Sun.

The meeting was tremendously significant in thwarting the enemy's "large winter punitive operations", defending the Paektusan Base and the history of party building in our country. The meeting was also attended by Wei Zheng-min. The lunar New Year's Day, celebrated on Hengshan, was very impressive. On that day Park Yong Sun made noodle-press with cans and made starch noodles for the festival. The sewing unit made dumplings and the people in the hospital prepared hand-cut noodles. The people in Hengshan prepared a variety of rare dishes and treated us to a sumptuous feast.

Later Wei Zheng-min often recalled the New Year's Day of 1937, when he ate starch noodles with relish at Hengshan Secret Camp, and praised Park Yong Sun's skill whenever he had the opportunity.

The lunar New Year's Day of 1937 reminds me of Qiao Bang-xin, a guardsman of Chinese nationality. On that day Qiao ate two bowls of noodle, on top of 15 dumplings. The five brothers of Qiao had joined the guerrillas on the same day in Diyangxi. He was the youngest. Therefore we always called him "Xiaowuzi" (the fifth). "Xiaowuzi" had once been wounded in his hand. At that time I had conducted a surgical operation on his hand with a razor. Although it may have been painful for him, as it was conducted without any special anesthetics, he endured it wonderfully.

As the wound did not heal easily, he could not tighten his belt with his hands after paying a call of nature. Therefore I had to help him each time. When his shoes got wet, I helped him take them off and dried

them by the fire. Once I had been to Wudaoyangcha, Antu County, with guardsmen to attend a meeting and we had been encircled by the enemy owing to a betrayer. At that time Qiao fought bravely; one of his brothers had been killed during the battle to our sorrow.

After enjoying New Year's Day at Hengshan, we returned to the Hongtoushan Secret Camp the next day. Not long after our return, gunshot was raised by our long-range observation post. The situation was very pressing and the odds were against us. Some of Lee Tu Su's company and a machine-gun unit on guard duty for me were all we had. The enemy numbered at least 500. Worse still, the sentries at the observation post detected the enemy, when they had almost climbed up the height where the post was situated, at a height where they could overpower us.

I ordered my men to occupy the southern ridge quickly. Then I Ordered RI Tu Su, company commander, to remove the sentries from the post to open the way for the enemy, ensuring that they withdraw along the knife ridge within sight of the enemy. The ridge was a narrow lane; Slipping here meant falling down to the bottom of the valley and into the deep snow. If we lured the enemy along the lane, one of our men could defeat 100 or 1,000 enemy soldiers without difficulty. The southern ridge of Hongtoushan was a strategic stronghold; on the ridge we could attack the enemy, enjoying a full view of them closing in along the knife ridge, and annihilate them when they took to flight, by driving them into the valley under the ridge.

On my orders, the sentries lured the enemy along the knife ridge. The valley between the southern ridge and knife ridge became literally a "trap". Another factor contributed to our victory; Lee Tu Su had, on my orders, made the slope of the southern ridge icy. Owing to the layer of ice, not an enemy soldier could climb up the ridge occupied by us.

The battle of Hongtoushan went against a common military knowledge. Despite heavy odds, we virtually annihilated the enemy. On our side only Lee Tu Su was wounded by a bullet and sent to hospital in the rear.

After the battle I sent a night raid party to the enemy's camp and also took measures to slip off towards Fusong, as the enemy, although it had withdrawn, would return with reinforcements at any time. It would not be advantageous to continue fighting there, as our force was too small. The best thing to be done in such a situation was to slip away. While discussing ways of pulling out, a bugle note of our guerrilla unit for a charge rang out down the valley, followed by loud rifle crackings. The unit led by Oh Jung Hup was attacking the enemy.

On hearing from the people that the enemy's "punitive" forces had moved towards Hongtoushan, he ran hurry-scurry to us, fearing for the safety of Headquarters. Along with the night raid party we had sent, he showered heavy fire upon the enemy's camp and annihilated to the last man the remnants of the enemy.

After wiping out the enemy, Oh Jung Hup sent Han 1k Su to me to ask whether he should lead his unit into Hongtoushan. I ordered him to move as planned, now that the enemy's raid had been completely frus

trated. Even after receiving my orders, he confirmed the safety of Headquarters before returning to Heixiazigou. Oh Jung Hup was truly faithful to me.

A peasant in Erdaogang, who had carried goods for the Japanese troops at the time of the Hongtoushan battle and disposed of their dead bodies, said the following to a group of Korean visitors:

"In those days the Japanese soldiers drafted one man by force from each household. Most of us, who had been forced to do the dirty work, had frost-bitten toes and in the worst cases lost all their toes. When I was drafted for the first time, I was scared. Lying on the battlefield, I sweated all over. However, all the battles ended in the victory of the guerrillas. I was so glad that I forgot all my fatigue. When the enemy took flight, they told us to bring along those dirty corpses, a really disgusting job. At the time of Hongtoushan battle there were so many corpses that we could not carry them all on stretchers; so we unwrapped fr puttees from the dead, tied their necks and dragged them." One day I received a Japanese press delegation visiting our country, which included a tall newspaperman.

During the interview he silently took notes. However, during a luncheon he unlocked his heart. He said:

"I thought you, President Kim, would be a ferocious man, as you had been known as the 'tiger of Mt. Paektu', but today I realize that you are a benevolent man. To tell the truth, I was second lieutenant of the Japanese army, who narrowly escaped from destruction at the Hongtoushan battle. I survived your raid, because I was sent out to inspect the sentries at that time. My survival cost me a beating by the military police. I had a hard time of it. This incident induced me to abandon my military career and I subsequently became a journalist." The enemy involved in the Hongtoushan battle was a composite "punitive" force made up of Japanese and puppet Manchukuo troops. On 8-whole Japanese soldiers were killed; few Manchukuo troops died.

The Japanese officers beat and kicked the Manchukuo officers, saying, "How can you return alive when all the Imperial Army soldiers were killed in the battle? Have the guerrillas' bullets been magnetized to trace only Japanese soldiers? There is no such bullet. Your survival is proof positive that you doubtlessly maintain secret relations with the guerrillas."

What is the main reason behind our victory in the battle of Hongtoushan, fought against overwhelming numerical strength? It can be attributed to the strong mental power of our men.

The conviction of sure victory, an unbreakable fighting spirit, the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and fortitude, devotion and self-sacrificing spirit - these qualities are now called in our country the "revolutionary spirit of Paektu".

We emerged victorious in every battle with the enemy at all times and in all places, because we were full of confidence in victory, and maintained an indefatigable fighting and self-sacrificing spirit without losing our composure and hope, even in confrontation with an enemy force, which was dozens of times stronger in number.

Many examples prove our anti-Japanese guerrillas' unfailing confidence in victory and their indomitable fighting spirit.

Lee Tu Su spent hard days with a few sick and wounded guerrillas, including Lee Kye Sun and Park Sun Il, in a hospital located in a cave, under the treatment of doctor Song. It was a hospital in name only; it had no proper medicines, syringes and scalpels. However, this ill-equipped hospital brimmed over with the "revolutionary spirit of Paektu Park Sun Il, head of the munitions section of the 2nd Division, fell seriously ill; gangrene set in his foot as he had not received treatment in time."

Immediately after the battle of Pochonbo I sent to those in hospital medicines, canned food, summer uniforms, shoes and other goods captured at the battle and provisions with a letter wishing them a speedy recovery, so that they could join us on the battlefield.

On receiving the letter, Park Sun Il produced a saw he had made personally with an empty can and declared that he would amputate his gangrened foot with his own hands. All his comrades, including doctor Song, dissuaded him, advising him to seek out another path.

Nevertheless, Park Sun Il remained determined; he reproached his comrades for being passive in their sympathy for him. He said, "I've already decided to amputate my foot with my hands. I need only a little help from you to put my determination into effect. Please hold my foot. I want to recover as soon as possible and return to my revolutionary post."

I heard that he amputated his gangrened foot on his own with a phi-ant tin saw, singing revolutionary songs for six whole days and falling unconscious only after the operation. Fortunately the wound healed up without causing further trouble.

In the early winter of that year they moved deeper into the mountain, built a grass hut and lived there. However, as bad luck would have it, the hut was detected by the enemy's "punitive" forces.

Spotting the enemy before anybody else, Park Sun Il grabbed an enemy Soldier who was flying at him to capture him alive, and tumbled down a cliff with him with only one aim in mind: to save his comrades. He shouted, "The punitive forces!" Although he had preserved his life by amputating his foot for the revolution, he laid down his life without hesitation for his comrades. Such people lived on Mt. Paektu and fought there.

Thanks to his cries, Lee Tu Su who had been away from the hut to collect firewood, could easily escape. However, Lee Kye Sun and a few others were captured. The rest were all killed.

Left alone on the mountain without his comrades, provisions and hut, Lee Tu Su suffered severely. He went hungry without seeing a grain of cereals for six whole days. Then he found two bowlfuls of beans Lee Kye Sun had saved grain by grain when preparing meals. After eating the beans, he subsisted on grass, which wild boars are said to graze. He had to live in the open like a primitive man with a piece of

threadbare sack on his body in the bitter cold of Mt. Paektu, as his clothes had been worn out. How can I describe all his sufferings in those days? Crows flew in every day and perched on the tree branches around him, croaking noisily. At times they would fly low by turns and flap his face with their wings. Lee Tu Su himself thought that he would be better off dead, as even the embers he had been keeping with so much care in the ashes had died out.

But, just when he had decided to give up his life, he was reminded of my wish to meet again on the battlefield after full recovery and the last moments of Park Sun Il, who had tumbled down a cliff to save his comrades.

"I have no right to die. Death would be treachery to the comrades who saved me at the cost of their lives. The Commander ordered me to survive and come to the battlefield again. I have no right to disobey such an order."

He made desperate efforts to survive. Living alone for three months and 20 days on the mountain, which was no better than an isolated island, without any food and clothes, he miraculously preserved his life. Like him, Park Sun Il, Lee Kye Sun and all the other comrades-in-arms were undying men, who had cherished spirits as high as the peaks of Paektu, even when sacrificing their lives.

After the battle of Hongtoushan, we fought at Taoquanli and Limingshui successively. Soon after the battle of Hongtoushan I led the main force to the Xiagangqu area in Changbai County. As the enemy concentrated again large forces in the area surrounding Mt. Paektu and conducted an extensive search, it was necessary to attract their attention to another place, in order to unfold a fresh military operation. Our main unit's move to that area constituted a tactical move to crush the enemy's "winter punitive operations" once and for all, after dispersing their forces and throwing them into confusion. We had originally planned to meet the comrades from southern Manchuria after the lunar New Year's Day.

When the unit arrived at a village near Yaofangzi, I ordered it to billet there and sent out a scout party to Taoquanli. On their way to the village the scouts came across a member of the underground organization in Taoquanli who was coming to our small unit with information of the enemy's movements. He reported that a Jingan army unit, which had gone here and there to no avail all winter, tricked by our tactics of combining large and small units' activities, was roaming in search of our Headquarters to fight to the finish.

To reach Taoquanli or Choeryonggam valley from Yaofangzi, we had to pass through a long lane between birch trees, brambles, reeds taller than a man, and entanglements of purple eulalia. We went to the upper village in Taoquanli along that lane; at that time Choe Kum San, my orderly, stepped in the shrubbery and had his eye prickled by a thorn, raising a fuss.

If we drew the enemy in that 12-kilometre-long lane, they would have to march in one line and our main force could lie in ambush at important points behind fallen trees to vanquish them piecemeal without great difficulty.



Deciding to make the enemy dog-tired via enticement by a small unit, and annihilate them to the last man via the ambush of a large force, I called Oh Jung Hup to Headquarters. I instructed him to lure the enemy into the lane of the plateau and beat them piecemeal. When the enemy's marching column appeared, the decoy party opened surprise fire at the head of column and then quickly ran away to the plateau, full of thorn-bush where our men were lying in ambush. The duped enemy chased them rashly.

The decoy party entered the lane tangled with thorn bush. The thorn-bush resembled a barrier, just like a wire entanglement, to an enemy who had not been accustomed to mountain life. Owing to the thorn bush, the enemy force was naturally cut into pieces. The men in ambush unleashed a shower of bullets here and there on the enemy's column. The enemy ran pell-mell up and down the valley and then fell bleeding on the snow. Hundreds of the enemy were smashed by our tactics of piecemeal annihilation. When dusk began to set, the enemy fled to Taoquanli, leaving a large number of those killed and wounded in the battlefield.

The underground organization in Taoquanhi informed us that the enemy seemed to return to their base that night. Apparently they were making haste out of fear of a night raid.

More than two hours were needed for our unit to go from our assembly place to the road in front of Taoquanli. We needed to delay the time of the enemy's departure in order to gain time for our advance along the road. So I gave the underground organization the directive to delay the preparations of their supper.

The organization delayed the preparation of supper deliberately to enable our unit to climb down the plateau and occupy the ambush position. The enemy, in a fever of fretfulness, urged that supper be served quickly, but Jong Tong Chol, the village head and a member of the underground organization, dragged on the preparations of the meal by killing chickens and hulling rice as if giving a feast, saying that he could not slight the treat of the Jingan army soldiers, who had come all the way to his village. Consequently, the enemy left the village almost at midnight. By that time we had already prepared the ambush on both sides of the road and had been awaiting them for almost half an hour.

In this ambush we completely annihilated the Jingan army unit. The corpses of the enemy were spread over the plateau covered with purple eulalia. The guerrillas disarmed the corpses and evacuated quietly. I was told that 24 oxen had been needed to carry those corpses to Shisandaogou, each sleigh carrying nine corpses. From that day the people felt delighted at the enemy's defeat, saying, "What does a sleigh load of 9 corpses by 24 make?"

After the battle at Taoquanli our unit moved to the valley of Fuhoushui. There we met comrades from southern Manchuria and, in joint operations with them, fought another victorious battle. It was the conclusive battle, putting an end to the enemy's "large winter punitive operations".

Thanks to the defeat of the "punitive" operations which the enemy had planned to the best of their ability and the successive victories of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, the Changbai area had

completely become our world. The Japanese imperialists desperately schemed to check the revolutionary army's advance into the homeland by overpowering the KPRA with military strength, but only suffered defeat at every battle. They resorted to every means, calling me "boss of the bandits" and "ringleader of the communist bandits", in order to ruin me politically and entomb me morally, but to no avail. So they trembled with fear, describing our guerrilla tactics as protean and elusive.

The Japanese and Manchukuo army and police were driven into a right corner by our ever-changing tactics. The enemy most feared "net Ometics". They repeatedly emphasized through their publications and internal directives that one should not be trapped in the net tactics in mountainous areas. They all feared that once caught in the net, they would be unable to escape. "Net tactics" is a name they gave to the ambush, the most typical guerrilla tactics of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. Net here means encirclement or pit with no way-out.

After defeat in the "punitive" operations from late 1936 to early 1937, the enemy spoke in great detail about their experiences in those operations, the hard times they had faced, trapped in our "net tactics". The May 1937 issue of Tiexin, the magazine of the puppet Manchukuo police, carried the writings of Ishizawa, the Japanese military instructor of the Composite Brigade, entitled On the Raid of Kim Il Sung's Guerrillas and Impressions of the Recent Punitive Operations and later his article in the form of an interview, entitled, My Experience of the Punitive Operations.

In these writings he acknowledged the tactical perfection of the "net tactics", adding, "Throughout the period of recent 'punitive' operations we can see that the guerrillas mainly employ 'net tactics'. They resort to such stereotyped tactics not only when their force is smaller than ours but also when it is bigger. In February this year all our soldiers fought bravely in an encounter with Kim Il Sung's guerrillas near Dajiapigou southwest of the Fusong county town but died honorable deaths in their defeat, failing mainly because they were trapped in the 'net tactics' of the guerrillas."

Confessing that there were many such examples, he once again warned of the need to be wary of the nets.

Apparently Comintern schools paid attention to our guerrilla tactics. Park Kwang Son, an anti-Japanese revolutionary veteran, recalled whenever he had the occasion, that the school teachers had frequently mentioned the guerrilla tactics of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The Comintern ran schools in the Soviet Union; the communists in Manchuria in those days called them Comintern schools or Comintern universities. These schools gave political and military education to the students and communists, who had come there on the recommendations of revolutionary organizations in various countries in the world. Park Kwang Son studied in one of them for some years.

The gun reports, raised by the KPRA in the Changbai area, struck terror into the hearts of the top hierarchies of the Government-General of Korea, the Japanese army and police in Korea, and the politicians, warlords and capitalists in Japan. Whereas the aggressors and reactionaries were struck silent by the gun reports, our people were delighted.

The daring military operations we carried on with credit in Changbai opened up the way to enable the KPRA to advance into the homeland. These operations made the status of our revolutionary army the indisputable main force of the Korean revolution.

I do not think that the battles we fought in Changbai are world-breaking, great battles. In the world history of war, there are a great number of well-publicized campaigns and decisive battles, which led to thousands, tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands of casualties. Our operations involved only hundreds of our troops, while the enemy's casualties numbered only hundreds or thousands.

However, we look back on these battles with great pride. We treasure the spirit of the revolutionary army displayed in the arduous struggle. The willpower of the people's revolutionary army overpowered the enemy. It is a law that victory is inevitably won when a man overpowers the enemy mentally.

Consequently we treasure the traces of the bloody battles we fought in Changbai.

## 15.4. Tojong - Park In Jin

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The inaugural issue of Samil Wolgan, mouthpiece of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, carried a short article headlined, "Mr. X, a Local Leader of the Chondoist Religion, Personally Visits Representative of Our ARF".

It noted that an anonymous person on the Chondoist committee, which had a strong mass following at home and abroad, inspired by intense patriotism, had called on me, representative of the ARF, and expressed his support for the programme and all the policies of our ARE and readiness to call one million members of the Young Chondoist Party to the battle front for Korea's independence, promising to strengthen ties with the association.

The person mentioned in the article was Tojong (a title of a local leader of Chondoist religion) Park In Jin. The few lines of this article, which had to keep his name anonymous for secrecy's sake, hides untold stories, which are too numerous to be published in a single volume. To convey the circumstances inducing him to visit us in the Paektusan Secret Camp, we have to refer to another article in the same issue, dealing with the courageous patriotic young people, who joined en masse the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. It read as follows:

"Courageous young patriots from northwestern Korea are crossing the Rivers Yalu and Tuman in groups of seven or eight every day ... to join Commander Kim's unit.... As they are familiar with the terrain, roads as well as the local situation in Korea, they have volunteered to be in the vanguard of the armed detachments moving to and from the country."

This happened when we stopped off at Xinchangdong village, for the second or third time I guess, after moving to the border area. Several young people from the village requested that we accept them as soldiers. I proposed that as they were volunteers from the border area they should all be recruited, unless they had any physical handicaps. Lee Tong Hak said that it seemed to him that the other young men were all eligible, except for the "Chondoist enthusiast" from Phungsan, who ought to be reconsidered. There were limits to the united front; how on earth could an adherent of Chondoist faith be allowed into the revolutionary army without discrimination, he asked, shaking his head.

I told Lee Tong Hak to fetch the young man, called a "Chondoist enthusiast", from the villagers, to Headquarters. Although poorly dressed, a good-looking young man appeared before me with a steady gait, following Lee Tong Hak. I was impressed by his double-eyelid eyes and gold tooth, revealed during his smile.

He was Lee Chang Son who lived in the same village in Sul-ri, Chonnam Sub-county, Phungsan County with Park In Jin, in charge of the Chondoists in the Ryongbuk area, who had educated him, and joined the Young Chondoist Party under his influence. As he was the top disciple and favorite of Park In Jin, he was constantly watched and shadowed by the police. Tojong Park, his master, was blacklisted; he had been in

jail for years, charged with playing a leading role in the March First Movement in Phungsan.

The Japanese police hung a small box under the eaves of his house for surveillance purposes and patrolled his home once a week at regular intervals to follow his movements; the police chief himself patrolled there once a month. This unpleasant regular patrol and incessant watch extended even to Lee Chang Son. Not a single policeman who had been to Tojong's house, went past without peering into his home. Therefore, he said, he had moved with the consent of his master to the Changbai area, where he might be a bit freer from the molestation of the Japanese police.

When I unreservedly approved the enlistment of Lee Chang Son, Lee Tong Hak grumbled as though he had been wrongly overruled.

"Comrade Commander, what kind of splendid guerrilla will a religionist make? Working youths are as plentiful as blackberries. Why recruit a Chondoist enthusiast of all people, leaving a dark blot on the organizational composition of our ranks?"

I reproached him, half in jest, half in earnest.

"I'm disappointed at your short-sightedness. You recognized at a glance that Lee Je Sun was a man of ability, but failed to realize that he's a gem. You're not squint-eyed, but sometimes your view is surprisingly incorrect."

"Marx, too, defined religion as opium, didn't he? What kind of a treasure do you think a Chondoist believer of that sort would become? I hope he'll never become a trouble-maker." Clearly he was too prejudiced against religion.

I had to prevail on him in real earnest:

"Marx's definition of religion as opium must not be construed radically and unilaterally. He was warning against the temptation of a religious mirage and was not opposing believers in general. We must welcome and join hands with any patriotic religionist, no matter what he or she is. You must realize that our guerrilla army is a patriotic armed force, whose primary mission is national salvation against Japan and the people's army which fights for the sake of the workers and peasants and also the Korean nation as a whole.

Admittedly, the central role in this army is played by us communists. But that does not imply the exclusion of other circles or forces. Even a religionist must be enrolled in our ranks without hesitation, if he so desires. However, you are unable to see the unexpected windfall we have in our hands. With his help we can sow the seeds of the ARF among the Chondoists in the Kapsan, Phungsan and Samsu areas and bring the vast area of Ryongbuk under our influence. Time will only prove the worth of that young man, so you had better treat him well and take good care of him."

I cannot say how much Lee Tong Hak accepted my words.

The nickname "Chondoist enthusiast", given by Xinchangdong's villagers, stayed with Lee Chang Son, even after he had become a guerrilla. It bore little of comradely love, and reeked more of unfriendly derision and scorn. Every time he heard the nickname he grimaced and openly showed his disgust.

Once an entertainment party was held at the secret camp in honor of the recruits. Veterans and recruits performed alternately; every act was very interesting. That day the veterans exhibited their repertoires in full for the recruits, and the latter, in high hilarity, vied with each other. Regrettably, however, the meaningful party fell flat, due to a slip of the tongue by the compere. It was the turn of Lee Chang Son, when the serious blunder was made by the compere, who said, "Now we will hear a song by a Comrade 'Chondoist enthusiast', a raw recruit from Xinchangdong." Upset by the announcement, Lee Chang Son walked off without singing.

This occasioned heated controversy in our unit. The compere of the party became the focus of criticism. "What an improper remark to call a newcomer, not a veteran, as a 'Chondoist enthusiast'! Although one may slight and mock others, one should know where to draw the line."

Some people blamed Lee Chang Son's narrow-mindedness. Their criticism went as follows: "What does it matter if he was nicknamed? If he disappeared without singing, what has become of the party? If he can't suppress this sort of anger, does he deserve to be called a man, who left home for the revolutionary army? He can hardly make a good fighter. He is effeminate."

The different views about the compere of the party and Lee Chang alone suffices to prove its national character.

"Chondoism is a patriotic and progressive religion in its basic tenets and ideals. Its mottos, 'Poguk anmin' (defending the country and providing welfare for the people) and 'Kwangje changsaeng'(Deliverance of the people), provide a graphic demonstration. "The adherents of Chondoist faith exerted themselves under these slogans for decades to achieve the country's independence and build an ideal society, where all people enjoy happy lives. Should we unconditionally oppose such national religion and abuse its adherent as a 'Chondoist enthusiast' for no other reason than that it is a religion?"

Once my explanations on the ideal of Chondoism, that is, love of one's country and people, and the patriotic struggle of the Chondoists and on the principled stand one should abide by in relation to the Chondoists and the united front policy, had been clearly expounded to all, Lee Chang Son's nickname "Chondoist enthusiast" was obliterated. He was instead accorded a new nickname, "Kimppai". This means a man with a gold tooth. When "Kimppai" was treated as his real name in the guerrilla army, he exploited this fact and changed his surname to "Kim" and "Kap Pu" as the given name, calling himself "Kim Kap Pu". When he later toured on political work he went by this name.

Despite his rural origins, he was very intelligent and clever with relatively high levels of cultural

knowledge. He particularly had a forte for song and dance, and comic chat; consequently, he almost ran the show at an entertainment party. As he was so affable he quickly made friends with strangers. He was exceedingly open-hearted. But he had a self-conceited disposition.

One or two months after his enrollment in the army the following thing happened. One day Kim Phyong, head of the organizational section at the political department of the unit, came to me and said that "Kimppai" had asked him if it was not high time for his promotion to at least the position of company political instructor. At the time the political instructor of the company "Kimppai" belonged to was not very competent in his political, theoretical and working ability. Learned "Kimppai", who had once worked as a cadre in the Young Chondoist Party, found it intolerable to receive guidance from a superior, who he considered inferior to him.

I summoned Lee Chang Son and told him about the company political instructor's merits and exploits which he had not heard of before, and gave him some essential advice:

"In future you may work in more important posts than political instructor of a company. But just as a hundred-mile journey begins with one step and as a student passes through a primary school course, one needs to pass an elementary probation and training stage to become an able military and political worker.

You have just passed probation for a Soldier of the KPRA. In the next stage you must train yourself to be an able political operative. When I received you into our unit, I intended to you do political work among Chondoists in the future. You will become a political operative, who will lead hundreds, thousands or tens of thousands of Chondoists into the ranks of the ARF, far greater than the numerical strength of a company, and grow up to be a greater political worker.

I will assign the organizational section head Kim Phyong and the propaganda section head Kwon Yong Byok of Headquarters to you as your tutors. Try to acquire political theories and master methods of work among the masses and learn from the experiences of work underground. You must, above all, acquire popular traits. Bear in mind that modesty is the most laudable virtue and remain a student throughout your life, regarding revolutionary veterans, your contemporaries and juniors as your teachers.

Then everyone will respect and follow you." Sometime later, we transferred him from the combat company to the political department of Headquarters. Thereafter "Kimppai" was a secretary in charge of propaganda of the 7th Regiment within the unit and externally a political operative for Chondoist religion. Later on he handed over the secretary's assignment to another man and became a professional political worker.

Lee Chang Son rendered distinguished services in winning Park In Jin and a large number of other Chondoists in the northern Korean region into the organizational network under the influence of the ARF.

Through his assistance we obtained knowledge of Park In Jin, as well as the internal situation of the Chondoist faith beforehand and opened up contacts with the Chondoists. Park In Jin was a man of

considerable eminence in the Chondoist hierarchy.

Park In Jin, with the religious name of Munam, joined the Chondoist faith in 1909 and became the Tojong of Jiwon-pho in 1932 following consecutive services on different levels of the Chondoist hierarchy.

At the time Chondoism had 29 pho all over the country; the Jiwonpho, which included Phungsan, Samsu, Kapsan and Changbai areas, was said to be one of the biggest pho organizations. Park In uin was also called the Ryongbuk Tojong.

His father belonged to the Tonghak Party, which fought gallantly in the southern force of rebellion commanded by Jon Pong Jun in the Kabo Peasant War. Defeat in the peasant war was followed by the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people, involved in the war so that he left his native parts and fled from the far end of Jolla Province to the land of Ryongbuk. Park In Jin's life journey was steered by the spirit of resistance, he had acquired from the lives of Chondoist leaders and his father, who used to tell him about these leaders.

The March First Popular Uprising was the greatest trial, which tried his willpower and faith. He led the people of Phungsan on demonstrations, shouting hurrah and attacked the government office at the head of more than one thousand demonstrators, when he was seriously wounded under enemy fire.

He suffered hardships in Hamhung and Sodaemun prisons for three years. The harsh torture in prison, however, could not break the religious belief and spirit of resistance deeply engraved in his mind. On his release from prison, in contact with the Independence Army units, he actively engaged in aiding and assisting them for three or four years, traveling to many parts of the country. However, the Independence Army was driven out to alien land without proper resistance and he bade them a mournful and tearful farewell. At the end of his quest for a place far from Japanese clutches, he moved his family to the deep mountain village of Chonnam Sub-county Phungsan County.

There he opened a preaching room, as well as a night school. He propagated the doctrine of Chondoism to Lee Chang Son and other villagers and infused a patriotic spirit into them. However, the mountain village did not offer complete refuge. The punctual visits of unbidden guests to his home at the end of every week and month compelled him to leave the Thungsan area. Park In Jin moved to a new town in Changbai.

Lee Chang Son told me an interesting anecdote, which helped me Understand what Park In Jin was like.

This event happened when he went to a neighboring village to meet his prospective bride at the age of 29. As soon as the man and girl in question were presented, the old woman, the matchmaker, asked what his intentions were. Park In Jin replied that he had no objection to the marriage. But the old man, future father-in-law, said nothing, only puffing at his pipe.



"Is it true that you are twenty-four years old?"

This blunt question was spat out by the old man after a long silence; he obviously had a chip on his shoulder.

Guileless Park In Jin, who was never known to have told a lie in his life, responded truthfully that he was twenty-nine, unaware that the matchmaker had told the girl's father in advance that he was twenty-four, or five years younger than he really was. A moan escaped the lips of the matchmaker.

In those days people married when young, so single young men over 20 were considered as impotent or good-for-nothing. The old man, his future father-in-law, had good reason to frown. Park In Jin's family was so poor that he had enjoyed no chance of marriage.

The girl's father made the stunning declaration to Park In Jin that he would not agree to give his daughter to an aged man, who was almost 30.

Park In Jin was shocked; however, he gathered up his courage and asked the old man in rage, whether he was lacking a nose or eyes and pressed him to explain the faults he found in him.

Quite embarrassed, the old man explained that there was nothing special to speak of and everything was satisfactory, apart from the fact that he was too old. He was 11 years older than his daughter. If he agreed to the engagement and disregarded this fact, a scandal would spread that he had mated his beloved daughter to an aged widower. He said that he feared such developments.

This answer did not daunt Park In Jin. If there were no other reason, he said, he would marry the daughter of this house under any circumstances. Although aged, he had never touched a woman's hand. Why should he be treated as a widower? He would not leave before he had received the promise of marriage. If the old man was stubbornly opposed, he would take his daughter away in a sack, he warned, and persistently demanded a quick, affirmative answer.

The girl's brother chimed in, smiling that he had to pay 1,000 won if he wanted to marry his sister. This was a huge sum, enough to buy more than 20 cows. This was a fantastic sum, which was inconceivable to Park In Jin, who did not have even a calf. But he said that he would readily pay the money, if the old man promised to give him his daughter. The host, who was gazing at his face like a physiognomist, finally consented to the engagement.

In this way he became the son-in-law of the house, putting an end to his life as an old bachelor. It goes without saying that the thousand won was no longer important. The question of money had merely been raised to test the prospective bridegroom's guts. Apparently Tojong Park In Jin was a bold and headstrong man with a strong sense of self-respect and an uncommon fighting spirit. We shaped his image in the course of our talk with "Kimppai": it contained something, which pulled at people's heartstrings.

Preparations were finished to dispatch Lee Chang Son as political Operative to work in the line of Chondoism. Prior to his departure to see Park In Jin, I said to him with particular emphasis that we and Chondoist believers were both Koreans, who loved their country and nation, and friends of the poor and humble populace, whose first and foremost goal was to "defeat the Japanese" and "defend the country and provide welfare for the people", we should therefore join hands and pool our strength in the struggle against Japanese imperialism and that we desired that the representatives of both sides meet at one place for serious negotiations in the near future. "Kimppai" returned to the secret camp three days later.

Park In uin supported our proposal on waging the anti-Japanese war with our united forces and requested the dispatch of our representative to him for the parley.

I prepared myself for the parley with Tojong Park. However, some unavoidable circumstances prevented me from leaving the secret camp. This occurred immediately after the holding of the "Tumen conference" between Minami and Ueda. The People's Revolutionary Army had been faced serious challenges at the start of the enemy's "large winter punitive operation". In parallel with the "punitive" offensive, many spies ran amuck to do us harm.

My comrades-in-arms resolutely objected to my departure, saying that the Commander should not attend the negotiations in person for the safety of newly-established secret camps and my own security. Everybody's nerves were high strung, because it occurred right after the incident when a spy had stolen up close to our Headquarters.

Consequently I had no alternative and sent in my place Kim Phyong and Lee Chang Son to negotiate with Park In Jin.

Kim Phyong had tried his hand at all trades since childhood; he was a man of great working ability, who could implement any task without difficulty. He was well-versed in Chinese characters. He owed this to his five-to six-year-long study of Chinese characters as a child at a village school, I presume. As a grown-up, he received regular education at school, and in the revolutionary army was given military and political training at the school, which trained the commanding officers of the guerrilla army.

He once taught at school. The nomination of Kim Phyong as representative to the parley with the Chondoist followers, together with Lee Chang Son, was attributed on the whole to the deep consideration of his knowledge of the religion of Chondoism and rich experience of political activity.

The meeting between Park In Jin and our representatives took place in the living room of Lee Jon Hwa, head of Changbai County chapter of Chondoism in Wanggedong, Shiqidaogou, Changbai County.

At first Kim Phyong submitted the credentials bearing my signature, conveyed the Ten-Point Programme and the Inaugural Declaration of the ARE to Park In Jin and then entered into serious discussion on the alliance with the religious force of Chondoism.

Park In Jin displayed a keen interest in the type of government we planned to establish, after the Japanese imperialists had been driven out. He opposed either return to the monarchy, the government of old Korea, or the establishment of the soviet power of Russian style, or the conversion of the provisional government of the Republic of Korea, known as the "government in exile", into the legitimate government.

Referring to the first provision of the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, Kim Phyong explained that the people's power would be based on a parliamentary system of people's representatives, elected democratically in accordance with the general will of the entire Korean people. Park In Jin remarked that he would unconditionally approve, if the popular government was formed as stipulated in the ten-point programme, but frankly expressed his apprehension and doubt that a Soviet-style communist power might appear against our commitments when the time came to establish people's power, following the restoration of the country.

In those days the purge of the anti-party and hostile elements in the Soviet Union was under way; this factor was adversely affecting the peoples of neighboring countries. Kim Phyong emphatically assured him that, even if the communists who had waged the armed struggle, came to power, they would not build a Soviet-style communist power and that, as clearly defined in the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, the government we would build in our independent country would constitute a power, which fully embodies democracy, the power of the popular masses to administer state affairs as the master, people's power which would defend and represent the interests of the workers and peasants, and also the broad patriotic forces of all strata.

To corroborate the truth of his assertion, he talked about our reorganization of the "soviet" (government council) into the people's revolutionary government in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao.

Park In Jin said that he had no other comments to make about the Ten-Point Programme and the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF. If the programme and the declaration were not mere propaganda, but rather the reflection of our sincere intentions and unswerving determination to implement it, Chondoist believers would be willing to join the anti-Japanese national united front. But their participation was an important matter, which could not be determined and dealt with by himself alone. He promised to answer, after debating the matter with the brethren and Choe Rin, head of the center of Chondoist faith.

He then humbly inquired if he could realize his wish and call directly at the secret camp and talk to me before paying a visit to Choe Rin. Kim Phyong promised to do his utmost to realize his wish.

Park In Jin was too cautious to say whether he would cooperate or not. He gave only noncommittal answers, making some pretexts. It was clear that he wanted to decide only after meeting me. Nevertheless, the talks were very constructive. The following day Park In Jin rallied more than 50 men and women believers under the Changbai County chapter and gave a grand banquet in honor of the representatives of the KPRA. A hog was butchered and rice-cake pounded to treat our representatives warmly.

An entertainment party was held amidst the Young Chondoist Party members on sentry duty. The song and dance performances inspired as one the love for the country and the fighting spirit, so that Kim Phyong said he was moved afresh by the patriotic passion of Chondoist followers.

Lee Jon Hwa, the master of the house, sang the song "Met, Met, I've Met the Enemies", sung by U Tok Sun, who accompanied An Jung Gun when the latter left for Harbin in order to assassinate Ito Hirobumi; his song was so touching that everyone shed tears. Early in winter 1936 Park In Jin paid us a visit at the secret camp. Lee Jon Hwa still lives on in my memory among his entourage. They were all in dark turumagi (Korean overcoat?Tr.).

Their turumagi had two button hooks, instead of one, as a substitute for coat strings. The adherents of the Chondoist faith had their own style of dress and wore turumagi, onspicuous with button hooks, to distinguish themselves from other people. On meeting me, Park In Jin expressed his heartfelt gratitude for inviting him to the secret camp. "I had not expected that my wish to meet you, General, would come true so easily. I am deeply ashamed that I have not contributed a rifle or a penny to the anti-Japanese war for independence."

His words revealed his modesty, politeness and conscientiousness. I told him sincerely: "We hold a man's heart dearer than money or goods. We think it is more important how ardently he loves his country than his contribution of a small sum of money or batch of rifles. I'm happy to have heard that you are still constant in your love for the country. For us your noble mind is an encouragement several hundred times strong. It is a great inspiration and pleasure that we have people like you, who are true to our patriotic principles in this present murky world."

Park In Jin responded: "Your praise is too much for me. I'm not worthy of your compliments." He apologized from the bottom of his heart for the fact that he had for a brief moment been fooled by the propaganda of the Japanese under the false impression that the People's Revolutionary Army, devoted to the sacred cause of independence, was a "gang of bandits". I replied: "A lack of mutual understanding can bring about perversion or animosity. We do not blame you. The important thing is the future. Let bygones be bygones. We should now think with one mind about the days, which lie ahead.

As you have learned from our representatives, we inaugurated the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland last spring in order to rally the people of all strata, who love the country and nation and hate the Japanese enemy, into a nation-wide war against the Japanese. I hope that the conscientious Chondoists will join in this great anti-Japanese war, as long as they do not object to its programme.

We can emerge only victorious, when we're united in the struggle, but we cannot achieve the independence of the country and will be vulnerable in all actions, if we are disunited and torn apart by factions. T

his is a bitter lesson history has taught us. Suppose that in the heyday of the Kabo Peasant War Choe Si Hyong, high commander of the northern force of rebellion of the Hoso area (North and South

Chungcheong Provinces) readily accepted the proposal for cooperation, made by Jon Pong Jun, who commanded the southern force of rebels of the Honam area (North and South Jolla Provinces) and did not bar their advance to Seoul; history might have been written somewhat differently.

The unsuccessful insurrection of Tonghak Party<sup>20</sup> is attributable to the fact that the entire anti-Japanese patriotic forces from all regions and social strata were at sixes and sevens and fought separately, instead of uniting as one in their struggle. To win victory in the sacred war against the Japanese and achieve independence, the whole nation must be of one mind and fight in a united force. National unity is a very wise policy for channeling the entire strength of the nation against Japan; this is the road to the great victory of our nation.

The Chondoists cannot 'defeat the Japanese' on their own and 'defend the country and provide welfare for the people'. Nor can the Korean People's Revolutionary Army win Korea's independence single-handed. Fortune will only smile on us, when all other anti-Japanese patriotic forces pull together.

So we must unite behind the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, just like the ribbons, intertwining round the May Pole for great national unity." Park In Jin said that, as he considered the Inaugural Declaration and the Programme of the ARF as perfect, leaving no room for improvement, and believed my views to be absolutely right, he would certainly persuade Choe Rin, leader of the Chondoist faith to ensure the participation in the ARF of the three million adherents across the country. It seemed that in the Chondoist order, based on a strict principle of democratic centralism, its center was vested with the absolute right to judgment.

However, there was a very slim chance of success, as the upper echelon of the Chondoist center was becoming corrupt and degenerated. I expressed my thoughts to him frankly: "It would be fine if things go as you say. However, in my opinion you should not expect too much from Choe Rin. His latest activities and writings tell me that he is following quite different course from the one taken by successive Chondoist leaders. He has betrayed the ideal of Tonghak and the nation and become a lapdog of the enemy's power.

Park In Jin asked me: "How do you know so much about Choe Rin?" He confessed; "Frankly speaking, quite a few people of our Chondoist circle are displeased with his suspicious changes. I also suspect him." - Choe Rin was involved in the drafting of the March First Independence Declaration.

He did much toward launching the March First Movement. Consequently he suffered a bitter prison life. On release, he was promoted to the position of religious head on the recommendation of Son Pyong Hui, 3rd leader of Chondoism. Thereafter, signs of "reorientation" began to appear in his life.

He asserted that in order to build an "earthly paradise" by "a posterior creation", the ultimate goal of Chondoism, one should make a tour of all countries to become familiar with the political situation of the east and west and hammer out practical, rational ideas for reform. He spent one full year on a round-the-world trip. After his return home, he preached that in the given circumstances Korea had no hope of

independence from the Japanese colonial yoke, that Japan was daily extending its power in the world arena; therefore, it was advisable for the Chondoists to renounce harmful clashes with Japan and confine themselves to the "autonomy movement".

Choe Rin insisted on participation in the government with the aim of protecting Chondoism from Japanese imperialist oppression. "Although attending the Governor-General like his waiting man, Choe Rin asserted that everything was intended for the good of Chondoism and the brethren of Chondoist faith.

Therefore, the vast majority of believers failed to see that his contention was hypocritical. I also trusted and revered him. Chapter head Lee Jon Hwa had been to Seoul to see him last summer and told me on his return that he had changed much, judging from the way he had refurbished his house so luxuriously and the manner in which he spoke and behaved.

However, I cannot label him a renegade, before I see things for myself. I will have an opportunity to visit Seoul and would like to meet him. The central meeting of Chondoist faith is due to open in Seoul before long and I will be there at that time. If it is true that he has become depraved, we must break with him. We will act at our own discretion."

Park In Jin clarified his stand as if cutting radish with one bold stroke. At the meeting we exchanged views on various issues such as domestic and foreign affairs, the current state of the nationalist movement, the progress of the anti-Japanese armed struggle and the nation building to be undertaken in the wake of national independence. The talks continued, day and night. At intervals, the guests were shown round to acquaint themselves with life in our unit.

Park In Jin expressed admiration and wonder that the weapons of our People's Revolutionary Army were more modern than he had imagined, the guerrilla soldiers looked very steady and vivacious, the barracks were kept spick-and-span and surroundings were clean and tidy, the daily routine was organized without a hitch and every soldier was well disciplined and accurate in action, giving the impression of serving in regular army.

He marveled at the mysterious layout of the mountain, where our secret camp was located. To borrow his expression, the mountains and rivers around the secret camp of the guerrilla army gave him the illusion of his being in the valley of Mt. Chonsong in Ryangsan of Kyongsang Province, which Choe Je U, the founder of Chondoism, visited twice to cultivate his indigenous faith.

The Naewon Temple in Mt. Chonsong is associated with an old tale, which Saint Won Hyo, father of Sol Chong, who is famous as author of the Hwawanggye, taught the Hwaomgyong. It eulogized the ten thousand virtues of Buddha to more than 1,000 monks from Tang and turned them all into saints.

Allegedly the founder of Tonghak evolved his faith and originated Tonghak in this place of old associations. Park In Jin remarked that he had felt a surge of fresh strength, when he saw that, in the green forests of Mt. Paektu, we were developing our minds and gathering strength for the sake of national

liberation and training a large number of young people as soldiers, in line with the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, the great blueprint for national restoration, which Was more vital than Hwaomgyong or Tonggyongtae]on.

He was most impressed during his stay in our secret camp by the Ulornent when I had given him the opportunity to do divine service for the offering of clean water. Chondoism has five commandments - Jumun (a 21-word formula), Chongsu (offering of clean water), Siji (church worship on Sundays), Songmi (rice donation) and Kido (prayers) - which are binding on its adherents.

Chongsu means the provision of brass bowl of clean water, which is a commandment never to be violated even for a day in the world of Chondoism. Clean water symbolizes the foundation of heaven and earth and represents the pledge of believers to never forget the benevolence of the universe. During his religious cultivation, Choe Je U used to resign himself to deep meditation, while offering clean water three times a day.

The offer of clean water was also made during the last moment before his beheading. Consequently, the Chondoist followers set as a traditional rule and convention the provision of clean water, symbol of the sacred blood of its founder. During my Whasung Uisuk School days, I often realized that Choe Tong O, Kang Je Ha and other Chondoists offered clean water at nine o'clock in the evening at the family prayers. During an evening conversation with Tojong Park I noticed it was close to nine o'clock. It suddenly occurred to me that it was the time for him to offer clean water. I told the orderly to fetch a bowl of fresh water.

The bowl of water was reverentially placed in the middle of the log table and I told him that it was time for the offering of clean water. "Forgive me for bringing holy water in an enamel bowl instead of a brass bowl. Tojong, please offer clean water, as long as you don't mind that it isn't in a brass bowl." After my words, Park In Jin glanced at me, greatly surprised.

"General, how can I offer clean water at your military camp, knowing that you do not believe in Chondoism?" "At the time of the Tonghak rebellion, its adherents were said to have chanted their prayers before a bowl of clean water every day even on the battlefield. Respected Tojong, are you going to violate this rule which you have observed for decades, on account of your visit to our camp? Please feel free and relaxed in your prayers."

As a guest, Park In Jin humbly declined my request. Pointing out that respect of human equality and freedom of religion was clearly laid down in the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, I said that if Tojong, who was uncommonly pious, neglected the daily divine routine even once out of deference to an unbeliever, we would regret this act. In this way I repeatedly beseeched him to offer clean water. Consequently he recited the 21-word formula before the bowl of clean water.

He repeated it three times and had a drink of water. Then, touched with reverence, he said: "The clean water in the valley of the Paektu Mountains tastes wonderful, indeed. I made the offering with the water

drunk by the ancestors of our country. I will never forget this evening. General, I hardly imagined that a man of arms like you would respect the tenets of our religion. I am deeply moved." Clearly Park In Jin, like other believers, misguided by anti-communist demagoguery, had believed that communists negate, oppose and hate religion and all manner of religious regulations.

One year the Rev. Kim Song Rak, a Korean resident in the United States, paid a visit to the homeland. During a luncheon with him, I advised him to pray before taking meals. At the time the Rev. Kim Song Rak was extremely surprised at my advice. He was puzzled that the President of a communist state was as kind as to show concern about the prayers of a Christian. I had not intended to make a good impression or planned to seek a Propaganda effect and make out that we do not take a negative attitude towards religion and its believers, when I advised the Rev. Kim Song Rak to say prayers before the meal that day.

I was motivated by the hospitality of a typical host, eager to entertain his guest with honor and by the pure humanitarian desire to help him, a faithful Christian, in his life, freely adhere to Christian rules during his stay in the homeland. The provision on religious freedom stipulated in the Constitution of our country is not an empty phrase or promise. We have never trampled upon freedom of faith or oppressed its believers. If there were men of religion, who were punished or suffered political trials under the Government of the Republic, they were criminals or traitors to the nation, who had sold out the interests of our country and people.

Of course there were cases, which caused social commotion owing to factionalist deviation of discriminating religious people and antagonizing religion itself in some local areas after liberation. But this was not a universal phenomenon, which happened everywhere, much less an abuse caused by the organizational intention or directions of the center.

There were a large number of churches and temples in our country before the outbreak of the Fatherland Liberation War against the US imperialists. When I visited Chilgol after the country's liberation, there was a church I had known of in my Changdok School days. There were two grand churches on Namsan Hill of Pyongyang, where the Grand People's Study House now stands.

These buildings were destroyed by the planes of Americans, who profess themselves to be the apostles of "God". The temples and hermitages with Buddhist images were also bombed. The crucifixes, icons and bibles were all reduced to ashes or buried under the ruins. The believers were killed and passed on to the world beyond.

In this way the Americans destroyed our churches and killed religious people. "God" could not rescue them from disaster. This led to a decline in churchgoers among our people during the war. Our religionists felt no more need to pray to "God" for their access to "Heaven". Believers, who became conscious of the fact that religion was power-less in shaping the destiny of human beings, renounced their faith of their own accord and became advocates of the Juche idea - that man is the master of everything and decides everything, is the creator and dominator of the world.



After the war, they did not hurry to rebuild the churches by gathering donations. Instead, first dwelling houses, factories and schools were built. As for our younger generation, no young man or child believes that they will be blessed and have access to Paradise, only when they worship “God”, “Heaven” or Buddha. Consequently they do not embrace religion or join religious bodies.

At present, as in the past, we do not consider religion as bad or persecute its followers. On the contrary, the state builds churches free of charge for them and provides them with living quarters. A few years ago a religious department was newly instituted in the faculty of history of Kim Il Sung University to produce religious specialists. In our country the activities of all religious organizations and men of religion enjoy solid legal protection as in other countries. It is said that there are a large number of religious people in south Korea.

They include quite a few patriots and fighters, active on the three fronts of democracy, reunification and peace. The increase in the number of patriots seeking an alliance with communism among the religionists in south Korea and abroad does not necessarily mean that they are adherents of The Communist Manifesto.

The bond of union between us and them is provided by the idea and sentiments, based on love for the country and nation. Such ties also existed in the 1930s. It was the principle of the united front, elucidated in the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, that we could join hands with any social circle, which loved the country and nation. This principle united us with Tojong Park In Jin. Some people distort our idea on the freedom of faith as a conciliatory trick aimed at inveigling religious people into the “web” of the united front. Such a lie will never pass, however plausible it may sound.

The warm relations I had with O Tong Jin, Son Jung Doh, Choc Tong O, Kang Je Ha and other believers were based on pure feelings of love for the country and nation and had nothing to do with any stratagem. I had no intention to transform them into followers of Marx or supporters of the Communist Party. I only respected their faith, personality and human rights. It was not accidental that Tojong Park In Jin frankly acknowledged that his opinion of us had changed after the offering of clean water.

That day, after the offering of clean water was over, he asked me point-blank: “I would like to ask you one thing. General, do you worship anything, like we believe in the ‘Heaven’? If you have, what is it?” I accepted his question as a manifestation of his trust in us and answered in all sincerity: “Of course there is something I believe in like God: the people. I have been worshipping the people as Heaven, and respecting them as if they were God. My God is none other than the people. Only the popular masses are omniscient and omnipotent and almighty on earth. Therefore, my lifetime motto is ‘The people are my God’.”

After hearing me through, he remarked significantly that his visit to Mt. Paektu had been rewarded and, that he had learned, albeit belatedly, what and where was the true “Heaven”.

Extremely satisfied, he added that the idea of Choe Je U, the founder of Chondoism, “Man and God are

one” had something to do with our way of thinking. During the three days of their stay, Tojong Park In Jin and his party called at the printing shop and the sewing unit’s work place, then inspected the live firing practice and saw the art performance staged by the guerrillas. “I have learned and seen for the first time here what I failed to learn and see in my fifty years. A real miracle, I should say. To be frank, I am completely fascinated by your secret camp. I have now come to realize what I must do and I have made up my mind as well.

I will meet Choe Rin and undertake the great event to enlist all Chondoists in the ARF. If I fail, I assure you of the enrollment of all the Chondoists affiliated with the eight chapters in Ryongbuk under my influence. And I will try by all means to persuade the virile one million members of the Young Chondoist Party throughout the country to take up arms and come under your command, General. I assure you of this fact,” Park In Jin said on departing the secret camp. On his return home, Park In Jin worked hard to rally the believers of Chondoism to the ARF organizations.

He mobilized the Chondoists of the Changbai area in the national liberation front. In August 1937 he himself paid a visit to the Samsu County chapter and discussed with Jo Wan Hyop, its head, and Lee Jon Hwa, head of Changbai County chapter, a positive promotion of the united front. “Kimppai” was his active assistant. Park In Jin sent seven or eight young men to us, requesting that they be trained as future workers capable of assistance as Chang Son was in his activity. Around that time Lee Kyong Un, Phungsan County representative of the Young Chondoist Party, and others joined the main unit of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army.

As he told us, Park In Jin attended the meeting, convened by the center of Chondoist faith in Seoul in December that year. If Choe Rin informed on him or resorted to violent means against him, inauspicious things possibly could happen to Park In Jin. To back him in the parley and protect him from danger, I sent Kim Pong Sok, my orderly, with Lee Chang Son for Tojong Park’s safe journey to Seoul.

As soon as he arrived in Seoul, Park In Jin heard the surprising news that Choe Rin had refashioned his western-style house in Myongryun Street still more luxuriously and had donated huge funds of Chondoist order to the Government-General as a “contribution to the national defense funds”, alleging that reconciliation with Japan was a prerequisite for the “autonomy for independence”.

However, Park In Jin restrained his wrath and began patiently to persuade him. But he was too haughty to lend an ear to other people’s advice. In a fury Park In Jin then censured him, pointing out that his so-called contribution to defense funds constituted an act of treachery to the country and nation, an act opposed to the sacred cause of independence and that it would bring people nothing good but help increase Japan’s strength and prolong Korea’s subjugation.

He thrust the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF at him, declaring emphatically: the true way to win Korea’s independence is not money donations; it is clearly indicated in this programme; this is the only path we should take; the Chondoist believers should join the ARF formed by General Kim Il Sung and wage a great war against the Japanese in alliance with the KPRA.

After a long perusal of the ten-point programme, Choe Rin exhorted: "Don't get so excited. The destination of Kim Il Sung is the ocean and my destination is the same. There are many roads open to the ocean, broad avenues and small lanes. Now is not the time to push ourselves through the highway and make a loud noise. There is a time for everything. Now you wash the bowl as you can fill it with water any time you like." After a furious argument, Park In Jin strode out of his house.

After breaking with Choe Rin, Park formed the Phungsan chapter of the ARF, embracing the Chondoists of Phungsan County. This was followed by the appearance of the ARF chapters formed with hardcore members of Chondoist faith in Kapsan, Samsu, Hyesan and Changbai areas. These chapters rallied a large number of Chondoist believers and peasants around them.

The ARF organizations, under the influence of Park In Jin, supplied our secret camp with provisions in large quantities. Park In Jin himself frequented Hyesan and Phungsan to obtain the supplies to be sent to us. At one time he sent us ten or more sheets of furs, which he himself had acquired, to be used by the soldiers of our guerrilla army as pads when they had to bivouac outdoors. Looking at them, my comrades-in-arms lavished praises on Park In Jin. His disciples in Diyangxi included people, who rented out hectares of land from Kim Jong Bu and exerted themselves to covertly produce grain to be supplied to the revolutionary army.

No one except Tojong Park knew that the grain from these fields was channeled to our secret camp. His wife and daughters worked with enthusiasm to carry the supplies to the KPRA. Unfortunately Park In Jin, who had been working day and night for the freedom and liberation of our people, was arrested by the Japanese police in October 1937 in the aftermath of the "Hyesan incident".

The enemy, who had a vague idea of his struggles and relations with us, pressed him to own up. They said: "We know well that you've long maintained contact with Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army. We know that you have also rallied riotous elements in both areas along the border into secret organizations in a bid to reform the state system. Tell us what directions you've received from General Kim Il Sung and where your organizations are."

However, Park In Jin remained silent. When they failed to break his principle and willpower, the enemy tried to find fault with Chondoism, "Chondoism preaches that no man busts above and below man and that man is at once 'Heaven'.

Then if it is heresy to Chondoism and blasphemy against morality to drive out people, whom you respect like the Heaven, to the battle-fields allegedly to win independence from Japan and let them shed blood for nothing?" Park In Jin gave a shattering blow to the enemy's fallacy:

"We are not the ones, who profane humanity - you do. You are the very same criminals, who trample upon the tenets of our Chondoism. Aren't you dragging thousands of 'Heavens' of Korea to slaughter every day, as if they were cows, dogs and swine? You know that, wherever the sabers and rifles of your army and police glitter, the blood of our white-clad people flows, forming a river, and that even the

people's livers are torn to shreds owing to their rancor. Now you tell me, who is the criminal and who has to sit in the dock? We'll never forgive the robbers, who massacred countless people in violation of the sacred Chondoism of Korea. And we do not recognize the so-called state system they illegally fabricated.

Consequently we three million Chondoists have risen, hand in hand with the 20 million Korean people, to fight courageously in the bloody war of resistance. If the blood of my body changes into a spark of fire, which will burn down your empire, I would be happy even if I am reduced to ashes." The enemy shuddered at his fiery denunciation. Enraged, the enemy tortured the old Tojong cruelly until he became an invalid. He was at death's door, assailed by a serious disease. The enemy sensed that his life was hanging by a thread and paroled him on sick bail.

The spring of 1939 met him in his sick bed. During his last moments he spoke with great difficulty to his wife, who had been devoted to her husband all her life: "I feel happy at this moment of my death. Because I have lived worthily in the evening of my life as the posterity of the Most Reverend Suun. Park In Jin was born into a man of Korea and departs from life as a man of Korea. When the country is liberated, you and our children must follow General Kim Il Sung." On hearing that he was at death's door, one of his favorite pupils went to his bedside.

Recognizing him, Tojong asked him to sing the folksong, Tondollari, his favorite. It is said that Tondollari is the abbreviation of "Tongthulnali Orira" meaning that day will dawn. It reflected the belief that the day would certainly come, when they would resume a peaceful life after driving out the Japanese imperialist aggressors.

In the Phungsan area, located close to Pukchong across the Huchi Pass, the song and dance of Tondollari were widespread early in the 1930s. After the ARF organizations became active in assisting the guerrilla army under the guidance of Park In Jin, the underground organizations of the Phungsan district used the song and dance of Tondollari as a screen to be drawn over the enemy's eyes at the time of joint labour to prepare supplies for the guerrillas. The loyal disciple began singing the Tondollari as his master had Mked, but could not continue; he was choked by tears. His disciple was sobbing his heart out, calling him "Master!" and "Master!" Taking his hand in his own, Park In Jin said quietly: "As long as General Kim is in good health and the revolutionary army is going strong in Mt. Paektu, our white-clad Koreans will meet the dawn without fail.

You will live in a country, governed by the 'Heaven', where one hundred flowers are in full bloom. I have a clear Vision of that day." Tojong Park In Jin, who had achieved great exploits on the road of Rational salvation in alliance with communism, is one of the patriots Produced by the anti-Japanese revolution. Ever since the liberation of the country, I would call on the widow hid Posterity of Park In Jin every time my thoughts turned to him. At an interview with bereaved families of anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters in summer 1992, I was told that his wife was in good health, although she was past 90. Therefore I said that she should be present, even if she found it difficult to walk and had to be carried on someone's back.

However, as soon as she alighted from the car, Tojong's old widow walked up to me without anyone's help. She addressed me as "Heaven", rather than "General" or "Leader", as other bereaved families did. I

told her not to address me like that, but she would not listen. She continued: "I saw you, 'Heaven', in my dreams." The vocative, which only the wife of Park In Jin could pronounce, and her frank talks revived old memories of my days with Tojong. I felt my eyes growing moist. Lee Chang Son, who assisted Park In Jin in many ways as a member of the Young Chondoist Party and political operative of the KPRA, died of frostbite in the rigors of winter in Mt. Paektu.

It was probably in winter 1938 that he froze to death. Recently the officials concerned discovered an amazing photograph in the photo album of his wife's male cousin. It was a photograph of Lee Chang Son and his sworn brothers, taken when he worked as a Young Chondoist Party member.

One of them turned out to be Lee In Mo, incarnation of faith and will. Apparently Lee was one of a great number of pupils of Tojong Park. In other words Park In Jin was also a revered teacher, who had trained many peerless patriots.

## 15.5. On Chondoism, a National Religion

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My view on Chondoism considerably helped me find a revolutionary companion in a renowned religionist like Park In Jin. If I had not known what kind of religion the Chondoist faith was or had a biased and hostile view of the faith, I would not have tried to negotiate with Park In Jin, or boldly planned to rally millions of believers in Chondoism across the country under the banner of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

Here, in this section of my memoirs I shall dwell on my view of Chondoism. I have a great deal to say about the Tonghak doctrine and its history.

I think that people come to understand "isms" and doctrines through different channels and methods.

My initiation to Marxism-Leninism came through books, while the church introduced me to Christianity. I mentioned earlier that I often Went to church with my mother during my childhood. I first saw religious rites in the church and heard the pastor's sermon on the Christian doctrine. My father, who had been educated at Sungsil Middle School, and my maternal grandfather, a teacher and elder in Chilgol Church, knew much about Jesus Christ. When I attended Changdok School, there were many believers in Christianity in Chilgol. Mr. Kang Yang Uk was also a Christian.

Many friends of my father's, including Son Jung Doh, O Tong Jin, Fang Chol Ho, Kim Sa Hon and Kim Si U, were Christians. It could be said that I was surrounded by Christians during my childhood. Many of my classmates in primary school were also Christians. In those days many books were devoted to Christianity. This environment benefited my understanding of Christianity.

It was via a different channel that I learned about Islam. It was related to a funny story. I first learned about Islam from Ma Jin-dou, my classmate in Jirin Yuwen Middle School. He was a believer in Islam. Having a good appetite, he used to go to a restaurant and order wine and pork, disregarding the Moslem taboo. He always took a seat in an obscure corner and ate, looking round uneasily, because if others had known that he took wine and pork, he would have been discredited as a Moslem and severely censured by his mullah.

While eating several times with Ma Jin-dou at a restaurant, I learned that wine drinking and eating of pork were taboo among Moslems. My general knowledge about Islam in my middle school days came from what I saw and heard when I was on intimate terms with Ma Jin-dou. I began to take an interest in Chondoism when I learned about Jon Pong Jun, General Green Bean of the Kabo Peasant War.

When my father told me about our forerunners, his name was mentioned alongside the names of Hong Kyong Rae, Lee Jun, An Jung Gun, Hong Bom Do and others. But my knowledge of Jon Pong Jun in those days was limited to the fact that he led the Kabo Peasant War and was a peerlessly courageous, fine

man, who remained faithful to his principles to the end of his life. My father did not tell me anything more, as I was still a child.

Mr. Kang Yang Uk provided me with detailed information for the first time on the life of General Green Bean (Jon Pong Jun) and the Kabo Peasant War. He was a devout Christian, but was versed in Chondoism as well. I came to consider the Kabo Peasant War and Chondoist faith in relation to each other, after listening to his coherent lecture.

The disastrous failure of the rebellion of the Tonghak followers and the tragic death of General Green Bean led me to resent flunkeyism and the incompetence of the feudal court, which had reduced our country to misery, and the evil designs and interference of both Japan and Qing in the affairs of Korea. I considered the rebellion of the Toaghak followers as a great event, which adorned the modern history of our people's struggle against aggression and feudality, and the heroes the war produced were eagles exerting a great influence upon the political and mental life of the Korean nation in modern times. Jon Pong Jun, the lion of the Kabo Peasant War, has remained as a lasting, unquenchable spark in my memory.

My understanding of the Chondoist faith deepened during my Hwawng Uisuk School days. There were many Chondoists in the school. In his recollections of the past, Choe Tok Sin, the son of Choe Tong O, the schoolmaster, said that his father was a disciple of Son Pyong Hui, Ibe third leader of the religion. School superintendent Kang Je Ha and his son Kang Pyong Son were also devout followers of Chondoism.

At the Whasung Uisuk School many students displayed their learning, by reciting Tonggyongtaejon (Complete Collection of Tonghak Scriptures), Ryongdamyusa and other Tonghak scriptures by rote, while other eagerly read the monthly Kaebok (Creation), issued by the Chon4oist centre, taking it with them, and commented on the Korean rural almmunity from the viewpoint of the Tonghak doctrine and Lee Tonwa's writings.

Choe Tong O prevented the students from reading The Communist Manifesto, but encouraged them to read Tonggyongtaejon and Kaebok. When the history teacher was absent, the schoolmaster often appeared in his place and gave us a lecture. In such cases history lessons used to be transformed into a lecture on the history of Tonghak without exception. He always analyzed and judged all the shocking principles centered on nation, people and man, similar to Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles.

The most striking of the stories he told us in connection with Chondoism concerned his introduction to Choe Je U, the founder and first leader of the religion.

I still recall vividly what he emphasized, after telling us about Choe Je U's career and how Tonghak was enunciated.

"We all call Mr. Choe Je U, who founded Tonghak, the Most Venerable Suun. So it is desirable that you

do not simply call him Choe Je U, but rather use the honorific title of Most Venerable."

According to Choe Tong O, Koun Choe Chi Won, a famous scholar of our country in the ninth century, was a remote ancestor of Choe Je U.

Choe Je U's father Choe Ok had a remarkable talent for poetry. His collection of poems Kunammunjip was famous in his day.

Choe Je U lost his mother when he was six and his father at sixteen and roamed about the country for nearly twenty years. He sought a way to deliver the country and people from mismanagement and evil practices, and in April 1860 proclaimed the doctrine of the Chondoist faith, which exerted a great influence on the modern history of Korea and founded Tonghak.

Choe Je U called Chondoism Tonghak (Eastern Learning), in order to stress that it was a religious philosophy of the Korean people in the East, in contrast to Roman Catholicism, a "Western Learning".

When Choe Je U was active, abuse of royal power and factional strife precipitated the nation to an abyss of ruin, and national strength declined to the extreme. The rebellions of peasants against the feudal tyranny occurred successively and socio-political chaos, aggravated by famine and flood, went to the extreme. Social and class conflicts between the nobility and common people reached the limit. The feudal caste relations, which had supported the existence of the Lee dynasty for several hundred years institutionally, became a cursed fetter impeding the prosperity of the country and social development. Tyranny and molestation by corrupt officials reduced public welfare to the greatest misery, and the popular rights, which were only nominal, were deplorable.

Korea in the East, which remained a closed country for several hundred years, was coveted by the great powers, which sought to acquire wealth and expand their territory. Western powers, with Roman Catholicism serving as a guide, was about to stretch their tentacles to the Korean peninsula.

The prelude to "Wailing all day over the nation's fall" was, in effect, already ready at that time. It was only natural that in those days the pioneers of the times, who were sincerely concerned about the destiny of the country and nation, sought new thoughts and ideals. Choe Je U, leading the pioneers, enunciated Tonghak, whose basic ideas were "Innaechon" (Man and God are one) and "Poguk anmin" and carried out energetic efforts to preach and propagate its doctrine throughout the world.

"Friends, if you want to understand Tonghak, look at the slogan 'Poguk anmin'." Whenever Choe Tong O spoke about Chondoism he M the theme up like a placard.

"'Poguk' means defending the country from aggression, while 'amin' implies the provision of welfare for the people and countering tyranny. What a fine doctrine it is! Sung Ju, how do you like 'Poguk anmin'?" the schoolmaster once asked me unexpectedly.



I said, "I think it is a good slogan. If Chondoism advocates 'Poguk anmin', I will support the faith."

I really meant it. At that time the communist idea had already become an important ideological pillar in my life, but I expressed my support for Tonghak without hesitation. All sensible people want to defend the country and promote the welfare of the people.

Pleased, Choe Tong O looked at me with a smile, and said:

"Those who oppose 'Poguk anmin' are not Koreans. The slogan of the world revolution that the Communist Party advocates is good, but the slogan of 'Poguk anmin' is vital for our country and the Korean nation, isn't it? I'm sure the Most Venerable Suun is a wonderful man."

My knowledge of Chondoism in my Whasung Uisuk School days was not linked with practice; it was narrow, raw, commonplace and fragmentary.

During my life in Jirin I began to pay deep attention to the study of Tonghak in connection with practice. The search for a new path for the Korean revolution mostly kept us away from doctrines and the interpretation negated by history. However, we refrained from assuming a nihilistic attitude toward the former ideas and movements themselves. We were opposed to a blind transplantation of established theories and the experience of others, but adopted with an open mind what we considered good there.

The question of the united front was raised as an important strategic task around the time of the Kalun meeting in our revolutionary practice. The question of the forces to be embraced, shunned or isolated was raised everywhere and frequently caused heated dispute.

Whenever a debate arose over the parties, which the united front was to be formed with, the question of religion, together with that of noncomprador capitalists, became the major topic, which could not be ignored.

The Chondoist faith, along with the Christian faith, was one of the important religions in my consideration. Chondoism attracted our attention in those days and the activity of its followers became a matter of concern, for as a Korean religion, it consistently advocated patriotism and love of the people ideologically and in practice, and was widely propagated and had a strong permeability.

Like Capital, the Tonggyongtaejon merited deep study, but was difficult to read. Choe Je U's writings, which described the universe, things, natural and other phenomena in a mystic and abstruse manner, were hard to understand. Kim Tal Hyon, too, who was active as a cadre at the Chondoist centre after liberation, admitted that the writings of the Most Venerable Suun were hard to understand. Kim Tal Hyon said that if Choe Je U's writings had been as easy as Ryu Rin Sok's appeal, Tonghak would have attracted tens of thousands more followers.

The journal Kaebyok served as a guide for us to understand the Chondoist faith. The title Kaebyok was

derived from the phrase "Huchon Kaebiyok" (a posteriori creation) which was one of the main doctrines of the Chondoist faith. Throughout the issues of dozens of numbers since the inaugural issue, Kaebiyok maintained the characteristics of a comprehensive political and current affairs journal and contributed greatly to the enlightenment of the nation. The journal was rich in nationalist coloring, but also carried articles introducing socialist ideas. It was an innovative mass journal, which was very popular among readers in those days.

The Young Chondoist Party was expanding its branches in the northern part of Korea, eastern, southern and northern Manchuria up to Harbin in those days. Consequently Kaebiyok had many readers in Manchuria as well.

I read an article by Sin Il Yong in Kaebiyok. He was a theoretical adversary during my life in Jirin. He was entirely absorbed in the rural question in the mid-1920s. His article Study of the Rural Question carried in the journal was theoretically profound.

Kaebiyok carried many articles about different countries. Lee Ton Hwa's travelogue Journey through Southern Manchuria stood out most. I read it in Guyushu or Wujiazi. It provided a detailed account of the scenery of Manchuria, the customs of the Chinese, the wretched plight of coal miners in Fushun and the efforts of independence champions of our country.

According to the travelogue, the inhabitants of southern Manchuria had a strange custom of leaving a dead body placed in a coffin outdoors without burying it in the earth, and if it was a child who died under the age of seven, of hanging it wrapped in a mat on a tree.

Of the different genres carried in Kaebiyok the articles advocating patriotism whetted the appetite of the readers most. The journal often carried such articles on The Unique Merits of the Korean Nation, The Mettle and Efforts of Koguryo People, The Geography of Korea Blessed with Natural Resources, providing us an account of the history and geography of Korea, its natural beauty and features of different districts and local products, including an article Pride of Eight Provinces by Their Representatives. This article was based mainly on a realist scholar's comment on the mettle of the inhabitants of eight provinces of Korea.

He likened the character of the inhabitants of Phyongan Province to that of "a tiger rushing out of a forest". In the article a man from Pyongan Province, who was as fierce as a tiger rushing out of a forest, but was never ill-disposed, boasted of his province, while a man from Hamgyong Province, named "unyielding Jo", who was tenacious like "a dog fighting in mud", reeled off the pride of his province by prefacing his story with the fact that the ancestral mountain Paektu was in Hamgyong Province, and so on. It described the characteristics of the people of each province so vividly that it always drew a smile from the reader.

All the boasts of these eight provinces were interwoven with interesting stories which aroused national pride and self-respect in the reader.

As officials concerned found out, the Pride of Eight Provinces by Their Representatives was carried in the July issue of the journal in 1925. Recently I got hold of the journal and read the article again, experiencing new feelings. Although half a century had passed since then, I still found it interesting.

The popular articles in *Kaebiyok* included one called Foreigners' impressions on Korea. It gave fragmentary impressions on Korea of the German, French, Chinese, Japanese, American, Russian, British and other people under such titles as "Most Talented People in the World," "Three Wonders," "Most Polite People in the World," "Four Beauties of Korea," "Seven Creeds about Korea," "Natural Beauties and Kind Hearts" and Impressions on Koreans". It was pleasant to appreciate Korea by reading foreigners' impressions from a Korean standpoint. The journal *Kaebiyok* described the pride of Korea as seen by Koreans to be the "best-natured people in the world," "excellent health," "unexcelled morals," "future model people of the world," and "Koreans without cruelty".

The article Tonghak Party of Korea and the Kuomintang of China also mused the readers' interests. The author remarked that the only groups, which fought with the aim of reforming society in the Orient, were the Kuomintang of China and the Tonghak Party of Korea and proudly boasted that Choe Je U had enunciated Tonghak over 40 years earlier than Sun Yat-sen. Tracing back in memory, it seems to me that the biggest contributor to the journal *Kaebiyok* was Lee Ton Hwa, chief of the editorial section of the central Chondoist body and editor of *Kaebiyok*.

His pen name was Yaro. He was a talented theoretician who played a leading role in establishing the Tonghak doctrine theoretically and expounding it philosophically. I believe that the services he rendered to its propagation by his books *The Essence of "Innaechon"*, *Regeneration Philosophy*, *Lecture on Sunn's Doctrine* and history of the Foundation of the Chondoist Faith will occupy worthy pages in the history of the Chondoist faith.

I became interested in Lee Ton Hwa after reading the journal *Kaebiyok*. Park In Jin gave me comparatively detailed information about him. Park In Jin was favourably disposed to him. Park In Jin even advised me to meet him. But as I fought the Japanese imperialists in the mountains, it was very difficult for me to meet him, as he was in Seoul. I knew that he lived in Yangdok and served the Chondoist faith after liberation, but I could not find the time to meet him. At times I received fragmentary information of his activity from Kim Tal Hyon, chairman of the Chondoist Chongu Party.

Kim Tal Hyon, too, did not know exactly how he died.

According to the officials, he went to Jagang Province following the People's Army soldiers who were going northwards in autumn 1950 and stayed there for some time before being killed in the bombing by US planes.

Lee Ton Hwa's death was a sad, heartrending loss to the readers of *Kaebiyok*, who had loved him, and also to the followers of Chondoist faith.

In the light of his political views, Lee Ton Hwa seems to have belonged to a conservative and moderate group rather than the young reformers. However, judging from his writings which advocated the preservation of nationality and national prestige and moral self-cultivation, I believe he was a conscientious intellectual with a clean record, as well as a religious man who ardently loved his nation.

I used to exchange views with Kang Pyong Son after reading articles in Kaebyok and debate the position and doctrine of Tonghak. He was best informed of the Chondoist faith among members of the Down-with-Imperialism Union. An ardent adherent of communism at the same time, he looked favourably on the Tonghak idea he had worshiped and the organization of the Chondoist faith. There were many followers of Chondoist faith in Changsong, where Kang Pyong Son was born, and in Uiju, Pyoktong and Sakju.

Kang Je Ha, Choe Tong O and Kong Yong were patriots who played a leading part in the community of the Chondoist faith in those areas in North Phyongan Province. Through the channel of the Chondoist faith, Kang Pyong Son greatly expanded the subordinate organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in North Phyongan Province in the latter half of the 1930s.

As most of those, who belonged to the young reformist force of the Chondoist faith, at first he practically absolutized the role, which Chondoism played in the anti-aggression and anti-feudal struggle in our country in modern times, beginning with the Tonghak rebellion, and thought that all problems, both big and small, related to the shaping of the destiny of the nation could only be solved by Chondoism. This probably was the main point in our argument about Chondoism.

Naturally I fully recognized the services Tonghak had rendered to the struggle against feudalism and aggression and for the modernization of the country and social development. I recognized the national, patriotic and people-loving character of Tonghak as well. However, I did not adhere to the view and attitude that all problems could only be solved by relying on Tonghak.

Kang Pyong Son himself abandoned his view of the omnipotence of the Chondoist faith during practical struggle. He engaged in under-ground activity together with Zhang Wei-hua in Fusong in the early 1930s and was arrested by the police while acting as our political worker in northern Manchuria in the late 1930s; he died a heroic death in prison.

The idea of "Man and God are one", maintained by the Tonghak followers can be said to be relatively progressive, as it valued man, likening him to God, but was inevitably theoretically inconsistent, because it was free of religious elements and regarded man as a divine existence.

Choe Je U, the founder of Tonghak, and the second and third leaders of this religion who succeeded him, maintained that Chondoism represented the ultimate truth, born of the organic integration of three religions - Confucianism, Buddhism and Son gyo - and accordingly was not a heretic religion, unlike Roman Catholicism.

The theoreticians of the Chondoist faith further developed the predecessors' theory on the integration of the three religions and advocated the originality of Tonghak as the national religion.

Advocating the originality of the doctrine of the Chondoist faith, one of its reformist theoreticians negated the doctrines of all former religions, including the Nirvana theory of Buddhism, the Hyonmyo theory of Son gyo, the Paradise theory of Christianity and the Divine will theory of Confucianism and other mysticisms and idolatries, and preached "God-man identity" or "Man and God are one," that man is Buddha, Divine, God or Heaven and that, consequently, there is nothing beyond man.

The basic idea of Tonghak is "God-man identity" or "Man and God are one," which means that man is "Heaven Chondoism maintains that "Heaven", that is, the entire universe, is composed of special ether called jigi. It holds that it is neither material or spiritual, but rather something both material and spiritual and that nature, man and God are all composed of jigi.

The "jigi theory" of Tonghak, which holds that jigi is the origin of the world and the source of all matter, is a sort of spirit theory, which maintains that all matters contain spirit. It can be regarded as part of pan-psychic.

The Chondoist faith, based on the "jigi theory", holds that like "Heaven" man has spirit, whether alive or dead. Namely, man is a special being with a spirit, which ranks first among all things in the world.

It follows from the spirit theory that man does not lead an independent and creative life at his own discretion, but instead has to live, following the predestined course of life under the control of the spirit. The spirit theory inevitably resolves into fatalism. From fatalism it cannot be inferred that man is master of everything and decides everything himself, that one is responsible for one's own destiny and that one has also the ability to shape one's own destiny.

The prospect of the future society, offered by Tonghak, is not a scientific goal conforming with the law of social development. It stipulates that if virtues are promoted throughout the world by non-violent struggle, the time will come when all men become like God and then earthly paradise will come. It holds that man will be transformed into God, when he examines and realizes himself continuously and thereby promotes the awakening of conscience, while making daily incantations.

In short, the idea of "Man and God are one" is not based on materialism, but rather on theism.

The Chondoist faith did not play a leading role in the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle, owing to its class limitation, theoretical and practical immaturity. That was the main reason why we did not support the omnipotence of Tonghak.

Although this was our attitude to the Chondoist faith, we valued its merits and believed there was a possibility for it to join hands with us ideologically and practically for the united front.

Chondoism's highest ideal is to build a paradise on earth. The former religions held that this world is distressful and irredeemable, while chondoism preached that this world can be transformed into an earthly paradise. From this principle, Chondoism regarded "a posteriori creation" as one of its important missions and launched a practical struggle for the three reforms, called "spiritual reform", "national reform" and "social reform".

The theoreticians of Tonghak hold that Chondoism differs not only from the Christian faith, which sets the aim of attaining happiness in the world to come and paradise after death, by merely professing their faith, and from Confucianism, which regards moral culture and acquisition of knowledge as essential for indoctrination and advocates agreement between politics and religion, attaching importance to the promotion of virtues in this world, but also from Buddhism, which considers mercy as the basic tenet, while maintaining that man can become a Buddha.

Christianity is dynamic, they said, in comparison with static Buddhism, but Chondoism is more dynamic than the Christian faith, and that Buddhism markedly tends to reason, Christianity to sensitivity, while Chondoism combines both aspects.

The doctrine of the Chondoist faith opposes blind worship of Heaven and maintains the need to believe in man himself, unlike other religions which preach that the feudal social system or caste is the order ordained by Heaven, talking about the supernatural and superhuman character of Heaven or God. Therefore, we considered that the Chondoist faith had a positive aspect of progressive religion, advocating respect to man and human equality.

While establishing the Juche-orientated line of our revolution, naturally I displayed interest in different established theories and movements and positively recognized the position and role of Chondoism as national religion. However, proceeding from the specifics of our country's historical development, the environment of our revolution and historical analysis of previous movements, and fully taking into account our national tradition and balance of class forces, I evolved the Juche theory, explored the path for our revolution and accordingly worked out a strategy and tactics.

The new generation of communists never contemplated engineering a revolution with the help of Heaven or according to God's will, but rather embarked on the path of struggle, convinced that we must fight, believing in and depending on the strength of our people. After the foundation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland heated debates ensued on how to view the Chondoist faith. Particularly around the time of Tojong Park In Jin's visit to our secret camp, interest in Tonghak increased among the commanding officers of our troop.

After his visit to the secret camp we pushed ahead more confidently with the line of a united front with the Chondoists.

In retrospect. proceeding from its religious doctrine, Chondoism waged a practical struggle for "defending the country and providing of welfare for the people" which aimed to secure public welfare by

reject-big foreign forces and establishing national independence and people's sovereignty, and securing a peaceful world, that is, an earthly paradise by "promoting virtues in the world" and "delivering the people".

Tonghak received support from broad sections of the poor and lowly mid the ruined nobles for the patriotic and people-loving character of its doctrine and spirit of strong resistance. The propagation of the Tonghak doctrine, which claimed abolition of the discrimination between the noble and mean, constituted a great threat to the prevailing position of the feudal Confucian idea, which absolutized discrimination between the noble and mean, a formidable challenge to the feudal privileged class. Therefore, Choe Je U, the founder of Tonghak and first religious leader, was executed in Taegu in March 1864, charged with violating the laws and disturbing the government.

The second religious leader Ehoe Si Hyong, who had secretly been engaged in the dissemination of Tonghak and expansion of the organization, in the face of harsh suppression and pursuit of the feudal government of the Lee dynasty and fought as a leader of the Kobo Peasant War, was condemned to death in Seoul.

The third religious leader, Son Pyong Hui, who named Tonghak as Chondoism, in accordance with the intention of its founder and was a mastermind of the March First Movement, was harshly suppressed and persecuted by Japanese imperialists. As the lives of its successive leaders show, Chondoism was entirely patriotic and people-loving in its origin and development.

The Kobo Peasant War, called the first Tonghak revolution in the Chondoist community, was the biggest and fiercest war in the anti-aggression and the anti-feudal struggle of our people in the latter half of the 19th century.

The Kobo Peasant War was neither planned by the upper echelons of the Chondoist faith or triggered off by their directives, but was rather an anti-government rebellion of the peasants, who resented the tyranny and brutal plunder of the corrupt and impotent feudal privileged class.

The Kobo Peasant War was started by Jon Pong Jun and other leaders of the peasants' rebellion, under the banner of "eradicating tyranny and saving the people", "driving out Westerners and the Japanese" and "defending the country and providing welfare for the people", independent of the upper echelon of Tonghak. The leaders of the rebellion transformed the peasants' rebellion in Kobu into an all-out peasant war by establishing contact with local Tonghak organizations through the Tonghak organizations they belonged to.

The Kobo Peasant War was a historic event, which served as a prelude to the anti-imperialist national-liberation struggle in Asia in the 19th century. Along with the Tai-ping Peasant War in China and the Sepoy Mutiny against England in India, it was notable as one of the three big resistance wars in Asia.

The Kobo Peasant War ended in failure owing to the intervention of the Japanese and Qing armies, but

the peasant troops, who scattered to different parts of the country, became the main force of the subsequent anti-Japanese volunteer movement and continued the resistance war for national salvation.

The Kabo Peasant War not only left serious traces in the historical development of our country, but also exerted a considerable influence on the development of the political situation in the orient and rest of the world. A Korean historian, who examined the worldwide significance of the Tonghak revolution, commented that the origin of world-historic events, which threw the world into upheaval in the 20th century, can be traced back to the Tonghak revolution in Korea. He wrote, "If it had not been for the Tonghak revolution in Korea, the Sino-Japanese War would not have broken out. If China had emerged victorious in the Sino-Japanese War, Russia would not have been able to invade Manchuria. Had it not been for the Russian invasion of Manchuria, the Russo-Japanese War would not have broken out.

If Russia had not been defeated in the Russo-Japanese War, the Austro-Hungarian Empire would have been unable to spread its wings over the Balkan peninsula. If the empire had not annexed Bosnia and Hercegovina, the war between Austria and Serbia would not have broken out, and had it not been for the Austro-Serbian War, World War I would not have broken it. If World War I had not broken out, the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty in Russia would not have been dreamed of and the world could not have seen the birth of Red Russia. Oh, Tonghak Party, you indirectly served as the spark for the world war and brought about the birth of a Worker-peasant Russia."

Advocates of the Tonghak idea regarded Tonghak as the first step to the modernization of the East.

The Chondoist forces played a big role in the March First Movement. The main force of the popular uprising naturally came from the broad masses of workers and peasants, youth, students and intellectuals. The national champions, who started the uprising, were not only Christians and Buddhists but also Chondoists and these Chondoists took the initiative. In addition, more than half of all Chondoists (3,000,000) took The spirit of strong resistance of Chondoism constituted the major reason, why we attached importance to the united front with the Chondoists.

The Chondoist faith, as the Korean religion, was novel in its ideas and doctrines, it had a spirit of strong resistance: as it was simple in rites and practice, it was popular in nature.

Kim Jong Ju, the first Minister of Communications in the Cabinet of the Republic, used to say proudly that Tonghak was a modest national religion. About the time when we organized the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, he had joined the faith and later became a member of the central executive committee of the Young Chondoist Party. He was versed in the doctrines of the faith.

Kim Jong Ju was a good-looking Chondoist. Whenever he met me, he used to joke.

"Premier, you must be tired working all day. Please relax a bit and listen to my old stories." Beginning in this way he would tell his old stories in my office for some time. Once on a visit to me during a holiday, he boasted of Chondoism.



"Our Chondoism has the flavour of homely bean paste soup." When I asked what he had in mind, he answered, "It can easily be seen even from 'services with clean water'. When performing 'services with clean water's one may sit as one chooses - cross-legged, with knees raised or sideways. Such liberty is never allowed in other religions."

I talked much about religion with Kim Tal Hyon. He often repeated the anecdotes he had experienced when active in the organization of the Chondoist faith under Japanese rule. Frequent talks with him helped establish our human ties, independent of the business-like notion that I was the Premier and he was the Chairman of the Chondoist Chongu Party. He frankly told me the problems he faced in his daily life.

Once he came to the building of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea past midnight and asked for an interview. This happened when I was working as Chairman of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea: it must have been 1946.

It was surprising that he called on me past midnight, without giving any notice. I even had the ominous presentiment that something unusual had happened to him which he felt obliged to tell me.

But he surprised me further with an unexpected request, totally unrelated to official business.

"Don't blame this old man for lacking a sense of honor. I know it may sound very presumptuous, but would you get me some tonics like wild ginseng or antler, please?"

Even after entering my office, he hesitated, before saying what he had come to see me about and then, bracing himself, blurted out these words. Then he lowered his head without looking at me as if he were guilty. Wondering what the matter was with the old chairman, I looked closely at him and saw that he had blushed up to his ears.

Inviting him to sit down, I gently asked, "You always boasted about your health. How come you suddenly need tonic?"

"To tell the truth, the trouble is that I cannot manage my wife. I married a young woman recently and she treats me badly.... General, please help me."

"I'll help, if your wife slights you."

At this he beamed with joy and left.

I obtained some wild ginseng and antler and sent them to him.

After a year he called on me again.

"Thanks to you I begot a son at the age of seventy. My wife is very happy. I would like to invite you to attend the party to celebrate the first one hundred days of our baby." "It is a very happy event. These are good times, so we have such happy events. I accept your invitation with pleasure. Please convey my congratulations to your wife on the birth of her son."

This time, too, he beamed as he left my office.

I called at Kim Tal Hyon's house as I had promised, to attend the party on the hundredth day after his son's birth. His wife served me tasty dishes and bowed to me, saying, "You brought happiness to our home."

That day she offered me hospitality, smiling all the time.

During the war I met Kim Tal Hyon in Pyolo in Jagang Province. We talked about the Chondoist faith over noodles. He said that rice donation was an excellent customary practice peculiar to the Chondoist faith and served as the main financial source for the practice of the faith.

In fact, most successive leaders of Chondoism, except Choc Rin and some others, led a frugal life, disregarding personal gain and fame. They always experienced a dearth of funds. It might be easy to say, but not so easy to practise the faith, without receiving pay. Chondoist ministers do not receive pay, I am told.

The followers of the Chondoist faith in south Korea once financed the faith with earnings from a theatre they had built on the site of a former printing house for Kaebok, I hear. Two wedding halls arranged, in the central temple served as the main means to boost their finances and rent was charged per hour. It was an awkward stopgap, but unavoidable.

We attached importance to the united front with the followers of the Chondoist faith, mainly because their overwhelming majority were anti-Japanese and patriotic, although its upper echelons were irresolute and opportunist, and also because the grassroots were poor and lowly, mainly poor peasants, in class composition.

Originally the Chondoist faith had started as a peasant movement, based on peasants and its doctrine was peasant in nature. It was natural and inevitable that the Tonghak movement was based on peasants in our country, in those days when capitalist development was still incipient and the modern working class lacked a true force. The Tonghak movement was not only for the peasants. It was a broad mass movement, which represented the desires and interests of all the poor and lowly, including the poor and shopkeepers in cities. At the same time a nationwide anti-aggression patriotic movement, which opposed all foreign aggressors, tended towards the modernization of the country.

After failure in the March First Movement, the upper echelons of the Chondoist faith lost its fighting

spirit and confined themselves to insignificant propagation of the faith and little theoretical activity to maintain nationality, and some of them, Choe Rin, for example, turned pro-Japanese after three years' imprisonment.

However, the lower echelons of the faith made every effort to carry forward the patriotic tradition of the faith under harsh Japanese rule, disregarding the treachery of the upper echelons. This was the mass base, which made us attach importance to a united front with the Chondoist faith and convinced us of its possibilities.

The progressive leaders of the Chondoist movement, who did their best to link the movement with other revolutionary forces of the country and sought cooperation with the international revolution, professed that Chondoism was in the "service for the poor and lowly", that it was a "homogeneous communist party of a different scale" and hoped for Contact with the Comintern.

For instance, Lee Ton Hwa applied for membership of the Red Peasant International on behalf of the Council of the Korean Peasant Group towards the end of October 1925.

The Korean Peasant Group was a peasant organization under the Young Chondoist Party, which was founded in Seoul in October 1925.

After the end of World War I and establishment of the worker-peasant government in Russia and development of the internal and external situation following the March First Popular Uprising, Lee Ton Hwa, Jong To Jun, Park Rae Hong and other young Chondoists founded the doctrine lecture department for young Chondoists in September 1919, with a view to studying and disseminating the Chondoist doctrine and promoting the Korean new culture, to set up the first militant youth organization in our country. Some time later the organization was renamed the Young Chondoist Society.

The society founded the Kaebyok Company as its mouthpiece and began to issue the political and current affairs journal Kaebyok in 1920. It set up a children's department and conducted vigorous activity to cultivate the Korean children's aesthetic sentiments and improve their moral treatment and social status, in conformity with the doctrine, "Man and God are one."

In 1923 the Young Chondoist Society was reorganized into the Young Chondoist Party and acted as the vanguard organization of Chondoism, aiming at building an earthly paradise by "a posteriori creation".

The party had a well-organized system, consisting of the head office in the capital, local branches in provincial capitals and county towns and the lowest organizations called job in sub-counties and dong. It conducted vigorous activity to propagate the faith, drawing up a three-year plan for expansion of the party influence and extended its ranks by attracting many young people from the poor and lowly strata in a short space of time.

The Young Chondoist Party became the most influential denominational force, particularly in the area

north of the River Ryesong, which had not been ravaged by the Tonghak rebellion. According to the History of the Young Chondoist Party, published in 1935, in those days at least 100 local branches of the party existed at home and abroad. A large proportion of them (70%) were located in the northern part of the country. Phyongan Province had 40 of them, the largest number. In fact, almost every county had a local branch of the Young Chondoist Party in the former Phyongan Province, which covered today's Jagang Province, Pyongyang City and the area up to Nampho City.

The presence of the overwhelming majority of the Chondoist force in the northern part of the country in those days constituted another major reason why we attached importance to the united front with the Chondoist faith.

The reformist force of Chondoism also made every effort to extend their influence and energetically waged an anti-Japanese patriotic struggle, riding the tide of the world situation, following the March First Movement.

In July 1922, after the death of Son Pyong Hui, the third Chondoist leader, the young revolutionary reformists of the Chondoist faith strove to restore and reorganize their forces by organizing the Koryo Revolutionary Committee and conducted vigorous activity at home and abroad, in the Maritime Provinces and in Manchuria, in particular. Subsequently the Koryo Revolutionary Committee was reorganized into the extraordinary Supreme Revolutionary Chondoist Commission, a secret underground revolutionary organization.

What is particularly conspicuous in its activity is that it requested the Soviet Russian government and the Comintern to provide political support and considerable military aid to the revolutionary activity of the Chondoists, and carried out energetic efforts to attain them. It is said they planned to train about a thousand soldiers under the guise of employing labor in two years time around three gold mines near Chita in Siberia and further organize a Koryo National Revolutionary Army, composed of 15 composite brigades. The secret organization of the Chondoists called on the Soviet work how the Comintern viewed the Korean revolution and the situation developing in Korea and urged unprejudiced positive assistance to the Korean revolution.

The Chondoists aimed to establish close ties with the social revolutionary force of Japan in the east and Soviet Russia and the Comintern in the north for cooperation with Korea, Japan and Russia in the case of an outbreak of revolution in Korea.

As mentioned above, the revolutionary reformists made every effort to wage an armed resistance struggle in cooperation with the international revolution, disregarding the obstruction and hatred of the conservative Chondoist faction.

The revolutionary reformists strove in every way to dedicate themselves to the anti-Japanese struggle, with their patriotic and people-loving zeal and grievances kindled by the Tonghak movement, but achieved no real results. Worse still, after the failure of the March First Movement, the Chondoist faith

divided into radicals and moderates and sharp conflicts occurred between them.

The Japanese imperialists tried to exploit this factor and the radicals compromised in a bid to prevent a split. This seemed to weaken the revolutionary reformists, and their anti-Japanese movement gradually regressed into some sort of non-violent movement. Once the upper echelons of the Chondoist faith became non-violent national reformists and tended to be openly pro-Japanese, Chondoism gradually lost its revolutionary nature and reached a low ebb.

However, the local Chondoist organizations and overwhelming majority of their grassroots and members of the Young Chondoist Party formed legal and illegal organizations and fought Japanese colonial rule in various ways. Unfortunately they had neither a definite strategy of struggle or a force capable of unified leadership.

At this juncture we advanced to Mt. Paektu and proclaimed the Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

Millions of Chondoists provided their enthusiastic support for the programme. They firmly united under the banner of the ARF, convinced that the morning star they aspired was shining over Mt. Paektu. Therefore, the Chondoists accepted the united front and many of them joined the subordinate organizations of the ARF. It was the result of our positive and active efforts, based on a fair appreciation and broad understanding of the Chondoist faith, as well as the inevitable outcome of the development of the organization of the Chondoist faith, whose guiding ideas were patriotism, love of the people and opposition to foreign forces.

Naturally, there were certain differences between our movement and theirs in ideal, principle and doctrine and in starting points, but we firmly joined hands for the great cause, because we were one nation, of the same stock. At that time I keenly felt that there could be no communist movement, divorced from the nation and that the national interest, as well as class interest, should always be respected.

Because of this community I could easily become reconciled with Choe Tok Sin, who had been in the forefront of the battle against communism.

Although Choe Tok Sin and I were on the wrong side of seventy when we met, I received him excitedly with no past enmity at the thought of having fostered patriotism under Choe Tong O, and enjoyed a friendly, warm-hearted talk with him as colleagues of the same nation and stock, transcending ideological differences between communism and Chondoism.

Recently I published the "Ten-Point Programme of Great National Unity for National Reunification", which could be called a renewed version of the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF. In the 1930s, when we were cooperating with Park In Jin in the area of Mt. Paektu, national liberation constituted the supreme task for our nation. Today, at the turn of the 20th century, our supreme programme and ideal are to

reunify the divided country. It was only natural that our struggle to wipe out foreign forces and restore national sovereignty receives enthusiastic support from the Chondoists, who had put up the slogans "defending the country and providing welfare for the people" and "driving out the Westerners and the Japanese" in the past.

Owing to the division, our nation has experienced all kinds of suffering for nearly half a century. This is not a tragedy caused by our nation itself, but rather one which was imposed by foreign forces. Why should we not oppose the foreign forces and advocate national reunification, building up the nation and great national unity?

Consequently, the patriotic-minded Chondoists, Christians and Buddhists in the north and south of Korea and abroad are all fighting to bring an end to the tragic national division imposed by the foreign forces and bring about the new day of national reunification more rapidly.

It was not for personal comfort or personal glory, or for the interests of a certain class or social stratum, but for the liberation of the entire nation from Japanese colonial rule that we waged earlier on the anti-Japanese armed struggle in the expanses of Manchuria and area around Mt. Paektu for over twenty years.

It is the unanimous belief of all Koreans in the north and south of Korea and abroad that no God, interests of a certain class or party can stand above the nation and that they should climb over any abyss or barrier for the good of the nation; they realize this more keenly with the passage of time.

If the aim and ideal we communists have fought for, devoting our whole lives for the good of the nation, are realized, and if the 70 million compatriots live in lasting happiness in a reunified country, I think this is the very earthly paradise, which the Tonghak martyrs yearned for.

The ideal of Tonghak, the ideal of Chondoism, throbbing with national spirit, is the pride of our nation. The patriotism of these martyrs, who dedicated themselves to the motherland and fellow countrymen, will remain enshrined for ever in the history of our nation.

## 15.6. Living Apart from the People Is Impossible

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We felt one truth intensely during the whole anti-Japanese revolution: if an army does not enjoy the support of the people, it can never be strong and win a battle. During the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we invariably maintained that "As fish cannot live without water, so guerrillas cannot live without the people."

One slogan encapsulated in a nutshell, "supporting the army and loving the people". This means that the people should defend the army and the army should love the people.

I have already described the active and self-sacrificing nature of the support we received from the people, when we were fighting in Mt. Paektu.

What was the source of the zeal and spirit with which our people defended and supported the army, a zeal and spirit unprecedented in the history of guerrilla warfare? What enabled them to support and encourage the People's Revolutionary Army at all times and at the risk of their lives?

We must seek the secret above all in the popular character of our army. Our army was organized by the sons and daughters of the people, fought for the freedom and liberation of the people and safeguarded their lives and property. So it is only natural that the people were attached to such an army and helped them.

However, the people do not defend and support, at the risk of death, all armies, whose composition and mission are popular. The people do not like an army, which purports to be "popular", but misbehaves and lacks discipline. An army can only enjoy unsparing support from the people, when it truly loves the people and is deferential to their wishes, defends their interests and protects their lives and property.

The Korean People's Revolutionary Army possessed all these qualities.

The public morals of the KPRA were based on the thoroughgoing spirit of love for the people. Every commander and man of the People's Revolutionary Army found a reason for their existence in the people. They felt that they existed for the people and that they could only be happy when the people were happy. Consequently the joy of the people was their joy and the sorrow of the people was their sorrow. The existence of the KPRA itself was meaningless and worthless, if isolated from the people. If we had kept our distances from the people, our guerrilla army could not have maintained its existence.

On the very first day when we started the guerrilla warfare, we regarded the embrace of the people as the cradle for our happy lives and the support of the people as the source, guaranteeing our lives.

As a matter of fact, the parent body of our guerrilla army was the people. Our parents also came from the

people and the protectors of our revolution were none other than the people. Consequently, we considered unity between the army and people as a sine qua non.

The army's love of the people and enjoying their support determined its existence more than the outcome of the battle. If we had not attached great importance to this, we would have been transformed into a "drop in the ocean" as the enemy used to describe us, and would have broken up, after falling back hither and thither.

When waging guerrilla warfare, we felt a need to codify an idea, which could serve as the regulations and codes of behavior for the revolutionary army in relations between the army and people and between the officers and men, as well as in the everyday life of the army. So we formulated and made public the provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

We drafted the regulations to strengthen the popular character of our revolutionary army, legalize its spirit of loving the people and maintain it firmly.

Admittedly, the People's Revolutionary Army was not a regular army. However, it boasted a military force as good and well-organized as a regular army. A large number of men could not be moved only by the orders and instructions of the commanders or on the strength of conventions.

The mid-30s marked a period, when the enemy stepped up the construction of concentration villages in west Jiandao and sought to "isolate the bandits from the people" to prevent the influence of the People's Revolutionary Army. The Japanese imperialists resorted to every conceivable means to drive a wedge between the guerrilla army and people and cut off the route, the lifeline of the guerrilla army, by which assistance passed on to the army. They left no stone unturned to disgrace the People's Revolutionary Army and blockade it militarily and politically, as well as economically.

They themselves knew full well that our army was genuinely popular and morally sound, and that our soldiers would not behave like the bandits and their army therefore paled in comparison. However, the enemy defamed our revolutionary army calling our soldiers "bandits". This reflected their craftiness and real intentions to impair the political and moral prestige of our army.

Whereas we regarded unity between the army and people as vital, the enemy persistently attempted to "isolate the bandits from the people".

The Japanese imperialists tried to denigrate the popular nature of our People's Revolutionary Army, imputing to us even those crimes, which had been committed by gangs of mounted bandits. In order to restore the image of the revolutionary army, which had been reversed, owing to pernicious enemy propaganda, and elevate its status, it was necessary to give fuller play to the popular character inherent in our army. To this end, we had to codify our demands and seal them in a document.

The organizations of the Independence Army, which held their own ground in various parts of Manchuria



in the past, had left positive and negative impressions in their relations with the people. Sometimes the people looked unfavorably on the Righteous Volunteers Army and the Independence Army, mainly because they did not properly fulfill their obligations to the people and imposed too many economic burdens upon them. Some commanders of the Independence Army, like a certain company commander of Jongui-bu, collected an enormous amount of money and goods, under the name of war funds or contributions to the independence movement, only to unscrupulously misappropriate them for personal pleasure.

The Japanese imperialists even exploited such misdeeds, in order to slander and blaspheme our People's Revolutionary Army. They painted the Independence Army and People's Revolutionary Army with the mine brush, claiming that all people waving the banner of independence were robbers, who plundered and misappropriated the property of the people. To clear ourselves of such a false charge, intentionally imposed by the enemy, we had to clarify the popular character of our army.

We also drafted the provisional regulations, because the number of army recruits had rapidly increased.

The KPRA never waged a battle, which might harm the people. Aware of this fact, on the defensive in battles, the enemy soldiers entered a village and offered resistance, by leaning on the walls of residential houses or on fences. However, we never thought of fighting, by relying on the villages or residential houses, regardless of the adversity.

This was also true, when our army entered Sandaohezi village in early summer 1934 prior to the battle in Luozigou. The enemy started to attack our unit by mobilizing a large force with a view to checking its advance into Luozigou. At that time, too, I intentionally ordered my men to beat the enemy by luring them out to a field, located on the outskirts of Sandaohezi. Otherwise, the villagers might have suffered. As we did so, we missed a chance to remove about half the enemy's manpower. We experienced similar cases more than once.

Even when they stayed at a village for a short time, the People's Revolutionary Army never behaved arrogantly under the pretext that they were fighting for the liberation of the people. No sooner had they taken off their knapsacks than they fetched water, made a fire, swept the yard and chopped firewood. I was no exception. We always saw to it that the commanders themselves served as a model for the men and educated them by setting an example.

In this way, ever since the first founding days of the guerrilla army, we regarded loving and helping the people as the most important duty and precept of the men of the KPRA.

However, at first, after our advance to the area around Mt. Paektu, some recruits frequently acted scandalously, jeopardizing the relations between the army and people. The recruits in our unit included former rural youth, men from the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist armed units and also those, who had defected to our side, after rising up in revolt in the puppet Manchukuo army. These recruits from different origins, who had still not gone through the elementary stage of drills, occasionally behaved,

contrary to the traditional discipline of the revolutionary army and besmirched the honor of the unit.

The following events occurred, when our unit stayed for some time at old man Lee's at Liutiepaodong in Shijiudaogou. At that time the old man introduced us to a young man, his nephew, who had allegedly come to help him gather in the crops. Judging by his new shoes and gaiters, the young man had apparently made full preparations for the harvesting. Our subsequent talk was very interesting. He was extraordinarily eloquent. He depicted the special features of any object briefly and vividly.

The young man had been out for some time and came back in a gloomy mood with shabby gaiters and shoes. I asked him what had happened, but he hesitated and refused to answer.

I instructed platoon leader Kim Jong Phil to make detailed inquiries into how the gaiters and shoes had been changed. Kim Jong Phil subsequently came back and reported full of indignation that one soldier, who had defected from the puppet Manchukuo army, forced the young man to change his leggings and shoes, and that the soldier lightly shrugged off criticism, although he had committed such a preposterous misdeed.

"He had justified himself: 'The soldiers are having a hard time in the mountains for the sake of the people. Surely the people should take Care of them, then? The puppet Manchukuo army do this about all the time.'"

I was shocked by the platoon leader's report. In the bygone days there had been numerous instances, where the brass hats of the aggressor armies had legalized such crimes, as murder, robbery, rape and pillage in areas under their occupation, allowing their men to perpetrate such acts. During the Sino-Japanese War and Pacific War, the Japanese soldiers had even taken comfort women for the army to battle fields. The puppet Manchukuo army followed the Japanese army's lead, in maintaining ignoble relations with the people.

As the soldier had been unduly addicted to such wrongdoings as murder, incendiarism and plunder in an army, which specialized in these misdeeds, he considered it natural to exchange such things as gaiters and shoes with another man. However, in our People's Revolutionary Army such an act was a serious mistake, which could not be overlooked. As we regarded the love of the people as a strict rule, we considered such actions as heinous crimes.

I apologized to old man Lee on behalf of the revolutionary army.

"Old man, this happened owing to our failure to educate him properly. Please forgive us, although I know you are displeased, believing the blunder to be the fault of your own stupid son."

The old man staffed up and cut me short.

"When you say this, I feel even more ashamed. It is quite right to swap shoes for soldiers, who are

fighting in the mountains all the time. Why on earth are you asking for forgiveness?"

After this incident, the relations between the old man and us became more friendly. Whenever we went to Shijiudaogou, we never failed to visit Liutiepaodong to see and inquire after him.

Our men went to that village and conducted a lot of work to obtain supplies. Once they came back with two chickens they had got there. I made sure that the chickens were stewed for infirm Wei Zheng-min. At that time he was staying in our unit, because his health had deteriorated. The man who had got the chickens said that he had not been able to pay for them because the owner had refused money. I asked for the name of the owner: once again it was old man Lee. The guerrilla was experienced in the procurement of supplies, but had not dealt with the matter very well.

I visited old man Lee, taking with me the man's platoon leader from the supply unit. After giving a helping hand to the old man in threshing for some time, I made the platoon leader produce 10 yuan and say, "I'm sorry for my late payment for the chickens." In those days the market price of a chicken was about one yuan and fifty fen. Although the price for the two chickens was three yuan, we paid generously, because we wanted to help the old man. However, this only served to incur his anger. "I'm not a Korean if I take this money. The saying goes, 'He that does fear no shame, comes to no honor.' And this old man also has face."

"Accept it, please. If we had known that they were brood hens, we'd have returned them to you. Unaware of this fact we've consumed your brood hens, which would have hatched out chicks in spring, so we've spent all your capital, haven't we?"

Eventually we managed to slip the money into his hands.

Wiping away tears with his sleeves, the old man told us about a robbery two years earlier when he had been the victim.

One day he had hunted a deer. He had sold the deer to a rich man. On bearing this news, a crowd of soldiers rushed to him and rashly demanded money, producing their guns. He was robbed of all the money he had received for the deer, for they threatened to shoot him to death then and there. Since then he had said "No" at the mere mention of soldiers. However, when he saw how our men respected the people, he thought he should not spare anything for such soldiers. And one day he had heard that our men were searching for black hens.

He said that he had given our men his two hens in a desire to show his sincerity at such a time, although it was a small amount. Now that he had received money, which amounted W more than three times the price of the hens, he had a guilty conscience but he had not fulfilled his duty as one of the people, he said.

On hearing the old man I felt that we were abusing his sincerity too much. Nevertheless, we could not

disregard the revolutionary army's traditional regulation of unfailingly repaying the people's sincerity. I/me recruits regarded the people's disinterested support for the revolutionary army as a matter of course; they disposed of the aid materials imprudently, without taking the people's status and living conditions into serious consideration.

A typical example was provided by the ox incident, which happened in Yaoshuidong in autumn 1936.

At that time our unit had stopped at the entrance to Diyangxi, Shijiudaogou of Changbai County. Then we were all having a very hard time, owing to a shortage of food. One day two recruits, who had gone towards Yaoshuidong to gather some dried vegetable leaves, came back with an ox beaming with joy. We then discovered that the ox had been sent by peasants from Yaoshuidong, upon hearing that the guerrillas were taking only soup made of dried vegetable leaves for their meals.

At first the two men had refused to take the ox. However, they said that they had been compelled to bring it, because the peasants had entreated them to accept their sincerity and forced the reins into their hands.

Water was already boiling in one corner. As they had not tasted cereals for many days, even the veterans and commanders, to say nothing of the recruits, were delighted at the thought of eating plenty of beef soup after such a long break. I also felt like telling them to slay the ox promptly, at the thought that my men would otherwise have to eat a bowl of dried vegetable leaves soup for their supper. However, after examining the decorations of the full-grown ox, sadly looking up to the sky, I changed my mind.

The neatly made nose ring, the bridle nicely wound with red cloth, yellow brass bell and coins - all these bespoke the wholehearted devotion of its owner. I told the men, who were excitedly moving about, as if preparing to slay the ox, tear its limbs off and put them into the cauldron immediately, to gather in one place and then said gently: "Let's return the ox to its owner."

The men who had brought the ox looked up at me dumbfounded. The other recruits were also extremely disappointed; the smile disappeared from their faces. It must have seemed quite an unexpected order for such men, who had been appeasing their hunger for several days. I reasoned with the recruits, who were heaving a sigh:

Why are we going to return this ox to its owner? Precisely, because it is the precious property of the peasant, its owner. Look how dearly he has held his ox and loved it! This brass bell has probably been kept with much care for several generations in his family.

Most likely the grandma of the family brought the coins in the strings of her purse attached to her skirt, when she was married and treasured them all her life. Our mothers express their affection for oxen in such a way. We should also return the ox, because the farming of the peasants in Yaoshuidong is largely dependent on it. What will happen there, if we slay the ox because it is the sincerity of the people, without taking this into consideration?

The owner of the ox and his neighbors, who have become indebted to the ox, will have to do the work of the ox from tomorrow onwards. They will have a hard time of it in carrying the load, which used to be carried by the ox, on their backs and turning over, with picks and hoes, the fields, which have been ploughed by the ox until now. When you think of this, you can't feel at ease, if we were to eat this ox, van you? Almost all of you are the sons of poor peasants, so think of your parents, who are toiling away.

The soldiers, who had brought the ox, seemed to feel the pricks of their consciences. They said with tears in their eyes that they were to blame and asked me to punish them. Instead of punishing them, I sent them again to Yaoshuidong to return the ox.

In those days, when I received recruits I shared bed and board with them for some time. By mixing with them, I trained them for some time, before sending them on to a company or a regiment. It was difficult to do so when I received scores of them; however, when I received three or four of them, I kept them company for at least several days. In this way I could acquaint myself with their family circumstances, preparedness, characters and aptitudes and also adopt appropriate measures for their education.

Around October 1936 over 10 lumberjacks joined our unit at the same time. From the very first day I kept company with three young men from the new recruits.

One day, on their way back from sentry duty, they each brought back a knapsack of unhusked maize from a peasant's field without asking his permission. They said that, as even I drank only plain water at mealtime because of the unit's dearth of food, they wanted to pick at least some maize and treat me to plenty of it. I was surprised above all by the fact that, although they had committed an illegal act, laying hands on the people's property, they believed that they had fulfilled their duty as men for the sake of their Commander.

I could understand their concern for their Commander, but could not accept their sincerity. "Thank you for your sincerity. Nevertheless, today you seriously harmed the interests of the people. You have picked three knapsacks of maize, without even obtaining the owner's permission. How is such lawlessness acceptable!"

"We're soldiers who are having a hard time for Korea's independence. So three knapsacks of maize are nothing. In former days the people in my village even contributed gold for the fighters of the Independence Army. If any peasant has grievances against the removal of a few ears of his corn, he is as good as a pro-Japanese element." This speech was made by a stocky, short young man on behalf of the three.

They put in a word in turns. They showed no signs of repenting for their mistake. It was impossible to predict the serious mishaps and vices in future, if I failed to correct their mistaken view, that it was all right to encroach upon the interests of the people and boast about fighting for the liberation of the country.

It took me more than an hour to convince them of their error. Then I ordered the three recruits to take all the maize back to the edge of the peasant's field. A company commander accompanied them.

The party did not come back, even though several hours had passed. I was afraid that some accident might have happened. I went to the maize field with my orderly. The three men were sitting at the edge of the field with the ears of corn.

I asked the company commander why they were doing this. He replied that they were waiting for the owner.

I looked at the men. All their eyes were red and moist with tears. I was reminded of the first phrase "Ren-zhi-chu Xing-ben-shan" (A man's real nature is originally generous) of "San-zi-jing" (a Chinese book, in which each phrase consists of three words?Tr.), which I had read at primary school in Badaogou. As the phrase shows, man's inn-in-sic nature is truly beautiful.

Returning to our bivouac, I emphasized to the three men again: You should learn a lesson from what you have done today and love the people more ardently from now on. If we are rude to the people, they will turn their backs on us. Nothing is more horrible than abandonment by the people. The greatest tragedy for a revolutionary is to forfeit the love of the people.

If we forfeit the love and support of the people, what shall we rely on in our struggle? That night they did not utter a single word until they went to bed. I held the hand of the youngest man and asked him why he had remained so silent, maybe he disagreed with what I had said that day.

"No, not at all. I just think that ours is a really good army. I'll never do such a thing again." He pledged between tears to become without fail a good guerrilla and merit the love of the people.

Deviations, which were detrimental to the honor of the revolutionary army, were not only revealed in relations between the army and people.

As the numerical strength of the army increased, the regimental gave general orders. Worse still, some commanders even claimed that, as the number of soldiers increased to several hundreds, the superiors and inferiors should wear different uniforms by rank and eat and sleep separately; otherwise, they said, extreme democracy might be fostered in the army, which would make it impossible to command the troops.

Some newly selected junior commanders frequently assumed airs, regarding themselves as very important dignitaries.

This happened when our unit, which had been active in the Changbai area, was marching at night towards our secret camp, leaving the neighborhood of Shisidaogou in autumn 1936. Prior to our departure, I appointed a scout party and told my men what they should beware of during the march. 1

laid particular stress on refraining from smoking. Smoking during a night march was tantamount to exposing oneself to the enemy of one's own accord.

When we were about to turn a mountain bend, a strong smell of cigarette smoke suddenly spread from the direction of the company, walking at the head of the ranks. Clearly someone from the 2nd Company had quickly lit a cigarette, the moment Headquarters in the rear of the ranks was not visible, as his company turned the bend.

Next morning I summoned the company commanders to inquire into the matter. To my surprise, it was not the rank and file, but rather company leaders Lee Tu Su and Kim Thaek Hwan, who frankly confessed that they had disobeyed my order not to smoke the previous night. When they buckled to any task, they habitually rolled a cigarette.

I sternly reasoned with them.

"Today I will not dwell on the need to refrain from smoking. What would have happened to our unit, if the enemy had surprised us last night on seeing your lit cigarettes or smelling the smell of your cigarette smoke?

"The anti-Japanese war we are now waging is a war of will power and discipline. This war represents a serious confrontation between our revolutionary will to liberate our country and the aggressive ambitions of the enemy to legalize and perpetuate its occupation of another country. We are now winning victory after victory in this confrontation, for the very reason that our will and discipline are stronger than those of the enemy and that we are incomparably superior to the enemy both politically and morally.

"What will happen, if such feeble-minded people as you frequently appear in our ranks? A military group with lax discipline and a weak will is doomed to defeat in a battle with the enemy.

"You pose as rare habitual smokers, but there are many heavy smokers among ordinary soldiers, too. When you smoke, they also want to smoke. However, not a single rank-and-file soldier smoked on the march last night.

"What does this mean? It means that you consider yourselves special. There can be no privileged individuals in the case of military discipline. But you behaved yourselves as if you were special. If we permit such a behavior, this would mean that we condoned privileges for commanders. We do not admit privileges. If we were to admit them, the rank and file would not trust their superiors. In that case only unity between the officers and men and the spirit of defending the cadres and taking loving care of the men will suffer a loss. Is your mistake serious or not?"

Lee Tu Su and Kim Thaek Hwan said that they were ready to face any punishment, because their error was serious.

"I could punish you. However, that would be facile. I sincerely advise you not to repeat the same mistake. Regard this advice as punishment itself."

That day I assigned Lee Tu Su as "head of the no-smoking corps".

At around that time the orderly of regimental political commissar Kim Phyong advocated equality between the rank and file and their superiors, an extreme and undisciplined claim, vitiating the atmosphere in the ranks. Ho Pom Jun, the orderly, was a veteran, who was somewhat aged and had joined the armed struggle comparatively early. He had previously been my orderly, but Kim Phyong had taken him to his regiment, saying that he was not suitable for an orderly at Headquarters, because he was too slow. Kim Phyong sent his orderly Lee Kwon Haeng to Headquarters as successor to Ho Pom Jun.

Once he had been put under the command of Kim Phyong, Ho Pom Jun caused troubles from time to time, answering back to his commanders. When he was sent on a liaison mission by regimental commanders, he was sometimes disobedient. At their wits' ends, the commanders submitted Ho Pom Jun's matter to the superiors. If such a matter had been overlooked, comradeship between the rank and file and their superiors might have been damaged and the spirit of defending cadres might have flagged.

Taking due account of the aforementioned reasons and the new situation in our People's Revolutionary Army, we drafted and proclaimed the provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. I think it was around the end of 1936, for this was the time when Kim Ju Hyon was busying himself, saying that we should not make light of the first New Year's Day we would celebrate in Mt. Paektu. Kim Phyong had compiled the draft, but it lacked the attributes of provisional regulations. Therefore, we made another draft consisting of 15 articles. We termed the document "Provisional Regulations", as we planned to supplement and perfect them in future.

The provisional regulations of the KPRA clarified in detail the character and mission of our revolutionary army, as well as the regulations and codes of action, which should be observed by the commanders and men in their everyday lives.

In the provisional regulations we paid particular attention to the problem of relations between the army and people and between the officers and men. This can be seen from the fact that all the articles of these regulations emphasize the popular character of our revolutionary army.

"This army shall be the KPRA, which fights against Japanese imperialism and its lackeys and for the restoration of the country and the freedom and liberation of the people." This was the first article of the regulations.

The second article of the regulations laid down the organizational principle of our People's Revolutionary Army, stating that it was a genuinely revolutionary army of the Korean people organized by their fine sons and daughters.



The regulations described in the following manner relations between the army and people. "Given that 'fish cannot live without water', this army shall fight for the restoration of the country and emancipation of the people, defending and protecting the lives and property of the people and sharing life and death, good times and bad with them and in concert with them."

The article on unity between the officers and men read as follows:

"The commanders and men of this army shall voluntarily observe military discipline and public morality in the spirit of protecting of the cadres and taking loving care of the men, as well as unity between the officers and men."

The provisional regulations also included an article, which stipulated that the property of the Japanese imperialists and their stooges Should be confiscated and appropriated for the anti-Japanese war and that some of it should be used to help the poor. Furthermore, the provisional regulations included an article, stipulating that a common front would be formed with those units, which desired to conduct joint operations with the Korean People's Revolutionary Army as well as with those countries and peoples, which sympathized with this army.

The provisional regulations also defined the military structure of the People's Revolutionary Army and the authority of Headquarters, with regards to the appointment and dismissal of the commanders at all levels; in addition they laid down the qualifications for joining the army, the procedure for entering and leaving the army, as well as all acts subject to punishment.

The provisional regulations prescribed the flag, badge and star of the military cap, of the KPRA.

The aim of the provisional regulations was clear: To attain without fail the historic cause of national restoration, which the people yearned for, by our own efforts, without encroaching upon the interests of the people, where the army and people, as well as the officers and men, would become one and display the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and strenuous efforts.

One basic emotion ran through the provisional regulations: love. In other words, love for the people, men and commanders should be regarded as an iron rule.

According to my experience, unity between the army and people or the officers and men comprises identity of thoughts and feelings, which cannot be achieved merely with regulations and principles. To achieve this goal, human feelings of caring and doing something for the good of others should be simultaneously shared between the army and people, between the officers and men, and between the rank and file and their superiors. The human feelings of love for each other and consideration of one another as dear and valuable are strong ties, which solidly unite the people's ideas.

We can quite justly say that the provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army were not a rule or legal document used to control or supervise someone: they constituted an affectionate code

of laws or charter, which linked the army and people as well as the commanders and men with warm feelings.

After the promulgation of the provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, we made sure that all the commanders and men observed them strictly. Following the promulgation of these regulations, relations between the army and people and between the officers and men improved, becoming more cordial and unbreakable.

Even in difficult circumstances, when we the commanders and the men were threatened with death from hunger and cold, we did not recklessly lay hands on any property of the people. And when we dug even a few potatoes, without obtaining the owner's consent in unavoidable circumstances, we left a written apology and money, which was several times more than the cost, either at the edge of the field or in the potato cellar.

When we entered a village, our first thought was to help the people. We never hoped to be entertained.

Even now I cannot forget what happened when our unit stopped at a village in Ershidaogou, Changbai County.

At that time, too, I put up at a small straw-thatched house, which looked the poorest in the village. In that house an old couple aged over sixty were living, bringing up their little grandson as the apple of their eyes. Their son was said to have died before his time while working as a raftsman, while their daughter-in-law had died of typhoid fever. Rain was leaking from the ceiling of their house, which lacked able-bodied people. The thatched roof had decayed and the earthen porch had crumbled. Consequently the house looked jumbled, as if uninhabited. On the first day I cut, together with my orderlies, some ten bundles of grass on the hill at the back of the village, replaced the roof and also repaired the earthen porch.

At the dead of night a chicken could suddenly be heard flapping its wings. I looked out, wondering if a weasel was taking away the chicken. The old man of the house was taking the chicken out of the hencoop with the help of his wife, who was holding a lit pine-knot. When I asked him why he was doing this at midnight, he said that he needed it urgently. There were only three chickens in the hencoop, and the old man took out two of them. One was a cock, while the other was a fat hen.

In daytime we heard how the hen cackled for a good while after laying an egg. The old man tied up the two feet of the hen and the cock with a string. He put the hen into the kitchen and went out through the twig gate holding the cock under his arm. His wife followed him; I don't know why. They did not come back in even two or three hours.

I waited for them, sitting on the earthen porch. The old couple only made their appearance towards daybreak. They were extremely crestfallen. The cock was still under the old man's arm.

"Old man, where have you been, and why have you only come back now?"

"We've been to all fifty-odd houses of the village," said the old man, putting the cock down on the earthen porch.

I asked him why they had taken such trouble in the middle of the night.

"We learned that the name of your Commander is Kim Il Sung. So we've been looking for the house, where he is boarding and lodging, but failed to find it."

"Why are you looking for that house?"

"We want to tell your Commander about your commendable deed and bow low to him. Indebted as we are to you, we can't sit back with folded arms, can we? We wish to treat your Commander at least to a rooster, although it's nothing special, but...."

The old couple had first gone to the landlord in the village. He said that he expected the Commander to be staying in the largest house in the village.

They also visited the house of the landlord's agent, the second largest one in the village. Then they visited, one after another, all fifty-odd houses of the village. The old man said that all the villagers had treated him and his wife badly, because they lived in poverty with no one to rely on.

"It is true that we can't appear before your Commander in these clothes. However, they're going too far. Some even went so far as to tease us, saying, 'Well, he's in your house, and yet you're looking for him here!' Tell me, please, which house is your Commander staying at?"

It was clear that, even after visiting the whole village, the old man could not imagine that the man he was anxiously looking for was putting up at his own house. As the old man was very much anxious to learn my whereabouts, I disclosed my identity. But the old man did not believe me. He said that it could not be true.

He said: "In the past when the soldiers of the Independence Army frequented my village, even a company commander used to stay in the largest house, making people slay an ox and hold a drinking party. How Can the Commander stop at such a humble house as mine? Moreover, how can the Commander replace our roof, repair our earthen porch and enjoy sorghum gruel?"

Clearly you also despise us and conceal his whereabouts," he went on, greatly displeased. The old man acknowledged my identity only after hearing the truth from my orderly the following day. We barely managed to dissuade the old couple from killing their rooster for us and left the village. Similar incidents happened on many occasions.

The provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary army demonstrated our great viability in consolidating unity between the army and people.

If we had failed to establish in our ranks the spirit of living the people and serving them devotedly, we would not have endured the manifold hardships and might have abandoned the revolution halfway in those stern and trying days, when the destiny of the People's Revolutionary Army and our own existence was constantly at risk.

After the promulgation of the provisional regulations of the KPRA, a new advance was also made in the unity between the officers and men in our revolutionary army.

As the commanders we got into the habit of sharing good times and bad with the men. When the men ate gruel, so did the commanders; when the men slept on tree leaves in the snow, so did the commanders.

All the commanding personnel of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, from the Commander down to platoon leaders, strictly guarded against and opposed the "small pot".

The terms "large pot" and "small pot" emerged in the Kuomintang Army of Chiang Kaisek. In this army an officer regarded it as natural to have food specially prepared in a small pot separately from the large one, where ordinary men prepared their meals. The Japanese army went to extremes, strictly discriminating between the rank and file and their superiors and unconditionally treating the superiors with preference and categorically treating the rank and file coldly. In this army, when one rose to at least the rank of corporal, one did as one pleased, enforcing such barbarous discipline and punishment to the rank and file as making them lick the soles of his feet or shoes.

The KPRA never permitted such a "small pot". If there is a "small pot", it will inevitably engender a special section, which will enjoy the privilege of eating special food. Then a difference will inevitably be created between this special section and the rank and file, who have to eat from a large pot. If someone exercises discrimination and fosters support and follow such a hypocrite.

We made it an iron rule for all the commanders, irrespective of rank, to share with the rank and file food from the same pot at all times, in all places and in all circumstances. Everyone shared food from the same pot: this constituted the inviolable discipline and ethics of the People's Revolutionary Army.

As everyone shared the same food, clothing and bedding, the commanders authorized to take care of the men, were frequently given less to eat, dressed more poorly and had worse bedding than the men.

Today we also oppose the "small pot". Although this happened long ago, at one time many restaurants in the capital and provinces kept a separate room to serve cadres with special food. Although the central authorities warned them many times to refrain from maintaining a separate room, the people working in public service persisted in keeping a "small pot". In the end such individuals, who were being disloyal to the people, assumed the air of being special.

Some officials, guided by their subordinates to a separate room or reception room for distinguished guests, considered it natural and wanted to receive special treatment. We do not support the "small pot", as this will engender all kinds of "evil spirits". The "small pot" will only produce capitalist ideas. If we were to retain such a "small pot", relations between the Party and the masses would be impaired and the people might forsake their belief in socialism. The strength of our socialism has to do mainly with the fact that our Party has not become bureaucratic and we do not allow the "small pot".

Loyalty to the people always underlies all policies formulated and carried out by the Workers' Party of Korea. Loyalty to the people is the main factor underlying the character of our Party, army and state.

Through our own experience we have confirmed the truth that a party and army, which considers loyalty to the people as the main mode of existence, is ever-victorious. The existence of a handful of privileged circles is not humanism; it is open expression of the anti-popular spirit.

In a capitalist army genuine relations between the army and people, between comrades and between the rank and file and their superiors do not exist, nor can they exist. Only coercion, deception, conflict, confrontation, blind obedience and belief can exist. Sadly in the army of an imperialist state it is difficult to find, even among rank and file, the beautiful trait inherent in human beings, the trait of serving others' interests and caring for others.

"Eat first. If you don't eat him, he'll eat you!" This is the philosophy of life which officers in the armies of capitalist countries use to indoctrinate their men. According to this philosophy, all other beings except "myself" are enemies and should be eaten up.

Allegedly, towards the end of the Second World War, the Japanese soldiers on the New Guinean front caught human beings and ate their flesh, when they ran out of food. Even today the armies of capitalist countries foster a brutal mode of life, the "law of the jungle", among the soldiers.

The unity between the army and people and between the officers and men was further consolidated during the implementation of the provisional regulations of the KPRA. The traditions of this unity are now being implemented in full under the correct leadership of our Party.

The soldiers of our People's Army regard it as their greatest pleasure to love and help the people. Now it is commonplace everywhere in our country that the army helps the people and the people assist the army.

As we frequently hear and see in newspapers and on TV, our girls volunteer to become the eyes and limbs of disabled soldiers, who were wounded while defending their country. I feel the greatest happiness at seeing the unity between the army and people, which is displayed more fully with the passage of time.

The People's Army continues to consolidate the traditions of unity between the officers and men.

Today the commanding officers of our People's Army treasure and love their men like their children or younger brothers. Many of them have rescued their men heroically at the risk of their own lives. The men regard their company commander as their eldest brother and company political instructor as their eldest sister. Relations between the rank and file and their superiors in the company, the main combat unit of our People's Army, are so close.

Our country has a powerful weapon which we can justifiably be proud of in the eyes of the world. I am referring here to the unity between the army and people and the unity between the officers and rank and file.

Such a powerful weapon cannot be made by any military science or technology. It can only be made by genuine love.

## 15.7. A Written Warranty for a Good Citizen

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In March 1937, on the eve of the Xigang meeting, I dispatched Kim Jong Suk to Taoquanhi. That year the organizations in various places were requesting that I send able workers; Lee Je Sun, Park Tal, Kwon Yong Byok and Kim Jae Su all asked me to send them political workers. To honor such requests, I dispatched Kim Jong Suk to Taoquanli.

Whereas the underground network connecting Xinxincun, where Lee Je Sun lived, to the Khunungdengi village, where Park Tal lived, was a route, which enabled us to expand the network of our underground organizations to the whole region of North Hamgyong Province and the eastern region of South Hamgyong Province, the underground network linking Taoquanli to Sinpha could be called the route we used to ramify such a network to the western and southern areas of South Hamgyong Province and the inland area of the homeland. Situated at the center of the Xiagangqu area in Changbai County, Taoquanli could serve as a central base for expanding the network of the ARF to the vast areas of southern Manchuria, including Linjiang County, to say nothing of the Xiagangqu area, and for establishing contacts in the network.

Sinpha, located opposite to Taoquanli, was a suitable place for establishing a relationship with the industrial region of Hungnam, where a large army of our country's working class was concentrated; it could serve as a good stepping-stone for ramifying the network of our underground organizations to the southern region on the east coast and deep into the inland.

We also attached special importance to Sinpha, because we believed that it provided a chance to open with considerable ease a route to the underground organizations in the homeland.

Jang Hae U (alias Jang Hyo Ik) lived in Sinpha. Some visitors to our secret camp had told me that he seemed to have degraded into a petty bourgeois after his release from prison; however, this represented a subjective estimation of the people of other localities, who had a poor understanding of the underground world of Sinpha. Kwon Yong Byok informed me that Jang Hae U had not been reduced to a petty bourgeois and was in fact engaged in the revolution and had already made contacts with Kim Jae Su.

Jang Hae U had enjoyed the favor of independence campaigners. Maintaining close ties with my father, he had frequented Maritime Provinces in Russia, where many independence fighters and exiles were concentrated. On these occasions he would stay in my house for a night or two. Whenever he visited my house, my father would take meals at the same table, serving him wine; I cannot forget it.

I had heard of his arrest in the mid-1920s for his links with the independence movement and prison term, but had not learned about the length of his imprisonment and the circumstances of his switch from nationalist to communist movement. I only discovered after liberation that he had been sentenced to seven years in prison, but had been released after two years by the "amnesty" to mark the accession of

Hirohito to the Japanese throne.

The presence of Jang Hae U, a very experienced worker in the revolutionary movement and my intimate friend through my father, in Sinpha constituted a good omen for our future work. Later I heard of him from the underground organization in Taoquanli, which confirmed that his thoughts seemed to have remained unchanged and that there had been little change in his temperament. If we came in contact with Jang, we could open a reliable route to the homeland.

Who should we dispatch for work with Jang Hae U? Who could carve out with comparative ease a promising route to the homeland? Kim Phyong and I racked our brains to select the right person for the job. Kim Phyong, political commissar of the 7th Regiment, was at the same time in charge of the secret work of dispatching political operatives.

One evening, when it was snowing, I called Kim Phyong to the campfire at a bivouac. At that time we were marching northward, to the secret camp in Yangmudingzi, Fusong County, over the Duoguling. His lean face seemed to have become quite haggard from successive battles and marches in the snow.

"Have you decided which person is fit for opening the Sinpha route?" I was asking him the same question as a few days earlier. So far he had failed to provide a good response. However, this time he seemed to be brimming over with confidence.

"Yes, I have. 'Black Jong Suk' seems the best choice."

His answer surprised me, as she was the same nominee as the one I had in mind. "Black Jong Suk" means Kim Jong Suk. In my unit there were three girl soldiers with the name of Jong Suk - Jang Jong Suk, Park Jong Suk and Kim Jong Suk. When someone called, "Comrade Jong Suk!" the three of them would commonly answer in chorus, "Here!" This frequently provoked merry laughter, but also created inconveniences and confusion.

Consequently their comrades-in-arms distinguished them by calling them respectively "Gallant Jong Suk", "Blue Jong Suk" and "Black Jong Suk". "Gallant Jong Suk" was the nickname of Jang Jong Suk, named after her habit of breathing heavily when working and marching. Some veterans recall that she was nicknamed in that way, as she was always courageous and gallant. (The Korean words for "To be gallant" and "To breathe heavily" are pronounced the same)

I think both opinions are correct. Park Jong Suk's nickname of "Blue Jong Suk" originated from the blue skirt, which she had worn when she joined the guerrillas. The origin of Kim Jong Suk's nickname, "Black Jong Suk", is identical. She had worn a black skirt, the only one she had had during her life in the guerrilla zone, until the day of her admission to the revolutionary army.

"Can she handle the serious task of breaking fresh ground in Sinpha?" I asked Kim Phyong, as I wanted to know what had made him pick Kim Jong Suk.



"When I carried out party work in Badaogou in Yanji County, she worked in the Young Communist League under my guidance. She is prudent in every undertaking. Moreover, she is experienced in political work in the Women's Company. I am afraid I don't know her own feelings on this matter I voiced the same opinion.

For all that, I still did not thoroughly understand the person in Kim Jong Suk. Only one year had passed since she had been assigned to my unit. She and I had lived in this ruined nation in different places and immersed ourselves in the revolution through different channels.

I had first heard her name in Macun in Xiaowangqing. The children's art troupe members from Beidong, Wangyugou, to Wangqing had mentioned her name now and then along With that of Yun Pyong Do.

The butterfly-like children had harbored great illusions about the instructor of their Children's Corps. In later years Lee Sun Hui, recalled from the post of the chief of the children's affairs bureau in Yanji County and appointed to the same post in Wangqing County, frequently remembered her.

Yun Pyong Do had also talked about her now and then. The common name "Jong Suk" which a man would come across once or twice at every village, consequently found its way into my memory. According to all the assessments of other people about her, she was quite daring and persevering and at the Same time kind-hearted and unusually sympathetic. My understanding of Kim Jong Suk in the days in Wangqing had been limited to these generalizations.

When the art troupe of the Children's Corps in Yanji County visited Wangqing, I sent them 40 red ties as a present. I was told that Kim Jong Suk, YCL committee member of the district No. S and head of the art troupe of the Children's Corps in the county, had been quite moved by the present.

Kim Jong Suk was the only soldier of the 4th Company in the Maanshan Secret Camp, whom the Leftists could not rashly stigmatize as a member of the "Minsaengdan". Nevertheless, the Leftists assigned her to the company of "Minsaengdan" suspects for no reason at all. They apparently thought that she should live with the "guilty" Koreans, as she was a Korean no matter whether she was under suspicion or not.

However, she accepted this willingly. She was determined to share her fate with her comrades-in-arms, who had been falsely charged. She did not feel ashamed to be living in the same quarters as the "Minsaengdan" suspects. Later on in life I came to realize why that little, ordinary girl guerrilla of inconspicuous appearance, won the favor of the whole company.

Kim Jong Suk lived for other people, not for herself. She devoted her entire life to others. She always took care of other people at her expense. Whenever she was served food, she would share it with soldiers with bulkier bodies or with young soldiers. The young curly-haired soldier of the 1st Platoon, 4th Company, who was said to have been a bosom friend of her younger brother, Ki Song, must have eaten her share more than anyone else. She would mend the torn uniforms and shoes of male soldiers, when

everybody else had gone to bed. Devotion to her comrades and the common cause was the nucleus of her personality and personal charm.

Lim Chun Chu, Kim Jong Phil, Park Su Hwan and other guerrillas from Yanji had told me on many occasions that in the days, when the whirlwind of the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign was sweeping the whole of eastern Manchuria, a young girl had stealthily brought food everyday to the "Minsaengdan" suspects behind bars in Nengzhiying, and that the sufferers, who had been falsely charged, had escaped death from hunger thanks to her efforts. That young girl had been none other than Kim Jong Suk. If it had been revealed that she had brought food to the "Minsaengdan" suspects, she would have been stigmatized as a "Minsaengdan" member.

I had first seen her at the guerrilla zone in Sandaowan. In Mengjiang in spring 1936 I heard in detail the story of her life and family. One day I went out to the riverside, looking round the sentries, with a light heart as I had finished writing my report for the Donggang meeting. I could hear clear singing, full of nostalgia. I went upstream, where the singing voices were ringing out and found two women soldiers rinsing out the Wash in a willow grove. One of them was Kim Jong Suk.

That day I learned that she had been born in Hoeryong, North Ham-gyong Province, and that her family had left the hometown and emigrated to Manchuria when she was five or six years old.

The people in Hoeryong are proud that their native place is a scenic spot in North Hamgyong Province. During the anti-Japanese revolution this historic place, known as one of the six border points, was designated conspicuously on our operations map as a military strategic point, 2the seat of the headquarters of the 75th Regiment, Ranam 19th Division f the Japanese army, and an air corps.

The Hoeryong people take great pride in the fact that such a talented drama actor as Ra Un Gyu and a renowned poet as Jo Ki Chon were in there. They also speak highly of their hometown as the famous production center of white apricots. All visitors of Hoeryong in the bloomy spring will see the whole town covered with white apricot flowers.

However, Kim Jong Suk had only lived in that beautiful place for a few years. As she began to understand the world, she would stare at the barren mountains and fields of north Jiandao, where the mounted bandits were roaming, raising clouds of dust.

Kim Jong Suk was bereaved of her parents, sister and brothers one after the other. Her father was an independence fighter, who had undergone trials in the enemy's jails; he had received serious frostbite during the arduous struggle. He suffered from the illness only to die an early death. At the last moments of his life, he requested that his dear youngest daughter, Jong Suk, open the window. Then he looked out at the southern sky with tears in his eyes, saying, "I wanted to be buried in Korea and thereby fertilize the soil of Korea. I am afraid I can't fulfill that wish. Wherever you go, don't forget your home village and Korea. And fight for Korea."

When she turned 15, the aggressors who had turned the whole of Jiandao into a bloodbath, pounced on Fuyandong, set the village on fire and cold-bloodedly killed her mother and the wife of her elder brother.

The wife of her elder brother left her a suckling baby. From that day she began to beg for breast milk for the baby. She would go round other people's houses several times a day, carrying her nephew who was crying for milk, and even went to a neighboring village more than four kilometers away to beg for milk.

She had to part from the nephew she had raised with such care. When she was going to the guerrilla zone, her elder brother, Kim Ki Jun, who had to go to a mine in Badaogou to conduct underground activities, took the baby from her bosom by force. She was determined to take her nephew to the guerrilla zone, but her brother did not allow her to do so. So she postponed her departure for a day. At dawn the next day the enemy's "punitive" force suddenly swarmed into the village. At the gun fire, she carried the baby in her arms and ran up the mountain.

She planned to go to the guerrilla zone on the way. Her brother followed her panting and scolded her for being ill-prepared for the revolution. He said: "You should think of the revolution before anything else, as you have embarked on the road of the revolution. How can you wage a revolution, when you think only of your family? Don't worry about the baby." He took the crying baby in his arms and climbed down to the valley without looking back.

Apparently he felt like crying so much, despite the harsh remarks, that he could not look back at his younger sister. This marked the life-long parting between sister and brother.

Kim Jong Suk never saw her brother and nephew. Her brother was arrested during his underground work in the mine; he was tortured to death. Her nephew disappeared without leaving his whereabouts. Her younger brother, Ki Song, her only flesh and blood, was shot dead by enemy bullets, while luring the enemy's "punitive" force with a bugle of the Children's Corps, in order to rescue the people of Cangcaicun on the move from Fuyandong to the guerrilla zone in Sandaowan.

Even after liberation she would shed tears at the thought of her younger brother. Whenever she saw teenagers on the streets, she would leave a silent sigh, thinking that her nephew, if he was alive, would have been that age.

After consulting Kim Phyong, I called Kim Jong Suk to Headquarters.

"Comrade Kim Jae Su has made several requests, through messengers, for more people skilled in underground work. Although agile and experienced in underground activities, he seems to be experiencing great difficulties as the area under his charge is so vast. He is extremely anxious about failing in his work with women. He says that, in order to involve the women in the underground organizations, he has to work efficiently with the elderly, who are controlling them, and that this is no easy job. You must base yourself in Taoquanli and provide guidance for the work with the women in the Xiangangqu area, offering active assistance to Kim Jae Su.

"After improving the work there, cross the river to Sinpha and, while maintaining relations with Jang Hae U, build up a solid network of underground organizations in the Samsu area.

Then, try to rapidly expand the network of the organizations of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in such industrial towns on the east coast as Hungnam, Hamhung, Pukchong, Tanchon, Songjin and Wonsan, and in rural and fishermen's villages.

"The creation of secret organizations in the homeland is far more dangerous and difficult than work among the masses in Changbai under the protection of the People's Revolutionary Army. Take care and work efficiently.

"We are confident that you can carry out this challenging task. Whenever you face difficulties, please rely on the comrades and people."

These are some of the things I said to Kim Jong Suk when dispatching her to Taoquanli.

The line of our operations had already begun to be stretched since late summer 1936 in Taoquanli area. According to Jong Tong Chol, when the news of the Berlin Olympic Games reached as far as the mountainous village of Taoquanli, a strange “gambler”, named Kim Won Dal, had appeared in the Xiagangqu area and begun to make gambling popular among young people; he had told gamblers mostly that the Koreans were first and third in the marathon event during the Olympic Games, but that the Japanese flags had been hoisted on the flag poles at the time of the prize ceremony.

The short, agile, intelligent-looking young “gambler” was Kim Jae Su, a political worker we had dispatched there. He had a peculiar fighting history, reminiscent of an adventure story. First chairman of the Wangyugou soviet government, secretary of the Yanji County Party Committee, head of the organizational department of the East Manchuria Special District Party Committee - these positions marked his career moves in the first half of the 1930s, which can be condensed in a few words.

Then, an event had happened, which might otherwise have checked his normal career. When the East Manchuria Special District Party Committee moved to Luozigou, he had been arrested along with another member of the committee and dragged to the military police. They had made Kim Jae Su and Zhu Ming write letters of conversion and given them tasks, forcing them to help them in their work respectively.

They said, “Don’t tell anybody that you have been arrested by us, and continue your work in the special district party committee. Continue to form revolutionary organizations. We will not care. If you regularly hand over the lists of new members, we'll be satisfied.”

The enemy was overcome with delight that cadres at the special district party committee had been converted. In fact, Kim Jae Su had merely pretended to convert and given a false pledge in order to

resume his work in the revolution. He had taken secret documents and funds for his work from the enemy and frankly reported the particulars of the event to the committee. Zhu Ming, who had subsequently gone to the committee had cheated his organization, just as the enemy had instructed. In return the committee had duly punished him.

Kim Jae Su had been pardoned, but expelled from the party ranks. His political integrity had been undermined. He had also been debased in the moral aspect. Deprived of everything in a day and forced out of the fighting ranks, he had hidden himself away in a mountain village and groaned in agony, repenting of the false conversion, which was proving worse than death.

In the world of revolutionaries, who regard adherence to the faith, will, mental and moral integrity of communists in any adversity as the greatest honor and virtue, false conversion is recognized as an inexcusable crime. This is because, even if one makes a bogus conversion, it will provide the enemy with a clue for counterpropaganda, give the real betrayers a precedent and pretext for their betrayal. It is indeed true that, even if one maintains one's conscience and loyalty as a revolutionary, declaration of conversion to the enemy does not merit praise.

Kim Jae Su had acted against the noble moral norm of revolutionaries, proceeding from the simple thought that it was OK, as long as he remained alive by cheating the enemy and then continued the revolution. On hearing how I had burned the bundle of the "Minsaengdan" documents at Maanshan and had relieved some 100 men and women from being suspected as guilty, he visited me after much mental suffering and told me that he wanted to prove his innocence in the practical struggle. At that time he had appealed in this way, beating his own chest, "Either kill me or spare my life; it's up to you. But I want to be involved in the revolution. I can't bear it any longer."

I had trusted him. I had authorized him to conduct underground activities and sent him to the area on Xiagangqu in Changbai County. I was confident that he would never again leave a stain on his career. His frankness with the organization provided patent proof that he had preserved his revolutionary conscience. I believed this conscience. Although he had once made a false conversion owing to narrow thought, it was clear that he would never again take the shameful path at the cost of his life, as he had realized and experienced the disgrace of his act.

He had infiltrated Taoquanli via Tianshangshui under a pseudonym. At first he had organized gambling to become acquainted with Jong Tong Chol, Kim Tu Won, and Kim Hyok Chol (alias Kim Pyong Guk), introduced to him as reliable men by Lee Yong Sul, head of an ARF chapter in Tianshangshui. No one in the Xiagangqu area could rival him in gambling. When gambling he would put wristlets on his forearms and hoodwinked the others by putting in and taking out cards from the wristlets with lightning speed. When he made the highest score, he would hum Orang ballad.

The elderly with no inside information had complained that the prodigal was spoiling the young men. However, while they made a fuss, the organization had grown in the gambling den. The organization had subsequently turned out to be a core organization of the Xiagangqu ARE committee, Changbai County.

Thanks to his energetic activities, the ARF organizations had been formed in nearly all the villages in the area centering on Taoquanli by the early 1937, and later a paramilitary corps had also been organized.

Kim Jong Suk, dispatched to Taoquanli, made first contacts with Kim Jae Su at Lee Yong Sul's house, which was called by the people in Tianshangshui as "inner village house". Lee's was an unusually big family of eight brothers and sisters. The Tianshangshui chapter of the ARF had been organized in this house, and was headed by Lee Yong Sul, the fourth brother of the family.

We owed a great deal to that family. Many of our comrades had received much help from them on their way to localities for work. I put up at their house on three occasions from the end of 1936 to summer 1937; on my first visit I stayed for three days. Although they were struggling to make both ends meet by slash-and-burn farming, they were very generous.

Lee's eldest brother had two seals of our unit prepared on Kim Jae Su's request and sent them to us. We used the seals for a fairly long time. Staying in the "inner village house" for about 15 days, Kim Jong Suk helped the work of the ARF chapter and at the same time prepared to work under the guise of a civilian. Assuming the pseudonym of Om Ok Sun, she went to Taoquanli as a member of a family immigrating from Musan. A black red jacket, long, serge skirt and knee-high padded socks were the trademarks of the first appearance of Om Ok Sun, the "baby of Musan house", in front of the Taoquanli people. People hailing from Hamgyong Province would call any young lady a baby.

Taoquanli was a mountainous village about 12 kilometres away from Sinpha. According to Wi In Chan, who had lived since birth in one place in Taoquanli for over 20 years, the independence fighters, who had crossed the river from Korea immediately after the "annexation of Korea by Japan", had been the first inhabitants of this village.

Until the beginning of 1930, it had been under the influence of the Independence Army. Later on, following the mass immigration of the pioneers of the peasant union movement from the homeland, the ideological trend of communism began to gain the upper hand in the area of Taoquanli. From the latter half of 1936, small units of the KPRA frequented the area, exerting revolutionary influence on the inhabitants. Taoquanli and the surrounding area were covered with ARF organizations.

Frequent visits by the People's Revolutionary Army and its successive victories in Taoquanli and its vicinity heightened the spirits of the people and imbued them with fighting zeal. Indeed, they struck terror in the hearts of the enemy.

Here is one episode to illustrate how frightened the enemy were.

There was a spring in front of the school in Taoquanli. The spring water was so cold that if you drank it on a boiling summer day, you could feel your teeth chatter. On hearing that the spring water was especially good, the Japanese police weighed it on scales to explain why. It was heavier than ordinary water.

"Such spring makes the eyes of the Taoquanli scoundrels dark and sparkling. They are all associates of the guerrillas."

The enemy attempted to close up the spring. On learning of this news, Jong Tong Chol, the village head, said to the policemen, "The guerrillas drink this spring water on their way. If they find out that the spring has been closed up, won't they bring you to account?" The enemy did not dare close up the spring.

In brief, the mass foundation of Taoquanli was favorable and the revolutionary force enjoyed the upper hand.

Although busy with farm work, Kim Jong Suk visited other people's houses at nights to become acquainted with them. Then she familiarized herself with the names of the houses - Pukchong house, Kapsan house, Hungnam house and so on. She mentioned later on that she had learned by heart the names of the villagers and their houses in a week. She regarded this trivial matter as the first step to mixing with the people.

"After taking charge of a class, teachers familiarize themselves with the names of their pupils, from the roll call, in order to mix with the pupils. I felt that political operatives are no different from the teachers. How can they mix with the people, when they don't know their names?"

This is what Kim Jong Suk said to Kim Phyong, after finishing her task in Taoquanli. As instructed by Headquarters, she placed most emphasis on work with the women and made frequent contacts with them. Up until that point there was no women's organization in Taoquanli. Absorbed in household affairs, most women did not know what was happening in the world. To make matters worse, the old men and women severely restricted them. When any woman glimpsed into night school out of a desire to learn letters, the old men raised a fuss, as if a great disaster had happened.

Kim Jong Suk concluded that the revolutionary transformation of women in Taoquanli could only be expedited via efficient work with the elderly. Compared to the young, who were sensitive, the old people were bigots. Although they bemoaned their fate, they never thought about carving out their own destiny. Unless the old people were brought to their consciousness, the rallying of young people to organizations could not be conducted without a hitch. In fact, she had considerable trouble, owing to the old people and women on several occasions.

The experience of our activities in Jirin, Guyushu and Wujiazi testifies to this fact. As I have mentioned in a previous volume, the old man "Pyon Trotsky" had impeded our efforts to transform Wujiazi in a revolutionary manner. Until we won over the old man, we could neither transform Wujiazi in a revolutionary fashion or form any organization. It was only when we won over the old man that we could organize the Anti-Imperialist Youth League there. Hyon Ha Juk in Guyushu had been an important person in our work. As he had been a friend of my father's and enjoyed great influence, I would drop first of all at his house, whenever I went to Guyushu, to say hello and convey my mother's greetings to him.

Kim Jong Suk naturally respected and treated old people warmly. When I heard of her experience of work with the elderly in Taoquanli, I did not feel that the work had been deliberate. Kim Jong Suk did not regard people as one to be educated; she looked on them as simple and common men and women. Even if she met an individual she had to win over for her work, she did not consider him or her to be educated and herself as educator; she treated him or her just as she would attend to her tender neighbor. In this way she became the people's daughter and their neighbor trusted by them. These were the basic characteristics of Kim Jong Suk as an underground operative.

As I myself have keenly experienced throughout my life, a man must think of himself as a son, servant and friend of the people to mix with them and at the same time regard them as his parents, brothers, sisters and teachers. Anyone who purports to be the teacher of the people, a bureaucrat reigning over them and leader governing them, cannot mix with them or enjoy their trust. The people do not open up their minds to such individuals.

Kim Jong Suk did not leave the house without doing anything, even if she had only dropped in for a minute; she chopped firewood, brought water and pounded grain with a mill for the family. Her devotion to the villagers was earnest enough to bring a flower into bloom on a rock. In this way, the old people began to follow her. She achieved the breakthrough in transforming Taoquanli in a revolutionary fashion.

One day the landlord in Liugedong banished his young kitchen maid, suffering from typhoid, into a hut on the mountain. Nobody dared to take care of that pitiable girl. On hearing this news, Kim Jong Suk Went to the hut without hesitation and nursed her, sharing bed and meals with her.

Her comrades rushed to the hut on learning the news and tried to dissuade her, saying, "If you get infected in this risky humanitarian venture for the hopeless girl and something happens to you, what will happen to the important task assigned to you by Headquarters and who will be responsible'? You can nurse her, but do not share her bed and meals."

Smiling, Kim Jong Suk comforted them, saying, "Don't worry, and please go back. If we can't save a child for fear of our lives, how can We restore the country and rescue our fellow countrymen? I am determined to sacrifice my life for the sake of the people, so I fear nothing."

Her comrades could not bring her out of the hut.

Kim Jong Suk rescued the young girl in the long run. At last the people in Taoquanli began to call her "our dear Ok Sun". When they happened to get salted mackerel, they called for "our Ok Sun"; when a ceremony for a one-hundred-day-old baby was held, they asked for "our Ok Sun". Kim Jong Suk was their daughter, granddaughter and sister and indispensable in their lives.

When she took tender care of the villagers, she paid deep attention, ensuring the safety of Kim Jae Su, who was busy accelerating the transformation of Xiangangqu in a revolutionary way.



In February that year, while distributing among the ARF organizations the Samil Wolgan we had sent from the mountain, Kim Jae Su was caught by the enemy holding one last copy. In the police station, he pretended to be illiterate and kept repeating, "I got it on the mountain, when I collected firewood. I'm going to roll tobacco with it. Why do you take it away? Please give it back to me immediately."

Thinking that he was an ignoramus, they set him free for a while. However, they continued their investigations in secret.

After covering Xiagangqu area under the pseudonym of Kim Won Dal, Kim Jae Su had settled in the house of Lee Hyo Jun in the main hamlet of Taoquanli and changed his full name to Lee Yong Jun based on the common part of the name of Lee Hyo Jun, in order to disguise himself as his cousin. Kim Jong Suk discussed with Kim Jae Su an effective way to put an end to the enemy's secret investigation. They reached agreement that the best method would be to demonstrate to the enemy "Lee Yong Jun's stupidity".

According to their script, a fuss was raised the next day in Lee Hyo Jun's house, disturbing the whole village. Lee Hyo Jun's young wife committed a scandalous act, beating with a paddle her husband's "cousin" dependent on her family, and expelling him. She wailed loudly, saying that her family was now as poor as a church mouse, because her husband's stupid cousin had constantly stolen her family's property for gambling.

At the same time as his wife's fuss, Lee Hyo Jun called in at the police station and said that his family had been ruined by his stupid cousin, who knew nothing other than gambling and implored them to strike his brother's name off the census record and expel him. Meanwhile, the "stupid cousin" called in at the police station carrying a copy of the Samil Wolgan proudly and asked, "I'll give you this book you are fond of. But, for God's sake, dissuade Hyo Jun and his wife from beating and expelling me.

Wide-eyed at the Samil Wolgan, they asked him where he had got it.

Kim Jae Su replied that he had picked it up at Sanpudong, where the guerrillas and Japanese army had fought the other day, and said, "Frankly speaking, I got the book you took away from me the other day on that battlefield, but I cheated you into thinking that I got it on Mt. Baotai behind our village."

As the police reproved him seriously, glaring at him, he produced a ticker from his inside pocket and said, smiling:

"Tickers of this kind, fountain-pens, money and many other things are spread all over the place; if this is known, others will get them. If you prevent my brother and his wife from expelling me, I will tell you where you can find them."

This was enough to convince the police of his stupidity. Then the enemy stopped their secret investigation.

The forerunners of Taoquanli, including Jong Tong Chol, Ryu Yong Chan, Kim Hyok Chol and Lee Chol Su, and the revolutionary masses there made every effort to protect the underground activities of Kim Jong Suk and ensure her personal safety. They crossed the river to Sinpha for her sake and regularly brought her newspapers to read. Jong Tong Chol remitted money to the miscellaneous shopkeeper, a member of the underground organization in Sinpha, who in turn entered subscription for papers in his name and sent them, as soon as he received them, either by packing goods with them or in bulk. Kim Jong Suk thereby read regularly Tong-A Ilbo and Joson Ilbo.

On ceremonial occasions Jong Tong Chol invited Kim Jong Suk, to enable her to meet operatives from the guerrilla army and messengers from the secret organizations in other localities, who paid visits to Taoquanli.

In summer 1937 he arranged a ceremony in his house for the birth of his son. The ceremony was attended by several political workers, including "Blue Jong Suk" (Park Jong Suk), who had been dispatched from the guerrilla army recently, the members of secret organizations, policemen, village heads and secret agents of the enemy.

To disguise the operatives from the enemy, Jong Tong Chol asked them to bow to each other. Kim Jong Suk and Park Jong Suk bowed to each other, according to convention. Kim Jong Suk knelt down in front of "Blue Jong Suk" and made a bow, saying, "How do you do?" For that moment Jong Tong Chol had taught her to bow for days.

At nights Kim Jong Suk went to the well to practice putting a water jar on her head and walking with the jar on her head. She also practiced riding on a swing for several nights for the Tano festival (the fifth day of May on the lunar calendar).

She regarded them all as essential steps to enable her to acquire the status of woman underground worker.

She realized that the main link in the whole chain of her efforts to transform Taoquanli in a revolutionary fashion involved bringing the masses to their consciousness and rallying them to revolutionary organizations. She carried on active propaganda of our revolutionary ideology through the "Ten-Point Programme of the ARE", and organized leading core elements in stealth; she activated the core elements to form the Anti-Japanese Youth League and the Women's Association. The mountainous village, which had been quiet, finally became a solid base for our activities.

Wherever she went, Kim Jong Suk educated the people in the spirit of defending the army and loving the guerrillas; she prepared supply goods with members of the Women's Association, youth and children and sent them to the guerrilla unit. She launched education to support the army so efficiently that even the Chinese settlers in Taoquanli from the Shandong region volunteered to send support goods to the People's Revolutionary Army. The Children's Corps members wandered the battlefields to collect bullets.

The highest form of the movement's efforts to support the army involved joining the army. With the help of members of the Xiagangqu committee of the ARF, Kim Jong Suk selected from the core elements the young men she had gained good understanding of through organizations and sent them to the People's Revolutionary Army. As far as Jong Tong Chol can recall, over 100 young men and women joined the revolutionary army from the Xiagangqu area. In Taoquanli alone, more than ten men joined the guerrillas, including Kim Hyok Chol, Ryu Yong Chan, Lee Chol Su, Cboe In Dok and Han Chang Bong.

Han Chang Bong, the first generation of our revolution, led his regiment and crossed the River Raktong in the teeth of sacrifices during the great Fatherland Liberation War; his regiment occupied the heights on the opposite side of the river and rendered distinguished services in defending the heights.

Yun O Bok, chairwoman of the Women's Association in Yaofangzi wider the guidance of Kim Jong Suk and the mother of three children, came to our secret camp located more than 30 kilometers away, carrying a two-year-old baby on her back, and importuned to be admitted to the guerrilla army.

Their enthusiasm for joining the army went so far that one family Oade a sham grave for their son who had joined the guerrillas and held memorial services for him in order to deceive the enemy, because its surveillance and oppression were so severe for guerrillas' families.

Shortly after the detection of Kim Jae Su's distribution of the Samil Wolgan, we dispatched Choe Hui Suk to Yaofangzi to support Kim Jong Suk's operation in Sinpha. As Choe arrived, Kim Jong Suk entrusted to her with the task of providing guidance for the organizations of the women, young men and children in Taoquanli and other places in the Xiagangqu area. She preoccupied herself with the operation in Sinpha.

Her activity in Sinpha began with work with Jang Hae U, who was at that time involved in the anti-Japanese revolutionary movement in the Sinpha area with members of the Working Committee of Communists in Samsu. Around that time contacts were made between Jong Tong Chol, village head of Taoquanli and a special member of the ARF, and Jang Hae U, Lim Won Sam and So Jae Il, members of the Working Committee of Communists in Samsu. They began to communicate with each other.

So Jae Il, devoting himself to the work of the organization, while working as a laundryman, kept up contacts with Kim Jong Suk. To obtain a detailed understanding of Jang Hae U and his organizations, Kim Jong Suk made Jong Tong Chol swear brotherhood with Lim Won Sam, a member of Jang Hae U's organization. Only once she had sufficient understanding through Jong Tong Chol beforehand, did Kim Jong Suk make direct contact with Jang Hae U. She first met him in the back room of Sokjon Tailor's. That day she conveyed my personal letter to him.

"You say General Kim Il Sung was Kim Sung Ju in his childhood, a son of Mr. Kim Hyong Jik? I'll follow the General just as I followed Mr. Kim Hyong Jik."

When I received a report on this remark, I became certain that Kim Jong Suk's operation in Sinpha would

be successful.

Jang Hae U was not a petty revolutionary, who took into account other people's ages and the duration of their struggle or who was proud of himself or behaved narrow-mindedly. He followed and supported without any presumptions what was righteous. Putting to one side his own personal feelings, he joined the great duty and cause without hesitation; he was a man of such caliber.

Some time later he formed the Singalpa chapter of the ARF, involving members of the Working Committee of Communists in Samsu. In the same period, under the guidance of Kim Jae Su and Kim Jong Suk, a party branch of the Sinpha area was organized in the back room of Sokjon Taibor's, directly under the authority of the Party Committee of the KPRA with the Working Committee of Communists in Samsu as the parent body.

The meeting to form the ARF chapter was held in Kwangson Photo Studio. The retouching room on the second floor of the studio was the secret liaison place, which Kim Jong Suk used most frequently.

Lee Sun Won, who ran the studio, was a core member of the Singalpa chapter of the ARF. He had attended a short course on photography in Seoul and opened the photo studio. He was good at photography, was popular and sociable; we would find it easy to work with the people if we included him in our work. He took snaps of a considerable amount of the enemy's data and sent them to us. On one occasion he sent us a snap of the view of Sinpha to help the People's Revolutionary Army's advance into the homeland. Plenty of leaflets were printed in his developing room. His wife was a faithful assistant, who tacitly backed the secret work of the organization.

As well as Kwangson Photo Studio, Kim Jong Suk used many places in the Sinpha area - Sokjon Tailor's, the noodle house near a well, Sinpha Inn, bowl shop, the watermill house - as secret liaison places and working places, and conducted underground activities, when she made secret visits to these places. The noodle house beside the well, Sinpha Inn and bowl shop were used mainly to make contacts and communicate with members of organizations. They also served as sites for the collection and storage of supply goods for the guerrillas.

The secret place on the main route used for transporting supply goods was the watermill house. Situated away from the streets of the county town, it was well out of the enemy's attention and therefore provided quite a convenient place for the storage and dispatch of goods. A relative of the host of the house was a raftsmen, who could provide ready help in sending the supply goods over the River Yalu. The host of the watermill house and raftsmen were both members of the ARF.

A considerable amount of supply goods were sent to us from Sinpha. As not that many goods were available in Shisandaogou, the organizations in the Xiagangqu area in Changbai County had to buy most supply goods in Sinpha across the Yalu.

Large quantities of supply goods, like grain and cloth, sent by the organizations in Sinpha area to the

guerrillas, were carried over the Yalu by rafts or ferries mostly via the watermill house and the inn in Ohamdok. The family running the inn in Ohamdok was a special branch of the ARF.

During her activities in Taoquanli and Sinpha Kim Jong Suk went to Paektusan Secret Camp and Samsu, as well as such eastern coastal areas as Sinhung, Hungnam, Pukchong and Tanchon to conduct in-depth work with the revolutionaries there.

The secret liaison places in Aan-ri and Ohamdok were used mostly for sending operatives to other localities. Kim Jong Suk dispatched most members of secret revolutionary organizations to Pujon, Jangjin, Sinhung and Hungnam at the house of the head of the Aan-n branch and those to Kapsan, Pukchong, Toksong and Tanchon at the secret liaison places in Ohamdok. At the secret place in Aan-ri she sent Wi In Chan's group to the Hungnam industrial area, with the task of forming secret revolutionary organizations there.

Kim Jong Suk traveled to these many secret places spread all over Sinpha area to expand organizations. She never used a fixed secret place. By disguising herself, she skillfully used various secret liaison places and working places in turn, as it was convenient to conceal the organizations and also ensure her personal safety.

After her return from Taoquanli, I asked her to describe the methods she had employed to hide her true colors, as I had heard that the police in Sinpha were sharp-eyed, and the secret behind her free activities during her visits to Sinpha scores of times without arrest by the enemy.

Instead of answering she smiled; then she told me an anecdote of her shadowing by an enemy's agent.

"When I was entering the town from the Sinpha ferry, a man with a shabby straw hat on his head followed me. At first I didn't notice that he was shadowing me, but he still lingered behind me even in the town and I became suspicious. The man took out a cigarette, rather than tobacco, to while away the time in front of a restaurant. I felt even more suspicious when I saw the cigarette. Can poor peasants really afford cigarettes?"

As the enemy was shadowing her, she roamed about the alleys and went into the market; she quickly took a load from a woman familiar to her; the woman was carrying a heavy wicker on her head with a baby on her back. As a result she lost the enemy.

"My sense of responsibility ensured that I was not caught by the police or its agents. When I realized that I wouldn't be able to carry out the task assigned by Headquarters if I was caught, I felt myself growing braver. And the masses protected me at the cost of their lives."

This remark of Kim Jong Suk constituted the resume of her activities in Taoquanli and Sinpha. The important secret behind her successful execution of the difficult task of underground work was indeed her sense of responsibility and involvement with the masses. The wonderful creativity displayed by her

in secret work in the enemy area emanated in the long run from such a sense of responsibility. When I dispatched her to Taoquanli, I had told her only to carry out tasks related to political operations, not any other tasks, to avoid over-burdening her in her activities in the enemy area.

However, although she paid primary attention to the political work, Kim Jong Suk also frequently collected military information needed for the operations of our unit and sent it to Headquarters. She motivated the underground organizations in Taoquanli and Sinpha to collect large amounts of information. In particular such revolutionaries as Jong Tong Chol, Jang Hae U and Lim Won Sam supplied her with a lot of information.

Jong Tong Chol was a master hand in obtaining information. He swore brotherhood with the chiefs of the police station and customs office, the sub-county head and other leading personnel of the enemy's ruling organs, and collected information behind their backs, while maintaining "close relationships" with them. This swore brotherhood involved the ruling hierarchy in Shisandaogou and even the policeman of the special political division dispatched from Sinpha. He frequently arranged parties for them, as well as opium-smoking for drug addicts.

The Xiagangqu committee of the ARF adroitly infiltrated its members into the enemy establishments. Allegedly two or three special members of the ART made inroads into the sub-stations under the authority of the Shisandaogou police station. Most village heads and ten household heads, the servants in the lowest hierarchy of the enemy's administration, were involved in the revolutionary organizations.

Availing himself of the opportunity to work as a calligrapher in the regimental headquarters of the Jingan army, Lim Won Sam gathered a lot of military secrets. When the operations maps or statistical data, which could be used by the revolutionary army, were made available, he copied them quickly on paper and crumpled them into a ball, before throwing them into the waste basket; when incinerating the wastepaper at night, he would take them out and send them to his organization.

Kwangson Photo Studio and Sokjon Tailor's were also used on many occasions to gather information about the enemy's movements and make contacts. Some ARF members under the Sinpha chapter worked as clerks in such enemy establishments as sub-county offices and banking offices. They collected the enemy's information on a regular basis and concentrated it in the photo studio and tailor's before reporting back to the organization. Through these secret places Kim Jong Suk amassed details on the movement of the troops, led by Kim Sok Won at the battle in Jiansanfeng and reported them to Headquarters in time, rendering a great contribution to the victory of the People's Revolutionary Army.

Kim Jong Suk instructed members of organizations to learn the strength of enemy troops and police stationed in the Sinpha area, the distribution of their military installations and their military equipment. She herself personally confirmed the width and depth of the River Anmok, the speed of its current and even the most favorable site for crossing the river and returning; she then made a rough sketch before sending it to us.

When I reviewed her work in Taoquanli, I highly praised such creative effort and asked her why she had located the sites for crossing the river and withdrawing. She replied that she believed our revolutionary army might one day attack Sinpha.

In summer 1937 Kim Jong Suk was arrested by the enemy.

The rolls of paper which Women's Association members in Taoquanli had prepared to send to our printing shop were detected during a search by Jingan army soldiers. This served as the prime reason behind her arrest. Kim Jong Suk offered the plausible excuse that she had bought the rolls of paper for the register of inhabitants, at the request of Jong Tong Chol, the village head, and had been keeping them. Her unflinching appearance and logical answer aggravated the enemy. The enemy officer, dumbfounded and enraged, said that she must be a spy of the revolutionary army as she was fearless and spoke glibly; then they bound her and took her to Yaofangzi, the seat of their headquarters.

Believing that this was the last moment of her life, she wrote her will to the organization, which read as follows:

"Take it easy. I will be killed, but the organization must continue its existence. I enclose two yuan, my only assets. Please use it for the organization's funds."

The slip of paper written in pencil and two yuan were handed over from the granny, in whose house she was detained, to her neighbor and the organization via Jong Tong Chol. The organization called on its members to take emergency measures to rescue her. The organization members in Taoquanli formed a delegation and visited the headquarters of Jingan army unit; they filed a strong protest against the unwarranted arrest of a guiltless, innocent citizen, demanding her immediate release.

Their protest proved worthwhile. The headquarters of Jingan army unit handed her over to the police station in Shisidaogou on the pretext of the unit's transfer. Jong Tong Chol conducted negotiations for her transfer from this police station to the one in Shisandaogou. As the latter was a first-class police station, a grade higher than the former, her transfer was resolved without difficulty. Kim Jong Suk was escorted with her arms tied. Taoquanli was situated between the two police stations.

A little past midday she passed Taoquanli under police escort. Seeing the "baby of Musan house" walking bound and barefoot at police gunpoint, the villagers of Taoquanli saw her off with indignant tears. A granny rushed out to the road carrying a pair of straw sandals and put them on Kim Jong Suk's bleeding feet; she then severely reprimanded the policemen escorting her, "You rascals, what crime did our Ok Sun commit to be arrested? I heard that you arrested her for being a communist; if Ok Sun is a communist, I, too, will become a communist."

Jong Tong Chol followed her and conducted negotiations with the chief of the police station in Shisandaogou over her release. The station chief promised that he would recognize her as a "good citizen" and release her, if long prepared a warranty as a good citizen signed by 500 people. He was

demanding this document, in order to provide documentary evidence for shirking his responsibility, if his superior called the matter into account at a later date. It was a tall order, which was almost as impossible as crying for the moon. Nevertheless, Jong Tong Chol prepared the written warranty they demanded and put it on the chiefs desk.

The chiefs eyes almost popped out in astonishment. It was a common, popular mentality not to seal rashly with one's thumb a document testifying that a "disturbing element", spotted as a "Traitor" or "communist bandit", was in fact a "good citizen". Although he had promised to release her in exchange for the written warranty as a matter of prestige arising from his "friendship" with Jong Tong Chol, the station chief thought it could never be carried out. The warranty was signed by 500 seals and thumb - this was indeed a miracle.

How could this happen? There could not have been such a large number of secret organization members in Taoquanli, which comprised 200 households. However the organizations were arranged, non-members of organizations, which constituted several times more people than the organization members, would not have rashly affixed their seals on such a risky document.

So many people placed without hesitation their stamps on the document as proof of their infinite love and support for her. In other words the people's absolute trust and support proved more powerful than the power of authority and money.

Released in safety from the enemy's hand, Kim Jong Suk returned to Taoquanli and was surrounded by the villagers; on the spot, she said, "Oh, my! I am hungry. Please give me something to eat, sister." These unceremonious words can only be uttered between family members. She would not have readily spoken in this way, if she had not really regarded the villagers of Taoquanli as members of her family.

Lim Won Sam, who worked as chairman of the Hungnam City People's Committee after liberation, visited our house with Jang Hae U and Jong Tong Chol, his friends in those days in Taoquanli and Sinpha, as he came to Pyongyang to attend a meeting. Jang Hae U and Jong Tong Chol were working at that time in important posts in the capital. Kim Jae Su, who was working as chairman of the South Phyongan Provincial Committee of the Democratic Party, accompanied them. That day Kim Jong Suk prepared dumplings for these guests. The conversation of the day drifted naturally to the days in Taoquanli and Sinpha.

Kim Jong Suk recalled tearfully her rescue from the jaws of death, thanks to the help of her comrades. She said that during her detainment in Yaofangzi, she could easily have escaped, but had decided not to. She said:

"Frankly speaking, it is not difficult to kill a guard and run away, but I just couldn't. Thinking of the pitiable old couple, in whose house I was detained, I couldn't run away. When I looked at them, I thought: I can easily slip off; but if I do so, what will happen to the old couple and village head Jong, who vouched for my innocence and how much suffering and distress will the underground organizations



and people in Taoquanli have to face?

"This thought made me determined to protect the organizations and people at the cost of my life. That night I slept soundly in the front room of the house. My determination to sacrifice my life calmed me. I feared nothing."

This was the image of the "baby of Musan house" in those days in Taoquanli and Sinpha. Saved from the jaws of death by the written warranty for a good citizen, Kim Jong Suk continued her underground activities for some time in the Taoquanli area and the homeland before returning to Headquarters with Ryu Yong Chan, a member of the Taoquanli chapter of the ARF. He joined the guerrillas, on the faith of Kim Jong Suk. In 1944, while we were absorbed in preparations for the final anti-Japanese operations at the training base near Khabarovsk, Ryu Yong Chan unfortunately drowned to death in the Amur, when transporting on a ship the requisite materials for the building of the camp. Kim Jong Suk would recall his name, whenever she had the opportunity to do so. She said that he was an unforgettable benefactor.

Ryu Yong Chan was not the only one determined to follow Kim Jong Suk, when she left Taoquanli, I was told. The Women's Association members also followed her, shedding tears and begging her to take them with her. One of them kept following her until she crossed over Mt. Baotai without any thought of returning home. After repeated attempts to dissuade her coming with her, Kim Jong Suk put her silver ring on the woman's finger and untied the woman's red belt and tied it round her own waist. The red woolen belt was the woman's dear belongings she had knitted in memory of the day when she had joined the Women's Association on the faith of Kim Jong Suk and had worn for boasting.

"It is not that I don't feel like taking you. I'm going alone, because I can't take you, so please don't feel sorry. By wearing this red belt until it is worn out to the last thread, I won't forget the dear people in Taoquanli."

On hearing these words, the woman did not try to follow her any more; she merely asked her to provide news wherever she went.

True to her promise, Kim Jong Suk wore the red woolen belt under her uniform all the time after her return to the unit. It was only after I married to her that I came to know the meaning of the belt, which had never been removed from her waist. Kim Jong Suk always lived, cherishing the warmth of the people in her body along with the belt. Her soul was never separated from the people. At times I ask myself; how could Kim Jong Suk carry out such challenging underground activities, enjoying the love and support of so many people?

If Kim Jong Suk hadn't loved the people sincerely, they would not have paid any attention to her on the eve of her death. Anyone who does not devote his whole for the sake of the people, cannot receive sincere help from them at crucial periods. She was duly paid back by the people, whom she had treasured and nursed with so much care, with all the affection she had devoted to them. All in all, the written warranty signed by 500 people should be called an eternal document, vouchsafing her fidelity to the

people.

In autumn 1991, more than half a century after Kim Jong Suk left Taoquanli, I paid a visit to Sinpha during field guidance to Ryanggang Province, the place she had devoted her heart and soul to. Although scores of years had passed, the relics associated with her secret activities were preserved, as they had been in those days. The devotion of the people in Sinpha to each of the relics and historical sites was really admirable.

That day the guide-lecturers showed me every historical site, replete with Kim Jong Suk's footprints, and explained to me the details of her activities. Their explanations included quite a few events and details, which were unfamiliar to me. Looking at the nasty fort standing on the River Yalu as it had been, I thought that Kim Jong Suk must have run many risks and gone through several fateful moments to transform this locality in a revolutionary fashion.

As I headed for the railway station at dusk, I looked back at the streets in Sinpha; I do not know why, but I felt reluctant to leave this place.

## 16.1. Expedition to Fusong

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After delivering a crushing blow at the enemy, who had been rampaging on large-scale winter "punitive" expeditions in Taoquanhi and Limingshui, I made the decision to march north again across the Changbai mountains in command of the main force.

My entire unit was surprised when I announced my plan for an expedition to Fusong: Why this sudden march northward at a time when everyone was eagerly waiting for orders to advance into the homeland to destroy the enemy? Why should they move north, leaving behind West Jiandao and Mt. Paektu, which they had secured at such great effort? I read these questions in their faces. They could see no reason for an expedition to Fusong when everything was going so well. And in fact it was not unreasonable for them to think so.

At that time the spirits of both our soldiers and our people were soaring, for we were defeating the enemy in one battle after another. Despite the enemy's frantic "punitive" attacks and their political, economic and military blockades, the ranks of our guerrilla army were swelling daily with fresh volunteers, and the army's combat power was increasing considerably as it armed itself with better weapons and equipment.

The area around Mt. Paektu and on the River Yalu was completely under our influence, and the initiative of the war was securely in our hands. Our underground organizations were stretching a ramified network throughout West Jiandao. The objective we had initially set for ourselves at the time of our departure from Nanhutou had been successfully attained. The final objective of our operations was to advance to the homeland.

In order to give a strong impetus to the anti-Japanese national united-front movement there and to speed up the struggle to found a new type of party, it was imperative to extend the fighting to our native land. Our most cherished dream was to whip the enemy on our own soil, and this was also the burning desire of every one of our compatriots.

Just how eager the people back home were for our advance can be seen in the following episodes.

In Diyangxi there was a village called Nande or Nahade. Ryu Ho, headman of the village and a special member of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, was an enthusiastic supporter of the guerrilla army. Once he and his villagers brought aid supplies to our secret camp. His company included three peasants from Kapsan.

These peasants arrived at our secret camp with full loads of foxtail millet, scorched-oat flour and hempen shoes on their backs. They had crossed the Yalu, slipping through a tight police cordon. We were surprised at the large amount of supplies they had carried on their backs. We were even more amazed at the fact that they had not touched a single morsel of the food they had brought us, even though they had

been roaming about with empty stomachs for some days, as they had lost their way in the primeval forest of Mt. Paektu.

We were also no less moved by the effort they had put into making the hempen shoes for us: there were at least 200 pairs. The footwear was made with the utmost care and looked neat and durable: the soles were woven from a combination of hemp and strips of elm bark, reinforced with a side webbing of twisted hemp fiber.

As Kim San Ho thanked the three peasants for their efforts, they were embarrassed. The eldest, a man with a long beard like a Taoist in an old tale, took Kim San Ho by the hand and said:

"Please forgive us poor people who cannot afford to offer anything but these hempen shoes to you, our great soldiers of Mt. Paektu. Your thanks for our insignificant efforts make us feel rather awkward. If you wear these humble shoes as you destroy the marauders from the island country and sweep them off our land of Kapsan, we shall be able to die in peace. We are waiting for the arrival of the revolutionary army with each passing day."

The peasants from Kapsan were not the only people who were impatiently anticipating the advance of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army into the homeland. Old Lee Pyong Won, from Kyongsang Province, who once brought aid supplies to our secret camp, asked me, "General, when will these Japanese be driven out of Korea? Do you think I'll see the day in my lifetime?"

Day by day, minute by minute, we could feel their craving for our arrival and their admiration for us. Having received a pair of hempen shoes, every one of our comrades had a strong impulse to march into the homeland then and there. I myself felt the same way. Nevertheless, I ordered my men to march north, in the opposite direction from the homeland. To comrades who were in doubt about my order, I explained, "Don't think we are retreating northward. By march-ing north, we are, in effect, heading south, towards home. We have to go in this direction. This brief march to Fusong is a preparation for eventual advance to the homeland - you must understand that."

Our major objective when planning the expedition to Fusong was to throw the enemy into confusion by using elusive hit-and-run tactics? attacking suddenly, then disappearing into nowhere. We intended to scatter the "punitive" forces as far as possible from Changbai, where they were being massed, divert the enemy's attention elsewhere, and thus create a safe environment for building the network of underground organizations, which were thriving in that area, and also create favorable conditions for large-force operations to advance into the homeland.

In spite of the failure of their large-scale "punitive" operations in the winter of 1936, the enemy did not abandon their attempt to isolate and stifle the revolutionary army. They continued to concentrate large forces in our theatre of operations, such as their occupation army in Korea, their frontier guards and their puppet Manchukuo army and police forces. In order to hold firmly on to our initiative and advance the revolution vigorously according to plan, we had to move to another area for a while. This was essential to

putting the enemy on the defensive and creating favorable conditions for the development of the revolutionary movement in West Jiandao and the border area.

Scattering the enemy's "punitive" forces massed in Changbai and protecting the revolutionary organizations in the Yalu area would also benefit our advance on the homeland. If the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was to operate on a large scale in the homeland, it was necessary to prevent the enemy from concentrating their forces in West Jiandao, our home front and the base of our advance.

As had been indicated at the "Tumen conference", the enemy was massing its forces in West Jiandao mainly to prevent our advance on to our home soil at any cost, although it also intended to stifle the People's Revolutionary Army by driving it into a dead end in the Changbai valley.

The enemy knew that it was only a matter of time before large forces of the KPRA would be advancing on Korean soil. More than anything else, the Japanese imperialists were afraid of this advance. The military and political operations of these large forces in Korea would have as great an impact as an attack on Japan itself.

The enemy was well aware of the misfortune a few rifle shots on our own territory would bring upon them. In the winter of the year in which the KPRA main force had established its base in the Paektu mountains, the enemy dragged out the people to break the ice on the Yalu noisily every night to prevent individuals or groups of soldiers from the People's Revolutionary Army from infiltrating their homeland. How the enemy must have dreaded our attack to have devised such a childish defensive measure!

I mentioned in my previous volume that the Japanese emperor dispatched his aide-de-camp on a three-week inspection tour along the border between Korea and Manchuria. Indeed, the political and military hierarchies of Japan could not, even for a moment, turn their eyes away from the northern border of our country. At that time the aide-de-camp's order to the border guards from the emperor was that they should turn the border into a veritable iron wall. He also dispatched some royal gifts to them. My men gloated over the presentation ceremony: the Japanese emperor was obviously greatly worried about an advance of the People's Revolutionary Army into Korea, they chuckled.

The planned advance into the homeland required a number of breakthroughs in the enemy's border defense, claimed to be an impenetrable "copper and iron wall". Preliminary to making these breakthroughs, it was imperative to scatter as much as possible the enemy's "punitive" forces, which were swarming about in the fields and mountains of Changbai. To accomplish this, we ourselves had first to pretend to leave the Changbai area. If we moved away from there, the enemy would follow us, which meant that their border defense would be weakened.

On our expedition to Fusong we intended to meet Choe Hyon's unit and the comrades of the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps operating in the area adjoining Fusong, Linjiang and Mengjiang Counties. We needed to plan cooperation for a successful advance into the homeland.

Another objective of the expedition was to give the recruits adequate political, military and moral training to meet the requirements of the prevailing situation and in keeping with the mission of the KPRA.

Since the establishment of a new type of base in Mt. Paektu, we had recruited hundreds of volunteers. Encouraged by the active military and political campaigns of the KPRA and its successes, young people in West Jiandao vied with one another in joining the army. Also young patriots from the homeland came to us almost every day to participate in the armed struggle.

The numerical growth of my unit made it necessary to improve its quality as a combat unit. Bettering the qualifications of the men and commanding officers was essential to increasing the unit's combat efficiency. Improving their ideological level and military know-how was crucial if the unit was to be made unconquerable. Our hundreds of recruits had neither combat experience nor any knowledge of guerrilla tactics, although they were all highly class-conscious and full of enthusiasm for the revolution.

Their political and cultural levels were also low. They were simple mountain people who had led a hand-to-mouth existence, doing slash-and-burn farming or toiling as day laborers until they joined the service. They knew little about military affairs, although they were very good at hoeing, digging and cutting hay. Some did not even know the Korean alphabet, let alone the rudiments of social progress.

Hardened though they were through labor and hardship, they were still barely able to endure the tough life of the guerrilla army. Some of them vacillated, or complained about the lack of sleep and grueling marches. Some even delegated the burden of mending their shoes and clothing to their veteran comrades instead of doing these things themselves. It would be impossible to undertake the advance on the homeland with these recruits before they had been given necessary training. These were green men with no knowledge of drill movements, night marches or direction-finding, helpless onlookers who would ask the veterans to fix their broken-down weapons and remain useless.

The veterans had been told to devote all their spare time to training their new comrades by passing on scraps of common knowledge to them, but this alone was not enough to prepare such a large number of recruits to meet the requirements of guerrilla warfare. The best way was to give them intensive military and political training over a period of time in a dense forest which the enemy was least likely to penetrate. Without full-scale training it would be impossible to turn them into crack troops. Unfortunately, there was no suitable training ground in Changbai. Both the flat lands and deep mountains of this region were being "combed" by the enemy. That was why we chose the Fusong area, with its numerous secret outposts, as our recruit training ground.

The expedition to Fusong was, in short, an offensive, a way for us to maintain the initiative even when large enemy forces were tenaciously attacking us. It was an adroit tactical measure to strengthen the revolutionary army and create favourable conditions for its advance to the homeland. The expedition was to follow up our successes in the six months since our appearance in the Paektu mountains.

We launched the expedition one day in March 1937. The expedition consisted of not only the main combat force, but also the supporting forces, such as the sewing unit, the kitchen staff and members of the weapons repair shop.

Wei Zheng-min, Jon Kwang and Gao Ya-fan also came with our unit.

On the first day of the trek, we were to cross the Duoguling Pass. We marched all day, but we were unable to climb over the pass, for the snow was very deep and the weather severely cold. We had to bivouac overnight halfway up the pass.

That winter there had been an unusually heavy snowfall on the Changbai mountains, and in some valleys the snow banks were as deep as the height of several men. In such places we had to forge ahead by ploughing our way through the snow, inch by inch.

Younger people who wish to get a real picture of the heavy snow on the Changbai mountains, should listen to the experiences of the veterans of the expedition. On our way back to Mt. Paektu from the expedition after the thaw had set in, I saw a hempen shoe hanging at the very top of a larch tree: the shoe belonged to a recruit who had joined the army in Changbai and who had lost it in the snow as he marched to Fusong.

By early March the snow disappears from the plains of Korea, but in the Paektu mountains the winter cold still prevails.

It was impossible to pitch a tent in a howling snowstorm. Even if one did manage to put it up, the tent would collapse in the gale. Whenever we were in this kind of a situation, we dug holes in the snow large enough for a squad to sit on deer skins or on tree bark and sleep while leaning against their packs. We covered the openings to the holes with sheets to keep the wind out. During this expedition we came to understand how Eskimos manage to survive the Arctic cold in igloos.

At that time we wore wadded Korean socks reaching our knees and the hempen shoes sent to us from the Kapsan people. Without such clothing it would have been impossible to travel in the Paektu mountains in winter. When bivouacking, we used to lie around the campfire, still wearing these shoes.

On the second day of our expedition we climbed over the Duoguling Pass. This was by no means an ordinary march. When thinking of arduous treks, our people are usually reminded of the 100-day march from Nanpaizi to Beidadingzi in the winter of 1938, but the expedition to Fusong was no less difficult than that particular journey. The distance of the expedition was scarcely a hundred kilometers, yet the march took us approximately 25 days and was certainly arduous enough.

We suffered from cold, hunger, lack of sleep and many other hardships. Fighting numerous battles, we spilt a great deal of blood and lost many comrades. It was an unusually harsh trial which even the seasoned soldiers were able to endure only with clenched teeth, so I hardly need to describe what it must

have been like for those who had joined the army only a few months before.

I saw to it that every veteran helped one fresh recruit. I also took care of three or four weaklings. All the veterans became kind brothers to their new comrades. While on the march, they carried rifles or packs for their charges. During breaks they built fires for the younger ones, and when camping they prepared sleeping places for them and mended their clothes, shoes and caps.

Once a soldier, fresh from Zhujiadong, slumped down by the campfire and began to snore as soon as the order was given to take a break. He did not think of mending his shoes, which had been worn down to such an extent that his big red toes poked out through the holes. While veterans were still wearing the hempen shoes they had put on at Changbai before departures he had already worn out the rubber-soled canvas shoes he had kept in reserve. I replaced his worn-out shoes with my own reserve shoes and mended them with a thick needle. I kept them in my pack and later gave the pair to another recruit. I used to mend such shoes in secret, lest the owners feel embarrassed. Once I was caught red-handed by their owner. In tears, he snatched the thread, needle and shoes from me.

That day I said to the new recruits:

"At home you don't need to do needlework because you wear straw shoes made by your fathers and clothes made or mended by your mothers. Now that you are guerrillas, however, you should learn how to mend your own clothes and shoes, learn how to manage your own. Because shoes and clothing wore down most quickly when one marched on ice-crusting snow, I taught them how to walk on this kind of terrain.

The expedition was plagued by hunger. Many a difficulty stood in our way, but the worst was the food shortage. Since the march had turned out to be much slower than we had expected, the scanty rations we had brought with us from Changbai ran out soon after we crossed the Duoguling Pass.

How could we obtain food in the snow, which denied us even frozen grass roots? The best way would have been to capture enemy supplies, but we had no idea where the enemy was at that time.

The starving experience on the march was so distressing that years later I was to describe the event to one of my comrades as "a virtual hunger expedition". Sometimes we had to plod for miles and miles all day without eating even as much as a grain of maize, merely licking snow and gulping water to suppress the clamor of our empty stomachs. How could I ever forget the bitter suffering?

Once, while passing through a forest near Donggang when the expedition was almost over, we found a Chinese house. For two days we had not taken in anything but water, so the sight of the house awakened in our minds a ray of hope, for people growing opium in remote mountains used to keep some food in reserve.

I explained to the master of the house that my unit had had nothing to eat for days, and asked him to sell



us some grain if he had any. But he flatly declined, saying that all his grain had been carried away by mountain rebels. A heap of maize bran below the millstones suggested that he had a large stock of husked maize or maize flour, but he was deaf to my entreaties. Though humiliated, I decided to soothe our empty stomachs with the bran. Unlike foxtail millet bran or barnyard millet bran, maize bran is difficult to swallow, even when scorched. Even ground with millstones and gulped with water, it left us hungry soon.

After much thought, I called my orderly, Paek Hak Lim, and gave him instructions:

"Go over several passes from here and you will find Wu Yi-cheng's unit. The commander is not there now, but some of his men are still fighting there. Tell them I am here and ask for some grain. If they have any, they will give us some for the sake of our old friendship."

The orderly went off, but returned with empty hands. Their commanding officer himself came with a sack of maize bran and apologized to me:

"Commander Kim, how could I refuse to comply with your unusual request? I wish I could help you, but I came with this because our food ran out and we are also going hungry. So please don't think ill of me."

Looking around the Chinese house that day, my men had found a coffin filled with husked maize in the front yard. Manchunan people had a custom of getting their coffins ready during their lifetime and keeping them in front of their houses. These coffins were considered inviolable. The custom gave rise to many anecdotes during the years of the revolution in Manchuria against the Japanese.

I understood why the maize was hidden in the coffin. But the trick had enraged my comrades. The recruits were the angriest of all. A volunteer from Zhujiadong came running to me and said:

"General, the people living in that house are evil. Offering food even to stray animals is human nature and hospitality, but these people are too cruel. Let's teach them a lesson and confiscate the grain."

"No, we can't do that. We must not touch their food. Better we should go hungry," I answered.

The man withdrew, clicking his tongue in frustration.

We gave no sign that we had seen the maize in the coffin, but did our best to allay our hunger with the bran, hoping patiently to educate the inhabitants of the house. They did not admit that they had any maize even when we were saying good-bye to them. The man who had suggested confiscation came to me and said, "You see? Education has no effect on such people."

"It does, you know," I told him. "They've begun to understand that we are good soldiers, even though they did not give us any food."

This incident taught new comrades that there were different types of people among the masses, and that stereotyped education, therefore, did not work. Moving people's hearts was the key to success, and the army, even in the most difficult situations, should not touch people's property, and it should never try to obtain sympathy or assistance by force.

Had we been unable to repress our anger and treated them severely, or had we taken away the maize as punishment for lying, the recruits might have violated the motto, "The revolutionary army cannot live divorced from the people." They might have degenerated into bandits, or people like the bureaucrats who shout at people for no reason and expect special favors from them.

Following the River Manjiang, we noticed two laborers following our marching column, while keeping their distance. They were lumbermen from the Duantoushan lumbermill. Their appearance and behavior were so suspicious that we stopped and asked them why they were shadowing us. They confessed that they had been told by the enemy to find out where we were going. They had been promised a reward according to the value of the information they collected about our whereabouts, and if they returned with no information, they would be labeled traitors "in secret contact with bandits" and severely punished.

From these men I learned that there was a large number of laborers and forest policemen at the Duantoushan lumbermill. I decided to attack the mill to obtain food, even if we had to fight a hard battle.

I committed the 7th and 8th Regiments to the battle. They assaulted the lumber mill and searched the storehouse, but in vain; there was not even one sack of grain there. The owner of the lumber mill kept no food supplies in the storehouse for fear of raids by the guerrilla army, and brought in daily rations from elsewhere. Seven hundred to 800 enemy troops unexpectedly came from the lumbermen's village in counterattack. They were "punitive" troops who, informed of the movement of our main force towards Fusong, had come as reinforcements.

The 7th and 8th Regiments captured about 20 head of cattle at the mill and withdrew to the main body.

The containment party under the command of Oh Jung Hup contained the enemy. Oh Jung Hup formed a do-or-die party by selecting men from each platoon and fought more than 10 close combats to keep back the pursuing enemy. At daybreak they found the enemy only 50 meters away.

While the containment party held on, I ordered the main body to occupy the two hills in the east and sent my orderly to tell Oh Jung Hup to lure the enemy into a trap by withdrawing his containment party into a field between two hills. Most of the enemy who entered the field in pursuit of our men were wiped out and only a few survivors managed to run away. Before the main body started fighting, several men had butchered the cattle behind an elevation. As soon as the animals were killed, the meat was roasted, and the smell of roasting beef was so tantalizing, we could barely endure it. We put the remaining cuts of beef in our packs. We resumed our march, eating some of the meat raw, but in a few days the remaining beef had run out.

As the enemy's pursuit grew fiercer, Jon Kwang left for the secret camp at Dongmanjiang, where he gave my men only a few mal of wheat to send to us.

My men denounced him angrily, saying, "Is this all the heart he has, a man in charge of political affairs? He is not worth his own weight."

Some of the other men criticized him as well, declaring that he had neither courage nor human sympathy. They were still suspicious of Jon Kwang, wondering why he had confused the operation as a whole by abandoning the raid on Wanlianghe, a mission which was to be carried out as a secondary effort in the battle of Fusong. Since he had always shirked his duty in difficult and dangerous situations, while at the same time putting on airs of importance, the men and officers of my unit did not think much of him. Their feelings proved to be correct: Jon Kwang later became a turncoat and did serious harm to the revolution.

We continued our march towards Fusong down along the River Manjiang. The wheat Jon Kwang had sent us soon ran out. Again we had to suffer hunger.

Later we succeeded in throwing the pursuing enemy off our trail and camped for some time at a place called Toudaoling. It was impossible to continue our march unless we obtained food. At this very moment Kang Thae Ok and some other recruits from Manjiang volunteered to go in search of food. They had joined the army, prompted by the exciting dramas, *The Sea of Blood* and *The Fate of a Self-Defense Corps Man* staged at Manjiang the previous year.

When they heard that we were near Manjiang; they came to see me with Kim Thaek Hwan and said:

"General, we'll go and get some food. Should the guerrilla army starve at a mere hailing distance of Manjiang? We don't have too much cereal, but there are plenty of potatoes, which were collected to help the guerrilla army before. We know where they are." Hearing this, I felt greatly relieved.

Thus about 10 men were sent to Manjiang to procure food. But the results fell short of our expectations. They said that the potatoes, which had been stored for the army, had been ravaged by wild boars. They returned with what remained of the potatoes. Nonetheless, it was still a great help to us, who had nothing to eat at all.

As bad luck would have it, we ran into deep trouble because of an accidental blunder. On their way back the foraging party, unable to endure their hunger, built a fire and baked some potatoes not far away from the camp of the main body. This proved to be a grave mistake.

By building the fire at dawn near the camp, they exposed not only their own position but also the location of the whole unit to the enemy. When discovered by the enemy, they ran straight to the main body, not even giving a signal to the guard post. So the unit, which had been sleeping, was caught unprepared.

Lack of discipline sometimes resulted in such blunders.

I had always emphasized to the recruits: "Indiscipline is taboo for a guerrilla army. Keeping discipline may be hard and difficult, but you must never see it as a burden, because discipline is the lifeblood of the army. Don't sleep with your shoes off when camping. Don't leave behind traces of yourself wherever you go. Don't build a fire at a place which has not been designated as safe by your superiors. When you are being pursued, lure the enemy away from the secret camp or from your own camping site. Do not eat any kind of grass if you are not sure it is harmless....

Because of the mistake made by the foraging party, however, we lost priceless comrades-in-arms in the engagement that followed.

I did not criticize them for their mistake, for criticism would not bring our dead comrades back to life. Their death itself was more than enough to replace my criticism. Loss of their comrades was a much more bitter thing to the recruits than mere criticism or punishment.

My orderly, Choe Kum San, was one of the fallen in that battle. The enemy who had discovered the fire and followed the foraging party by stealth surrounded our camp and opened fire. Choe Kum San lost his life by becoming my shield as he fought the enemy, who was closing in on Headquarters. Seeing that I was bringing up the rear of the withdrawing force, he and Lee Pong Rok came running to me, sending fierce fire in the direction of the enemy while shielding me with their bodies. Had they not protected me in this manner, I might well have been killed.

Although fatally wounded, Choe Kum San did not cease firing until the last round of his ammunition was gone. His uniform was drenched with blood.

Lee Pong Rok raised him in his arms from the snow and carried him on his back. Bringing up the rear, I protected Lee Pong Rok with my Mauser. Whenever RI became exhausted I carried Choe on my back.

Choe had stopped breathing when I lifted him down from Lee's back after breaking through the encirclement.

Choe was not particularly handsome, nor was he a boy of impressive character, but he was loved by all of Headquarters as a younger brother.

He was full of dreams and fancies. To travel far and wide by train was one of his wishes. He used to say that he would become a locomotive engineer when the country was independent. "To have died so young! He wasn't even twenty!" somebody exclaimed behind me, looking at the boy lying by the campfire. The whole unit was in tears.

Before burying the boy, I opened his pack and found a pair of the hempen shoes he had received from the Kapsan people and an envelope of scorched rice flour.

The cherished desire of this boy, born into the family of vagrants in a foreign land and growing up drinking foreign water, was to walk on the soil of his native land someday. On the march from Nanhutou in northern Manchuria to Mt. Paektu, the boy, my orderly, had asked me almost every day how far it was to the homeland. He wanted to know if he could eat Korean apples when he got to West Jiandao, if I had been to the East Sea, which was said to be really splendid, how long it would take to attack the enemy in Pyongyang, Seoul and Pusan, and all kinds of other things. He had kept the hempen shoes intact, thinking he would wear them on the day he marched into his homeland.

Choe Kum San had served as an orderly at Headquarters for a long time, sleeping with me under the same blanket. He was one of my favorites, my young comrade-in-arms. Probably that was why I mourned more bitterly over his death than over the loss of other comrades. The earth's crust at Toudaoling was frozen so hard that it even defied an axe and a bayonet. We had to bury Choe Kum San in the snow. We marked off the spot in order to bury him properly later.

On our way back to Mt. Paektu in the thawing season after our expedition to Fusong, I, in command of my unit, visited the place where the orderly lay buried.

I changed him into a new uniform, which I had brought with me from the secret camp at Donggang, and then gave him his final burial in a sunny spot. I had several shrubs of azalea planted in front of his grave.

I wanted him, even in his grave, to be able to smell the fragrance of his native land in their blossoms. Though the shrubs had grown in foreign soil, their scent would be no different. He had liked azaleas best.

"Good-bye, Kum San! We are going to Mt. Paektu again. In the coming summer, we will advance into the homeland, come what may, as you wished. There we will avenge your death upon the enemy, a hundred, even a thousand times." I said all this to him in my mind and then left him. Whenever I recollect the event, I still feel my heart ache. If he were alive today, he would be the same age as Paek Hak Lim.

During the expedition to Fusong in the spring of 1937, we lost many stalwart comrades. As the song expresses it, "Bright traces of blood on the crags of Changbai still gleam." We spilt a great deal of blood wherever we went in those days. Every inch of our advance was made at the cost of our own blood.

I am sorry I am unable to make a more vivid description of the brilliant exploits and devoted efforts made by my comrades-in-arms. However, I am putting all my heart into this writing to make up for my dull brush. I write this memoir as an epitaph to my beloved comrades-in-arms, who fell in battle on the rugged hills and in the deep valleys of Fusong.

Their wish was that we should fight to the last moment to win back Korea. They breathed their last with a smile, wishing me good health and success in the war.

## 16.2. Hundreds of Miles from Xiaotanghe at One Go

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After a great deal of heavy fighting near Manjiang, we led the unit to the secret camp at Yangmudingzi without leaving any trace of our passing.

Yangmudingzi was located half way up a hillside on the route from Xinancha to Laoling. The place is said to have been so named because it is full of willow trees. On both sides of the trail to Laoling there were secret camps, called East and West Yangmudingzi Secret Camps. We arrived at the west camp, where Staff Officer Yu was quartered with his unit. On the other side of a hill to the south, not far from the east camp, was the Gaolibuzi Secret Camp. These three camps, located in the shape of a triangle, with Laoling in the center, made up the Yangmudingzi Secret Camp as a whole.

In 1940, after many years of use, Yangmudingzi was abandoned as a result of an assault made upon it by a large "punitive" force, led by Lim Su San in March of that year. In this final battle, many people were killed and the camp was burnt down.

I shall never forget Yangmudingzi. Here, Lee Tong Baek, my comrade-in-arms and reliable advisor, was killed, as was Lee Tal Gyong, commander of the Guard Company, who had been seriously wounded and carried to the camp on a stretcher. It was here we published *The Tasks of Korean Communists* in the newspaper *Sogwang*, and here that I so often met Wei Zheng-min and other cadres from the corps to act for it.

Of crucial importance in these preparations was to obtain supplies.

I formed a small unit, led by Oh Jung Hup, and sent them to Changbai, where Kim Ju Hyon was waiting for them. The small unit included women soldiers from the sewing unit, comrades suffering from frostbite and other infirm people. I thought it would be easier for them to obtain supplies in Changbai than to march along snow-covered trails, barely able to get as much as a daily ration of a bowl of maize gruel.

In addition to this small unit, I also sent out political operatives to work both in West Jiandao and in the homeland.

The rest of us in the expeditionary force left Yangmudingzi for the secret camp of the 4th Division in the forest of Xiaotanghe. Our purpose was to lure away the enemy and scatter them so as to get food. At the secret camp in the forest there were barrels of alcoholic spirits and boxes of oranges and apples. The comrades of the 4th Division told us proudly that this was the booty they had captured by attacking the Jingan army. The booty also contained three machine-guns.

The comrades of the 4th Division gave us enough maize for two days' rations. When leaving the camp,

some of my men coaxed the youngest man, Pi, to give them a barrel of liquor. Seeing the barrel they were carrying, I ordered them not to touch the liquor. I did not like soldiers drinking or smoking, for these habits were often dangerous to military action. At one time during a march, I don't remember exactly in which year, I had found two men missing when checking my men at a rest period. The entire unit began to search for the missing comrades.

It was found later that the two men had slipped away from the marching column to drink liquor at an inn. Needless to say, they were severely criticized. Some cunning men could not tear their eyes from the liquor barrel and began to coax the company commander, Lee Tong Hak, to let them have a little, saying that warming up with a cup of liquor would be fine in such cold weather.

Lee Tong Hak could not silence the obstinate fellows who were begging and hanging around him. He drew some liquor from the barrel and offered a cup to each of the men.

"Let's have just one sip without the knowledge of the Comrade Commander. One sip won't matter," they said.

Every one of the Guard Company drank. Other companies drank as well. This reckless act of distributing alcohol equally among the soldiers led directly to the danger we were forced to face in the battle of Xiaotanghe.

I think this day's blunder was the costliest one Lee Tong Hak ever made in his life. The glow of the brandy quickly dulled the wits of the utterly exhausted men. Even the guard acted carelessly that day, going against regulations. A man from the 8th Regiment was standing guard at the edge of the camp that morning as hundreds of puppet Manchukuo troops were closing in on the camp to surround it. Hearing the rustle of movement, the guard challenged, "Who goes there?"

The challenged enemy soldier was sly enough to answer, "We are the 4th Division. Aren't you Commander Kim's unit?" The fooled guard made a hasty judgment and affirmed that he belonged to Commander Kim's unit. He even asked, "Where are you coming from?" Meanwhile, the "punitive" force was encircling the camp like a slowly-tightening noose.

The enemy soldier asked the guard to send one of our men as a representative to his (the enemy's) unit to confirm that this was truly Commander Kim's unit. According to the regulations a guard of the KPRA was not allowed to send any representative to meet anyone from a neighboring unit. But the guard took the enemy soldier for a KPRA soldier and arbitrarily sent the representative. Having occupied the ridge, the enemy arrested the representative, disarmed him and then began attacking. In consequence, we were in an unfavorable position for some time.

In this situation it was very difficult to change the tide of battle. The enemy was already climbing the back slope of the ridge where Headquarters was located. I ordered the whole unit to occupy the height.

It was at this moment that the brandy Lee Tong Hak had offered to the men began to take its toll: I found many of the men lingering at the foot of the slope, unable to climb quickly, even after the orders were given. These were the ones who had drunk thoughtlessly, even though they were not used to drinking. Among them was Kang Wi Ryong, a machine-gunner of the Guard Company. I barked at him repeatedly to occupy the height quickly, but it had no effect. Later he confessed that he had been unable to walk because his legs were wobbly and he was feeling dizzy because of the brandy. As the machine-gunner was in such a state, it was a bad situation indeed.

The enemy had come so near that a close combat took place on the height. Lee Tong Hak's pack was torn to shreds by enemy bullets, and one man lost an ear in the fiery exchange. On top of that, the 2nd Company of the 7th Regiment under the command of Kim Thaek Hwan was still surrounded by the enemy.

Nevertheless, even in this confusion the machine-gunners of the Guard Company fought efficiently that day. Changing their positions now and then, they poured heavy fire upon the enemy. Meanwhile the 8th Regiment broke through the enemy's encirclement. Kim Thaek Hwan's company, too, got out of the confusion, although it lost one squad.

The battle lasted from morning to evening. We killed or wounded hundreds of enemy soldiers and captured a lot of booty. But even though we won the battle, we all felt bitter, for we, too, had suffered no small losses.

Kim San Ho got multiple wounds while running about in all directions to save his men. At his last moment he had ordered Kim Hak Ryul, an expert in the bayonet charge, to lead the charge. Kim Hak Ryul had joined the army with Han Thae Ryong at Xinchangdong. In addition to his great physical strength, he was upright and courageous. Whenever attacking a walled town, he led the charge, and after the battle he was always the first to haul out heavy loads of supplies on his shoulders from the enemy's storehouse. Once he had carried away two rice sacks at one time, each weighing 100 kg, to the astonishment of his comrades. He had also led the advance by ploughing a path through the snow.

Receiving his orders, Kim Hak Ryul plunged into the enemy ranks and launched hand-to-hand combat. He finished off a dozen enemy soldiers with his bayonet, getting eight wounds in the process. He was, indeed, indestructible. When he became unable to wield his bayonet, he destroyed the enemy with hand grenades. With his last grenade he plunged into a group of the enemy. As the roar of the explosion shook the height, his comrades-in-arms clenched their teeth in bitter grief.

The greatest loss we suffered in the battle was the death of Kim San Ho, the political commissar of the 8th Regiment. He had shared good and bad times with me for many years since our days in Wujiazi. He became our shining example of the rapid advance a man could make through the revolution. "From a hired farmhand to a regimental political commissar" became a catchword for the strong impetus the revolution could give to the development of an ordinary man, and for the rapid progress simple young workers and peasants could make in the whirlwind of revolution in terms of political consciousness,



military techniques and cultural and moral refinement.

In mourning over Kim San Ho's death, I abstained from that day's evening meal.

The men made a campfire and invited me, but I refused. As I thought of Kim San Ho who was lying frozen in the snow, the mere sight of a fire made me feel guilty.

Qian Yong-lin, the 8th Regimental commander, also went without the evening meal. Kim San Ho was a Korean and Qian was a Chinese, but the difference in their nationality had never interfered with their revolutionary comradeship. Qian had always respected Kim's opinions, and Kim had always been a devoted assistant to Qian.

Seeing the regimental commander mourning so bitterly over Kim's death, all his men renounced food. The men who had been rescued from encirclement with the help of Kim San Ho and Kim Hak Ryul were unable to eat, being too grieved over the death of those who had saved them and the loss of other fallen comrades.

In the meantime, the enemy showed no sign of withdrawing, even though the battle was over. Obviously they were determined to surround us completely and drive us into the valley of Xiaotanghe so as to destroy us totally. One little slip might catch us in the enemy trap and cause our total destruction. In such a situation guerrilla tactics required that we maintain the initiative and put the enemy on the defensive.

We feigned a withdrawal through the forest, then returned to the same battlefield by stealth and camped there for the night. We meant to confuse the enemy with this tactic. But the enemy continued to bring in reinforcements in preparation for a decisive battle. Probably that spring they were determined to make up for the defeats they had suffered in the large winter "punitive" operations at any cost. More and more enemy troops were swarming into Xiaotanghe. It looked as if all the Japanese forces in Manchuria were being massed into the valley. After dark I looked down from an elevation and found us encircled by a sea of campfires that spread across a dozen miles of Xiaotanghe. It looked like a night scene in a large city. I told one of my men to count the campfires so I could make an estimate of total enemy strength on the basis of the number of enemy soldiers surrounding each fire. It came out to an alarming number of many thousands.

At the sight of the sea of fire, my men stiffened with apprehension and seemed to make a grim resolve to meet their end on the heights of Xiaotanghe.

"Comrade Commander, it seems there is no escape. What about preparing to fight the enemy to the death?" said Sun Zhang-xiang, the commander of the 7th Regiment, in a sombre tone. The faces of the other commanding officers revealed the same unflinching determination. To my ears, Sun Zhang-xiang's words sounded meaningless. Frankly, pitching a small force of scarcely 500 men against an enemy force of thousands showed a rashness that was little short of madness.

Of course we should not hesitate to lay down our lives in battle if it contributed to the immediate victory of the revolution. But because it was we who had initiated the revolution, we should make sure we survived to carry it through to victory.

"Comrades, surviving is more difficult than dying," I told them. "We must live and carry on with the revolution. We are faced with the great task of advancing to the homeland. This is a sacred and honorable task which has been entrusted to us by history. How can we choose death when we are anticipating this great event? We must all survive and make our way back to our native land, where the arrival of the People's Revolutionary Army is longed for by our compatriots. Let us use our heads to work our way out of this crisis."

"Comrade Commander, it's too hopeless racking our brains. How can we escape from this trap?" said Sun Zhang-xiang, who was still pessimistic about the situation.

The whole unit watched me, waiting for my orders. Never before had I felt so keenly the importance and difficulty of a commander's position as I did at that moment.

Looking down across the valley, which was ablaze with campfires, I thought of various tactics for breaking through the encirclement. The question was, how to do it without attracting the enemy's attention, and in which direction to move so as to get far enough away from the enemy. Since the "punitive" troops concentrated in the Xiaotanghe valley were an estimated several thousand in number, the enemy's rear would now be empty. They might consider that if we succeeded in breaking their encirclement, we would move deeper into the mountains.

So it would be best to slip away near the highroad, where the enemy force was probably relatively weak. Once we got to the highroad we could move quickly. I decided upon this idea and gave my orders at once:

"Comrades, your determination to fight to the death is commendable, but none of you should die. We have a way to survive. We must leave the forest of Xiaotanghe, move to the inhabited area, and from there proceed towards Donggang along the highroad. This is my decision."

At the mention of the highroad, the commanding officers lifted questioning eyebrows. Secrecy in movement was an iron rule of guerrilla warfare, and they were surprised at my orders to move to a populated area, to march along the highroad at a time when a large enemy force was all around us.

Sun Zhang-xiang approached me and uneasily asked me if it was not risky to do this. His uneasiness was not unfounded. My decision seemed to involve a somewhat rash adventure, for the enemy might possibly be guarding the highroad, or keeping some of his forces towards the rear.

From the early years of the armed struggle against the Japanese I had been opposed to military adventurism. We had always fought only when we had the chance of winning. We had avoided any

engagement we considered unlikely to be successful. We had risked ourselves only when it was unavoidable. But the risks we had taken were, without exception, those which envisaged success and made the maximum use of our force.

A risk can be taken with success only by a man who has courage, an iron will and the confidence that there is a way out even if the sky falls down.

The decision I made on the heights of Xiaotanghe to break through the encirclement, move to the inhabited area and march along the highroad was a risk, but one I was certain would succeed. I was confident of success because the risk was accompanied by our unbreakable offensive spirit, which was quite capable of changing adversity into a victory by switching from defensive to offensive. I also had faith in our ability to calculate scientifically just when to take full advantage of the enemy's weakness.

A battle is, after all, a duel between two opposing forms of wisdom, confidence, will and courage.

The enemy had massed thousands of troops in the area of Xiaotanghe with an aim to surround us and destroy us by simple numerical superiority. The employment of massive manpower was a stereo-typical tactic the enemy had used before against the revolutionary army, an outmoded device that had been exposed to the public more than hundreds of times. The enemy was depending on numbers, and that was all. It was precisely through this method that the enemy rendered itself vulnerable.

By spreading its sea of campfires over a dozen miles of Xiaotanghe, the enemy had exposed his strength and the tactics he was employing to destroy the People's Revolutionary Army? a mistake as great as if he had allowed his plan of operation to be stolen by us. The enemy had already lost the initiative.

I was convinced that we would have no trouble slipping away to a safety zone. I put my hand on Sun Zhang-xiang's shoulder with a smile, and then addressed the commanding officers: "The enemy has massed thousands of troops here. This means that he has scraped together all his military and police forces, even the Self-Defense Corps, from not only the area surrounding Xiaotanghe but from Fusong and its vicinity as well. This implies that the villages and highways in this area are now all devoid of enemy forces. He is concentrating so hard on this forest, he won't even imagine that we might escape along the highway. The highway is the gap in the enemy's ranks. We must move quickly to the Donggang Secret Camp through this gap." I spoke with perfect calm and confidence.

The commanding officers looked relieved and ordered departure with assurance. The 8th Regiment led the procession down to the valley, followed by the Guard Company and the 7th Regiment. The marching column glided noiselessly towards the highway, avoiding the enemy's campfires. I was struck by the realization of the serious effect of a commander's attitude, speech and actions on his men, especially in a complex situation or a crisis. They could well affect the life and death of the army. If the commander is calm, so will his men be; if the commander is confused, his men will be even more so.

As I had predicted, the highway was completely deserted. On the edges of villages we passed there were

heaps of cinders left over from campfires. We moved as swiftly as an express train through the villages towards Donggang.

We passed through the enemy area in complete safety, with no need to shoot except once: when I found that the column of the 8th Regiment was marching in two separate groups, with more than 500 meters of space between them. The men had begun to relax, many of them walking, half asleep. I told the commanding officer at the rear of the column to fire a shot. At the sound of the gunshot the marching speed doubled. Now there were no more sleepwalkers.

We used this tactic of the highway march again later in the homeland, when we were passing Pegae Hill to the Musan area. We called it the tactic of marching hundreds of miles at one go.

Later, while reading the magazine Tiexin, I discovered the enemy had brought in a company of reporters from Japan, Manchukuo and Germany to witness and report on the battle of Xiaotanghe. It is a usual practice for correspondents to visit battlefields in a war, but the presence of a Nazi war correspondent at a battlefield in Manchuria thousands of miles away from Germany showed that Japan's "punitive" specialists were attaching great importance to the operations in the Fusong area. They had also obviously taken it for granted that they would win.

According to the article "Punitive Actions Against Bandits in Dong biandao," carried in Tiexin, the journalist corps consisted of newsmen from Japan's major newspapers Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun, Yomiuri Shimbun and Hochi Shimbun, reporters from Radio Xinjing, and Johann Nebel, a correspondent from the State News Agency of Nazi Germany. There were also a number of diplomats from Manchukuo. It was, indeed, a pompous company of observers. The enemy obviously saw the "punitive" operations in the Fusong area as a chance for world-wide publicity, a chance to boast in front of allies about the "brilliant battle results" they had been dreaming about throughout the operation.

The Japanese observers present at the scene were Washizaki, an important man in the investigation department of the military administration within the Manchukuo government; Nagashima, secretary of the department; and Tanaka, chief of the Andong Special Agency. They had no doubt been indulging in the fantasy that the Japanese army would annihilate the People's Revolutionary Army in the steep mountains and valleys of Fusong that spring and root out the "cancer in Oriental peace" once and for all. Washizaki was well-informed of the communist movement in Manchuria, a formidable strategist who had masterminded the campaign to stamp out communism. He was a major contributor to a secret book, *A Study of Communist Bandits in Manchuria*.

To show off the fighting on the small hilltop "T" during the Fatherland Liberation War (1950-53), Syngman Rhee invited a large number of foreign reporters. The report of this battle reminded me of the expedition to Fusong. Syngman Rhee's rash act and the bragging of Japan's high-ranking "punitive" officers had something in common.

Hitler, Tojyo, Mussolini and Syngman Rhee had the same habit of underestimating others and

overestimating themselves.

The "punitive" commander told the company of reporters that his units encountered Kim Il Sung's communist army in the mountains, that Kim Il Sung was on this side of thirty, trained at Moscow Communist University (Japanese newspapers in those days all blared loudly that I had finished Moscow Communist University) and that his army of 500 men and women was the strongest force in Dongbiandao. He bragged, however, that they were now caught like "rats in a trap". He spoke German fluently and talked to the Nazi reporter without the help of an interpreter. Hearing that we were like "rats in a trap", the reporters gave a cheer.

But discovering that we had slipped out of the enemy's encirclement, the "punitive" commander changed his tune somewhat and told the reporters that the communist army had only 300 troops and had escaped. Awkwardly, he produced a "prisoner of war" and told them to gather their news from him. According to their news coverage, the soldier, who was alleged to be a "POW", had recently "come over" to the revolutionary army after serving in the Manchukuo army in Tonghua. In fact the grinning "POW" declared he knew nothing about communism. And as for us, we had never been to Tonghua. What a farce! One would easily imagine how disappointed the reporters were.

The sea of campfires spread by the enemy in the wide forest of Xiaotanghe not only gave us a chance to hit upon the idea of the highway-march tactic, it also convinced us that the objective of the expedition had been achieved, that is, the objective of luring the enemy forces assembled in the border area towards Fusong.

The enemy was filled with consternation when informed that the People's Revolutionary Army had broken through the circle of thousands of enemy troops and had vanished into thin air. They were at a loss as to how to go about finding us again. Rumors flew about among them - that even the devil was puzzled about the guerrillas' tactics, that in the Korean guerrilla army there was a Taoist much wiser than Zhu-ge Liang, and that the KPRA would attack Seoul and Tokyo in a few years. Rumors spread also among the people and became topics of conversation among old men visiting with one another in farm villages. The expedition created new folk tales and legends about our guerrilla army.

Our march from Toudaoling to Donggang was yet another indescribable hunger march.

On arrival in a forest near Donggang after marching hundreds of miles at one go, we began a search to obtain food supplies with an intention to stay there for about a month. It was no simple job to prepare one month's victuals for hundreds of men.

Fortunately, we found a much better solution to the food problem than we had expected. The men who had been on long-distance survival throughout the winter. There used to be such maize fields around Mt. Paektu.

The men, who had gone without food for days except for bran and water, returned from the sentry duty

with a few packs full of maize ears for their comrades in the camp. They had picked it without getting permission from the owner of the field. The owner was nowhere to be seen, they said, nor did they know where the owner was living, nor did they have time to inquire about his whereabouts because they had been relieved immediately from sentry duty. I gave them a stern rebuke and sent them off to find the owner. They returned in a few hours with a gray-haired old Chinese peasant.

On behalf of the army I apologized and offered him 30 yuan.

The old man said in surprise, "Commander, please don't apologize to this insignificant old man for taking a few packs of maize. We begrudge it to the local bandits, but not to you, the revolutionary army. It's ridiculous for me to take money from you for such a trifle. What would the villagers say if they knew I accepted your money? I will not take it, nor will I take back the maize."

I told the old man that he should take the maize because it had been picked from his field, and that he should also accept the money in compensation for his loss.

He finally yielded and went back with the money and maize. I got my men to escort him to his home. On the way he asked them who their commander was.

The men said, frankly, that he was General Kim Il Sung.

Then, the old man said that he felt as if he had committed a criminal act, taking our money, and that he would never forgive himself. For the rest of the way he was lost in deep thought. When he got home, he gathered all his family and relatives together, harvested the crop, and then brought it to me on a sleigh.

"Commander Kim, today I was deeply moved by your generous gesture. I am overwhelmed by the fact that you should show respect towards a man like me. Please do accept the sleigh of maize as a token of my gratitude for your kindness."

This time I was obliged to accept the old man's offer. The maize helped us to overcome the food crisis.

He even told us where we could obtain more food. About five miles down the River Man, he said, there were ginseng fields, and we should approach the owners. He explained that the owners had planted beans and maize in the fields instead of ginseng, and that they would not be reaping the crops, but would sell them as they stood. He added that if we wanted, he would go and bargain for us.

I sent the old man to the place, together with my orderly. The orderly returned to the unit with the answer that a deal had been struck.

We selected several sturdy men from the Guard Company and the 7th Regiment and sent them to the fields.

While the foraging party was away, we ate maize. A few days later, the foraging party came back with defatted bean cakes on their backs. This had been kept by the owners of the ginseng fields. We ate them raw or steamed or baked.

According to the foraging party, the owners had expressed deep sympathy for the fact that the revolutionary army was suffering food shortages. They added that the ginseng fields had been planted with beans and maize and that the crops had not been reaped. The amount, they calculated, would be more than enough for one month's food for us. But when our men asked them to sell the crops, the owners said, "Why should we take money for helping General Kim Il Sung's army? We can manage without these crops, so please harvest them all and take them away.

In the end the foraging party from the 7th Regiment managed to persuade the owners to sell the crops.

After supper all my men hurried to the fields and picked the maize and beans. The maize ears were stored whole, and the beans were threshed. They did the threshing with sticks, or by trampling, since we had no flail. Both the maize and beans amounted to dozens of som. I met the owners and thanked them.

The kind-hearted owners also brought us salt, more than enough for one month, and urged us to fight well.

With the food problem resolved, I led the unit to the Donggang Secret Camp. This was the site we had intended to use for military and political training at our departure from Changbai.

The previous spring or summer I had heard from old man Ho Rak Yo that in the forest of Donggang there were the remains of a village, formerly called Gaolibuzi, in which one could still see the cornerstones of a fort where our ancestors had gone through military training. The old man told me that when his family was settling down in the village of Hualazi (he was a teenager at the time), there were many purely Korean villages around Gaolibuzi, and the fertile slash-and-burn fields yielded good crops.

But as the waves of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars reached the foothills of the Paektu mountains, Japanese soldiers appeared even at Gaolibuzi to plunder the villagers. The enraged young villagers fought back with bows and arrows, spears and sling-shots. When Gaolibuzi became a training ground for the army of Hong Bom Do most of the young villagers joined up and took part in the training.

A massive "punitive" attack in the year of Kyongsin (1920) devastated the place. The village was burnt down, the fort was demolished, and the majority of the inhabitants were killed. The small number of people who had narrowly escaped death lived in hiding in the forest for a while, then scattered away to different places. This was why Gaolibuzi was now completely deserted.

Drawing on this piece of information, I searched for and found Gaolibuzi on the map. Within a range of 25 miles from Mt. Paektu there were actually quite a number of places named Gaolibuzi. There was one in Linjiang, for instance, and another in Changbai. In Antu County there was Gaoliweizi, a name that

signified the existence of a fort with Koryo<sup>4</sup> people.

In the areas east and south of the Paektu mountains there were places with such names as Yowabo, Pochonbo, Rananbo, Sinmusong, Changphyong, Changdong, Hyesanjin, Singalphajin and so on, which meant that in the old days there had been forts, walls, munitions depots or ferries guarded by sentries in these areas. This proves that our ancestors in the times of Ancient Korea, to say nothing of the Koguryo<sup>6</sup> and Koryo eras, had built walls and forts in many places around Mt. Paektu to strengthen national defense.

Listening to old man Ho's account in the village of Manjiang, I had memorized the location of the old fort built by our ancestors in the forest of Donggang that had been marked with traces of their hardships.

On arrival at the site of Gaolibuzi, we found two empty huts that had been built and abandoned by ginseng growers. In the Fusong area there were many people who grew ginseng in forests. Some of them spent the winter in their villages near urban communities, and worked in mountains only in the summer season.

The huts were located at the foot of two mountains, both called Mt. Guosong (Pine-nut). The twin mountains, which stood face to face in a friendly manner, one in the east and the other in the west, were thick with pine forests and created a friendly ambiance in the magnificent alpine scenery.

We repaired the vacant huts and then proceeded to give political and military education to the men. The training ground was prepared on a clearing in the forest of the east Guosong mountain.

Realizing that we had settled in the secret camp with food supplies for at least one month, many of the men looked forward to a long period of rest. This was a natural reaction, for they had been exhausted to the limit by the long forced march and heavy fighting. Unfortunately, we could not afford to relax.

Even before the men had settled down, we convened a meeting of company political instructors and higher officers and reviewed the expedition to Fusong. At the meeting, many officers spoke highly of the laudable deeds by the men in defense of their commanders, and of the officers' loving care of their men during the expedition. They emphasized the need to further encourage such deeds in the future.

This meeting was followed by the Xigang meeting, which was to become a historic turning point in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

The Xigang meeting was held at West Yangmudingzi Secret Camp and lasted three days. It was attended by cadres from the 2nd and 4th Divisions and other corps-class cadres such as Wei Zheng-min and Jon Kwang. The discussion at this meeting centred on the policy of advance on the homeland. After I had spoken about the policy it was unanimously approved by the meeting. We then came to a decision on the mission, direction of activity and area of operations for each unit.



The meeting was followed by military and political training at the Donggang Secret Camp, the entire course of which was directed towards political and military preparations for the advance into the homeland.

Our political training programme concentrated mainly on the line taken by the Korean revolution, its strategy and tactics, and the situation at home and abroad. The lecture on the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF greatly promoted the understanding of our own independent line of the Korean revolution. Through this lecture the recruits were able to deepen the knowledge they had gained at the Paektusan Secret Camp.

At that time, too, we rejected the dogmatic method of studying, encouraging instead debates and study through questions and answers, combined with practice.

I myself lectured to the Headquarters personnel, military and political cadres, and the Guard Company. My lectures dealt with the line of our revolution, the rudiments of social progress, world-famous revolutionaries, heroes, great men, and typical fascists. Lectures on the international situation were focused on the war between Ethiopia and Italy, the battle results of the Spanish popular-front army, and the fascistization of Germany, Italy and Japan.

A contemporary magazine carried a photograph of Hitler inspecting a local army unit. Showing the photograph to the men, I warned them of the dangers that Hitler represented. Our lecture also dealt with martyr Fang Zhi-min, an outstanding figure of the Chinese peasant movement. The story of his heroic career made a strong impression on the audience. Of the men evaluated as exemplary in the training at Donggang, I still remember Ma Tong Hui. He was both enthusiastic and very good at debating. Thanks to the training he received at Donggang, he grew into an excellent political worker.

At Gaolibuzi, once an old fort belonging to our ancestors, our youngsters, who only yesterday had been slash-and-burn peasants and day laborers, developed into reliable fighters capable of forming the front for the main attack that was to liberate their homeland.

In later years a story was to spread among the people that we had trained a large number of soldiers in one of the deep Paektu mountains.

In some places the story was exaggerated to mythical proportions, stating that we had trained tens of thousands of flying giants in a deep cave in Mt. Paektu. The Gaolibuzi training ground in Donggang was the on-gin of the legend.

Early in May 1937, when the training at Donggang was just about finished, we published Sogwang, the organ of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The title of the newspaper was a powerful symbol for the burning desire of our people to witness the new dawn of a liberated country, and the determination of the Korean communists to hasten the arrival of that dawn.

As soon as the inaugural number of the newspaper had been published, we left the Donggang Secret Camp and headed for our homeland.

## 16.3. Guardsmen

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A large part of my life was spent on battlefields. Fifteen years of anti-Japanese war and three years of great war against the United States make up nearly 20 years of struggle in a hail of bullets and gunfire.

By some miracle, or by good fortune, I have never had an accident. During the war of resistance against the Japanese, the guerrilla army greatly emphasized that commanders should set personal examples. Commanding officers always bore the brunt of all work, and they took pride in doing so. They led attacking formations and brought up the rear in retreat, protecting their comrades-in-arms. That was the militant spirit and moral trait of commanders and political workers of the People's Revolutionary Army.

I also did my best to live up to these standards. Sometimes I plunged into the barrage of enemy fire to rescue my men from danger, and sometimes I ventured to risk my life without hesitation, in spite of my comrades' attempts to dissuade me. More than once I seized a machine-gun on the firing line and got involved in a fierce engagement with the enemy. Strangely, however, nothing ever happened to me.

In the course of the struggle against ultra-democracy in the army, the guerrilla army Headquarters established the principle that company commanders and higher-grade officers should refrain from leading a charge. It is true that they refrained from risking their lives since then in normal battle situations, but could they renounce their communist readiness to risk their own lives in the midst of crises?

During the Korean war, the Americans wasted great quantities of explosives in their attempts to kill me. For instance, when spies like Park Hon Yong and Lee Sung Yop, who were in the leadership of our Party, sent a radio message to their boss that I was going somewhere at some hour at a certain date, the Americans never failed to send their fighters and bombers to carry out saturation bombing upon me. While at times bombs dropped close to the Supreme Headquarters, they failed to touch me.

When I was engaged in underground work, travelling in civilian clothes around Jirin, Changchun, Harbin and Kalun, I was protected by the DIU members, men of the Korean Revolutionary Army, members of the Young Communist League, the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and the Children's Expeditionary Corps, who were armed with pistols or clubs. Everywhere I went I found protectors, people who helped me and looked after me as they would their own sons or brothers. Everywhere there were innumerable women, like "Aunt of Jiaohe" who saved me from the enemy policemen shadowing.

Shang Yue, Zhang Wei-hua, Chen Han-zhang, and other Chinese people and communists also paid careful attention to my personal security. Whenever Chinese policemen appeared in my school, Mentor Shang Yue helped me to slip away over the wall, and when I was being pursued by Chinese warlords Chen Han-zhang provided me with bed, board and a hiding place. I have already spoken highly of Zhang Weihua as an exemplary internationalist for having sacrificed himself by drinking Adurol to save me.

Whenever he met commanding officers of my unit, Zhou Bao-zhong exhorted them to take good care of me.

After the death of Wang De-tai, the 2nd Corps commander, and of Cao Guo-an, the 2nd Division commander of the 1st Corps, the matter of personal security of commanding officers also began to be seriously discussed in the anti-Japanese armed units in eastern Manchuria. To our regret, Wang De-tai fell while leading a charge with his Mauser in hand.

Wang was a Chinese who had grown up in a Korean village in Yanji County and once worked in Korea. He joined the guerrilla army in a Korean village. Probably for this reason, in the records of the Japanese authorities he was said to be a Korean. In the early days of his military career he belonged to the same squad as Choe Hyon. From the rank and file he fought his way up to a corps commander, an officer who came from the working class and remained a simple, straightforward man, popular among the masses.

The death of Wang De-tai, Cao Guo-an and other military and political cadres had a strong impact on the men and officers of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, and triggered off a heated debate on the matter of security. In many units specialized guards were organized.

In this context, my comrades held a great many discussions on forming a unit exclusively for the protection of Headquarters. At first they talked about the matter among themselves, and having come to an agreement, they approached me with a proposal to form a guard unit. I turned it down, for thus far our men and officers had managed to protect Headquarters quite reliably without a specialized guard unit.

In the spring of 1937, however, I was unable to object to the idea any longer. Since the establishment of our secret camp in the Paektu mountains, the enemy had planted many spies and subversive elements among and around us. These spies were armed with axes or daggers or poison, and even carried obscene pictures with them.

The enemy was in the habit of sending assassins to our secret camp and to our unit whenever the latter was out on an expedition. Some of them wormed their way into underground organizations, won confidence by feigned enthusiasm and were even recommended to join the guerrilla army. They were constantly on the lookout for a chance to undermine Headquarters.

commanders. According to available information, an even greater sum was offered for me. As the enemy was resorting to every conceivable means to destroy our Headquarters, we had to take countermeasures. Officers of my unit again insisted on taking positive step to safeguard Headquarters. Even Wei Zheng-min joined in to say:

"Commander Kim, you don't look out for your own safety. That's where you are wrong. You must remember that the enemy is concentrating his attack on you. It's with reason that he is offering more money for you than for any other comrade. We must hurry and organize a guard unit."

I was obliged to accept his advice. Objecting to the idea that had been agreed upon by everyone would have amounted to narrow obstinacy.

In the spring of 1937 a Guard Unit was formally organized, reporting directly to Headquarters. The event was masterminded by Kim Phyong, the head of the organizational department of Headquarters. As I approved the formation of a company-size guard unit, he got down to the scheme with great enthusiasm. Overnight, he selected the personnel and made a list of the weapons needed for the unit.

I did not approve of the draft organization: the list of the guards included the elite men and women of every company - Kim Thaek Hwan who had distinguished himself in the battle of Xinancha, O Paek Ryong and Kang Hung Sok, renowned machine-gunners, Giant Kang Wi Ryong, and Kim Hwak Sil, famous as a woman general. Had they all been appointed to the Guard Company, the leadership in other companies would have crumbled.

Moreover, the weapons and equipment allotted to the Guard Company were exorbitant. The head of the organizational department had assigned several machine-guns to the Guard Company. In those days if those machine-guns were transferred to the Guard Company, the combat regiments would not have even one.

I expressed my disapproval:

"You haven't selected personnel properly, nor have you calculated the weapons and equipment reasonably. What's the use of a Guard Company if it is to weaken the combat power of other companies? If these basic combat units are neglected, the regiments will be weakened, and if the regiments are weak, Headquarters itself will be like a flame flickering in the wind."

"Comrade Commander, this is not my own personal opinion, but the consensus of the military and political cadres, the masses. Please don't turn it down."

Kim Phyong tried to win my approval by stressing the word masses.

But I disapproved of his draft organization and dictated my own list to him, because that was the only way to prevent the officers from continuing to pester me. My list of the personnel for the Guard Company included mainly recruits, and even some boys from the Children's Corps at Maanshan who had had not much experience in shooting.

As soon as it was announced, my list met with strong objections from the commanding officers. They delegated Lee Tong Baek to speak to me on their behalf, figuring that I would not ignore the old man's advice. I was well aware that they used him as their representative whenever I refused to accept their proposals. "Tobacco Pipe" had always acquitted himself well. As usual he approached me and came straight to the point.

"General, please don't be too austere. Do you really mean to leave the security of Headquarters to the care of these greenhorns? You'll be lucky if they don't end up being a burden on you. Headquarters could get into a lot of trouble acting as parents to these children. You had better give up this idea right away."

"You have nothing to fear from a Guard Company made up of fresh soldiers," I replied. "They will get used to fighting in no time. Remember how well they fought against the enemy's 'punitive' attack last winter? How fast they got used to their new life in the guerrilla army? By the time the expedition is over, they all will be as strong as their veteran comrades. I am forming the Guard Company mainly with fresh men because I want to keep them close by my side and train them into crack soldiers. It will be great to see them all grow up into first-class fighters and become a reliable reserve force for Headquarters! No matter how inexperienced they might be in the life of the guerrilla army, they will become tough combat troops if we give them good training. Without able fighters, a victorious revolution would be inconceivable."

"Tobacco Pipe" left me without saying anything further. He explained my ideas to the commanding officers, and seeing that the old man supported me, the officers made no further objection.

The Guard Company, the first of its kind in the history of the revolutionary armed forces in our country, was born of this polemic at the Huapichangzi Secret Camp.

The company had three platoons and a machine-gun section. Headquarters' orderlies and cooks were also a part of the organizational life in the Guard Company. Lee Tong Hak was appointed the first commander. His reappointment as company commander after his demotion to rank and file for his mistake raised his morale to the sky. He had been demoted for the inefficient education of his men, who violated the rules of work among the people. The mistake had been committed by his men, but he had been held responsible as their commander.

He addressed the newly organized Guard Company with the rapidity of machine-gun fire: "What is the basic mission of our company? To protect Headquarters. Our veteran revolutionary comrades have protected the General in good faith since the days in the guerrilla zone. Today they have turned over this duty to us. What are our circumstances? We are all fresh recruits, some of us barely more than boys.

I am afraid that Headquarters might have to protect us, instead of being protected by us. I appeal to you: we must truly learn to protect Headquarters so as not to be protected by Headquarters ourselves!"

While his speech had made a strong impression on some of the guardsmen, others were not happy because they felt that they were being looked down upon.

Nevertheless, the company commander had not gone too far in his speech. His apprehension was not unfounded. It would be right to say that for some time in its early days we had to protect the Guard Company. The company had double duties, to protect Headquarters and to fight as a combat unit. The guardsmen grew more mature with each passing day.

The boys in company behaved like men in doing everything in order not to cause us any trouble. They hated it more than anything else to be treated as youngsters.

At one formal occasion the company commander happened to call the boys from the Children's Corps "chicks". The boys were crushed by the word. Kim Jong Dok, who looked and behaved more like a man than any of the boys from Maanshan, was too gloomy to eat his evening meal. Seeing that he was sitting mutely without eating supper, I asked, "Why are you sitting like that, not eating? Have you had any quarrel?"

"No, sir. Our comrade company commander called us 'chicks'..." he mumbled, flushing. I burst out laughing at his innocent reply.

"Was his 'chicks' really so bad? He meant that you were cute."

"That was not all he meant. Anyway, we are chicks, so how can we protect Headquarters? I'm really puzzled about my duty."

The boy was glum, worrying over a possible failure to carry out the heavy duty to protect Headquarters.

It seemed to me he had, in fact, grown up. He was seventeen years old after all, and should not have been regarded as a child.

The mention of chicks reminds me of the sleeping hour, when the Guard Company youngsters used to nestle close to me like chicks, each trying to win a comfortable place under my wing. They were happiest when they could sleep by my side. In those days I had only one blanket. When they were all pressed close to my sides, I was very uncomfortable. But I saw it not as a burden, but as the greatest pleasure comparable to nothing.

When the sleeping hour came, I used to open my arms and call out to the young guardsmen: "Boys, come here!" They used to cheer and crowd around me, competing for the place next to me.

The closest places were usually occupied by the boys like Lee O Song, who was a little over 10 years old. Although I granted the privilege to the youngest boys, I changed the order now and then so that everyone might sleep by my side once in a while. When I confused the order by mistake and failed to treat them equally, they protested.

Once Kim Phyong happened to come to see me on some business at midnight and found the guardsmen wrangling over sleeping places.

"Comrade Commander, look at them," he said irritably. "How could you expect kids like these to perform guard duty? Judging from their unruly behavior in your presence, they will be good for nothing,

let alone guardsmen. They need a good tongue-lashing to straighten them out."

He looked sharply at the boys as he spoke. Having been dead against the appointment of the boys from the Children's Corps to the Guard Company in the first place, Kim Phyong was now overly critical of them.

I thought he was right, but I said in defense of the boys, "What's the use of scolding them? They are just vying for the best place to sleep, craving for the warmth and affection of their parents and brothers."

A mass of people sleeping under one blanket was called a ttabari (a round-shaped head pad for a woman carrying a heavy load on her head). A dozen of us used to sleep in a circle, with our feet in the center under the blanket. Sleeping in ttabari-shape, invented by the boys themselves, was very practical for guerrillas, who were always short of blankets or had to sleep in the open.

At one point immediately after liberation, Lee O Song, who was working in the Hyesan area, came to me to report on his work. In those days we were living at the foot of Haebang Hill, where the Party Foundation Museum is now located. At these quarters my comrades and I shared bed and board for some time, as we had done in the mountain. The comrades working out in the provinces used to come to the quarters when they were back in Pyongyang, and Lee O Song was one of them.

At the sleeping hour, the veterans began to spread quilts. Seeing this, Lee O Song pushed aside the quilts, saying, "When we sleep with the General, we must sleep like a ttabari." The comrades from northern Manchuria did not know what Lee O Song meant.

Lee O Song pulled me by the arm and asked, "General, won't you sleep like a ttabari tonight, as we used to do on Mt. Paektu?"

I did not readily agree. If we were to sleep as he proposed, I would have to draw all the veterans into a ttabari. and I did not think they would like such fun. Comrade Kim Chaek, please lie down on the General's right side, and Comrade Choe Hyon next to him. The General's left side is my place."

Even Kim Chaek was compelled into the ttabari by these preposterous orders.

Although I loved the Guard Company boys very much, I was not indulgent with them. When they made a mistake, I criticized them severely, and gave them many difficult tasks to harden them. Even in the dead of winter, when the temperature was -40°. I would post them on guard duty in the howling snowstorm. Sometimes they were sent with their veteran comrades into heavy fighting. When they violated discipline, they were made to criticize themselves before different companies, or reflect on their own behavior for hours, standing in a round space no more than a square meter in size. While meting out such punishments, I felt my own heart aching more than once.

It was fortunate that none of them thought ill of me or blamed me, no matter how severely I criticized



them or how hard I trained them. Once Lee O Song lost his way on an errand, which delayed the errand. He did not follow the route I had assigned to him, but changed it as he pleased. I knew that he was wrong, but I did not criticize him. My unusual forgiveness made him very sad.

"Am I not worthy of the Comrade Commander's criticism? Does he still consider me to be a sniveling child?" He was tormented by this thought, and finally came to me and asked why I did not punish him as I had punished other comrades when they made mistakes. He begged me to punish him.

Where there is true affection and trust, punishment can be regarded as a sign of confidence. The guardsmen accepted criticism and punishment without grumble. That was reward for the genuine love and confidence we bestowed upon them.

We made a special effort to help them with their studies so as to ensure their development. Both in everyday life and during intensive political and military training sessions at secret camps, I was their teacher. At Headquarters in those days there were Tong-A Ilbo, Manson Ilbo, Joson Ilbo and other Korean and foreign newspapers, Problems of Leninism, Outline of Socialism, State and Revolution and other publications helpful to the men in widening their mental horizons.

The guardsmen were granted the privilege of reading all these materials. In return they were obliged to submit written or oral impressions of their readings. In the meantime, the Guard Company became a model in studying that the rest of the People's Revolutionary Army was to follow. Love is reciprocated, and our loving care of the guardsmen was rewarded.

The guardsmen developed quickly both in ideology and in military practice. They did an excellent job of performing their duty to protect Headquarters. To be honest, they helped me out of many dangers.

Once we were surrounded by the enemy's "special force", led by Lim Su San, in a secret camp in Antu County. Lim Su San had been chief of staff of our main force. He had turned traitor and had become the commander of a "special force" specializing in "punitive" operations against the guerrilla army. He prowled around West Jiandao, destroying the secret camps of our supporting units.

On that morning we had eaten breakfast very early in order to leave the secret camp. Everyone had to eat breakfast quickly and hurry up for our departure, so there was no one to relieve the sentry. Lee Ul Sol was standing guard. I myself relieved him. While he was eating, I was on the alert. It was a foggy morning and I felt a bad omen.

In fact, I had the suspicion of a human presence near the guard post, having caught the snap of a dead twig. Judging it to be the enemy instantly, I threw myself down behind a fallen tree, shooting my Mauser at the sound. Almost simultaneously an enemy machine-gun opened fire from a distance of little more than 10 meters.

It was an instant that I dove behind the fallen tree and shot after detecting the enemy presence that

morning. Almost at the same time Kang Wi Ryong and Lee Ul Sol, who had been eating, rushed out to the sentry post, fearing for my safety. Kang Wi Ryong pulled me from behind the fallen tree with all his strength. Meanwhile, Lee Ul Sol opened light machine-gun fire at the enemy. Frankly speaking, I wondered if that wasn't our last moment. As Kang, whose nickname was Bear, was struggling to pull me back from the fallen tree I was grimly resolved to share death with my men.

But my loyal men saved me from death by exposing themselves to the barrage of enemy fire. As the enemy closed in to surround us, Lee Ul Sol stood up with his grenade in his hand and shouted at them, "Come on then, let's die together!"

He looked so overwhelming, so threatening, that the enemy hesitated. Kang Wi Ryong lost no time in rescuing me completely from the barrage of enemy fire.

After our withdrawal from the secret camp, Lim Su San plundered the camp, taking everything. We lost precious documents, photographs, pamphlets and drugs.

When the "special force" was gone, I went back to the secret camp and looked round the sentry post. The top half of an entire thicket of bush clover had been slashed off, as if sliced with a razor. The enemy's machine-gun fire had been very heavy. Seeing that, I said to the boys who had saved me, "Had it not been for you comrades, I would have gone to the next world."

The news of the guardsmen's performance in protecting me reached the Chinese commanding officers of the neighboring units. They had always been envious of our clever orderlies and guardsmen. When they met me they used to ask me by way of a joke to make them a present of a good orderly or to give them any of my guardsmen who spoke a little Chinese. Yang Jing-yu, Wei Zheng-min, Zhou Bao-zhong and Cao Ya-fan were all covetous of the guardsmen or orderlies of our main force.

After the expedition to Fusong, Cao Ya-fan asked me to select a Korean orderly for him. I sent to him Kim Thaek Man, the best of my orderlies, telling him to take good care of Cao. During the struggle against the "Minsaengdan", Cao had wronged the Koreans extremely and interfered with my activity, but I did not reject him or refuse to comply with his request, which was made after much consideration. When the new division was organized, he was supposed to come to our main force as political commissar, but I did not agree with his appointment, because I could not guarantee security to his person. Many people in my unit had been wronged by Cao Yafan during the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, and they all hated him. Because of this, I myself became the political commissar of my unit.

True to my instructions, Kim Thaek Man took excellent care of Cao Ya-fan. Cao thanked me on many occasions for sending such a fine orderly to him, praising him as a clever, loyal young man.

Yang Jing-yu also repeatedly requested that I give him a good man. When he came to Nanpaizi to attend the meeting of military and political cadres from the 1st Corps and 2nd Corps, I turned over several of my orderlies to him. I also detached hundreds of men and commanding officers from my unit and formed

an independent brigade for him.

Wei Zheng-min, too, wished to have men we had trained. He was so keen on having Korean guardsmen that I sent Hwang Jong Hae and Paek Hak Lim to him. Kim Chol Ho, Jon Mun Uk, Im Un Ha, Kim Tuk Su and some others were also with him for some time. They all helped him and protected him loyally. At one time Zhou Bao-zhong appointed Park Rak Kwon, a Korean, as the commander of his guards. Chen Hanzhang, commander of the 3rd Directional Army, had Son Myong Jik from the Children's Corps at Maanshan as his chief orderly.

Whenever I heard that the comrades I had sent to the Chinese commanders were fighting in a self-sacrificing way in different units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army for fulfilling internationalist duty, I felt highly satisfied.

The men of the Guard Company were all my "guardian angels". Beside the men I mentioned above, there were innumerable other comrades-in-arms who protected me - for instance, Kim Un Sin, Choe Won Ii, Kim Hak Song, Han Ik Su, Jon Mun Sop, Kim Hong Su, Choe In Dok, Choe Kum San, JO Myong Son, Ji Pong Son, Kim Pong Sok, Lee Hak Song, Lee Tu Ik, O Jae Won.... As their names flash through my mind, thousands and tens of thousands of complex events from the past loom up in my memory.

Lee Tong Hak, the first Guard Company commander, was promoted to a regimental commander. He died heroically in a battle towards the end of 1938.

Lee Tal Gyong, who had become the Guard Company commander when Lee Tong Hak was promoted, had been a machine-gunner for the 4th Division. He was a crack shot, an excellent marksman whose name was known to everyone. He had been the political instructor of the Guard Company for some time, and succeeded to Lee Tong Hak when the latter moved up to the position of regimental commander. Sadly, he fell in battle less than a month after his appointment as the Guard Company commander.

Park Su Man, who took over the post of Guard Company commander after Lee Tal Gyong, was a really courageous man. In order to divert enemy fire, which had been concentrated on me at the battle of Shuangshanzi, he and his machine-gunner fought by moving from place to place, but Park Sn Man was fatally wounded.

The successive Guard Company commanders, ranging from the first commander Lee Tong Hak to the fourth commander O Paek Ryong, did not hesitate to undertake whatever arduous task I asked them to perform. They would have gone through fire and water to carry out my orders. Among the comrades who laid down their own lives to protect me was a teenager named Lee Kwon Haeng. He followed me and respected me as he would have followed and respected his own brother.

One winter we were on a forced march, pursued by the enemy. It was unusually cold, but I did not feel my feet to be cold, although we were walking in the snow. I thought it strange, so I took off my shoes to find that soft pads of *Carex meyeriana* Kunth had been laid into them like insoles. An orderly whispered

to me that it was the work of Lee Kwon Haeng.

Chinese regard ginseng, young deer antlers and marten as the three treasures of Kwangtung (Northeast China), and also considered *Carex meyeriana* Kunth to be one of the three treasures, for it kept our feet from being frost-bitten in the coldest weather. I knew the plant grew only in wet land, so how did it come to be spread in my shoes? Probably the boy had picked it little by little whenever he found it and saved it up in his pack for me.

Had he not shielded me with his body in the battle of Shiwudaogou, Changbai County, I would not have survived. On that day the enemy was concentrating fire upon the C. P. Lee Kwon Haeng insisted on moving the C. P. to a safe place, but I declined, for it was a vantage-point which commanded a good view of both our own and enemy forces.

The enemy's fire was suddenly directed at me. At this critical moment, the boy stretched his arms open and covered me with his body. An enemy bullet crushed his leg-bone. How could I describe my grief as I held the bleeding boy in my arms and saw the wound?

"You won't die! You won't die!" I encouraged him as I followed his stretcher.

"Comrade Commander, I won't die. Don't worry about me.... Please take care of yourself until we see again." He was consoling me instead. Perhaps I looked very sad to him. Those were the last words he spoke to me. I heard that he had written to me from the hospital in the rear, but the letter did not reach me. All that I heard of him was that he had been captured by the enemy while he was receiving treatment in the hospital, and that he had refused to reveal the secret of the location of Headquarters. He would not stain his revolutionary honor even though he was brutally tortured to death at the Changbai County police station.

In the Guard Company was a comrade called "Rucksack", so nicknamed because he always carried a rucksack on his back. Nobody knew why he toted around such a bulky object on his back.

The secret of the rucksack was revealed at a battle in Linjiang. The battle was a fierce one. On that particular day comrade "Rucksack" stuck close to me all day. Whenever bullets thudded into the parapet, I pulled him low and would not allow him to raise his head lest he be wounded. He would slip away from my grip and cling to my right side whenever the enemy was attacking from the right side, and close in on my left side whenever the enemy was attacking from the left side.

When the battle was over, a thick smell of burning wool hovered over the trench. I looked around and, to my surprise, saw a coil of smoke rising from two bullet holes in the pack of comrade "Rucksack". Unaware of it, the boy was shouting at his comrades that somebody's clothes were on fire. Some other men snatched his pack from him and opened it. From thick folds of silk wool, two hot bullets rolled out. It was only now that I realized why he had hung around me with the nick-sack on his back. And after all, his silk wool had saved me from danger.

I asked the boy how he had hit upon the bright idea. He replied that Comrade Kim Jong Suk, while making my winter clothes lined with silk wool, had said that silk wool was bullet-proof. Hearing that, he had made up his mind to make a bullet-proof pack for me.

It would be difficult to describe in this short account all the distinguished services rendered by the guardsmen in the war against the Japanese imperialists. I must emphasize that the exploits they performed to protect the lifeline of the Korean revolution are worthy of the praise and respect of generations to come. Their noble, comradely and steadfast devotion to the revolutionary Headquarters is the source of the single-hearted loyalty and integrity that is now flowering in our society.

Drawing on my experiences in the years of the revolution against the Japanese, I formed a bodyguard company of teenage children, of revolutionary martyrs, the company to guard the security of Supreme Headquarters, during the Fatherland Liberation War.

Men of the Bodyguard Company went through many difficulties and dangers to protect me. One winter's day, on my way back from a visit to a Chinese People's Volunteers unit in Songchon for joint operations with them, I was caught in an air-raid. At that time the guardsmen compelled me to throw myself down into a furrow in a field. They then shielded me by covering me in a human shield of double, triple and quadruple layers. Similar actions took place on many occasions after that.

It was the peerlessly courageous Bodyguard Company that remained with me in Pyongyang until the last hour to protect Supreme Headquarters throughout the arduous days of the temporary strategic retreat in the autumn of 1950.

A sudden change in the tide of war, which had gone from a sweeping advance to the south into the sudden retreat, dispirited the people in the capital city. They all turned to Supreme Headquarters for the Supreme Commander's speech about the prospects of the war.

In my radio address I said that the retreat was temporary and appealed to the people to launch guerrilla actions in all parts of the country. I assured them that we would emerge victorious. I also told the Bodyguard Company to march, singing songs, through the streets of the city. The Bodyguards were dumbfounded at the unexpected orders. Their looks seemed to say, "Why a peaceful singing parade when the enemy's guns are rumbling across the River Taedong?" The next moment, however, my orders to march had convinced them of victory, and they marched through the streets, singing The Song of National Defense.

As the voices of the bodyguard company rang suddenly and loudly across the streets of the capital, which had been depressed by the prospects of retreat, thousands of civilians ran out to the streets to exclaim, "That's the Bodyguard Company! Bodyguard Company!" "The Bodyguard Company is by our side. So the Supreme Commander will be near us."

Only when all the institutions in Pyongyang had started their retreat did the Bodyguard Company leave the capital with me.

The guardsmen in the days of the anti-Japanese war are now well over 60 years old.

The third and fourth generations of the revolutionaries have now taken their place as guardsmen of the Party Central Committee and the Supreme Headquarters. Generations have been replaced by generations, but new guard companies and new bodyguards have been growing up continuously. Does one need to count their number?

All the army and all the people are guardsmen and bodyguards who protect the Party and the revolution.

## 16.4. Across the Whole of Korea

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The movement to build up the organizations for the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, which started at the foot of Mt. Paektu, went into full swing throughout Manchuria and Korea.

Each clause of the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, the text of which was woven out of an ardent love for the country and its people, breathed fresh life into the soul of the nation and inspired the whole country with a burning desire for independence. All the patriotic compatriots - communists, nationalists, workers, peasants, intellectuals, students, craftsmen, religious believers and non-comprador capitalists - joined in a single front for liberation.

The brisk campaign to build the ARF organizations was first launched in Changbai and other parts of West Jiandao and Manchuria.

The ARF was able to build its organizations quickly in Manchuria because in this region the anti-Japanese movement had been under way for many years, and the masses were in favor of the revolution. Each of the nearly 900,000 Koreans living in Manchuria was a "high explosive", so to speak, which could explode any moment.

The great task of rallying the anti-Japanese patriotic forces was not new to the people living in Manchuria. As is widely known, the meeting held in Kalun had seriously discussed the anti-Japanese national united front, and after the meeting the Korean revolutionaries had done some fine work to form the national united front from amongst the anti-Japanese forces in all sections of the population. The people of Manchuria had had a chequered history and experience of the united front movement. It was only natural that the seed of the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF quickly germinated and grew up on this soil.

While building up the ARF, we also pursued the policy of creating models, and with them as parent bodies, spreading out a network of organizations in all directions. Locations for such model units were chosen carefully: they were first organized in places with good foundations for building organizations - places that already had experience in social movements, a favorable ideological climate and a strong revolutionary spirit among the masses, and forces capable of giving leadership to the underground front. A membership of more than three formed a branch; more than three branches a chapter; and three or more chapters a district committee, several of which formed a county committee of the ARF.

We even infiltrated the army, police and government establishments of the enemy with subordinate organizations of the ARF. Those engaged in underground revolutionary work while serving in enemy establishments were called in those days special members of the ARF. Such special members operated even in the Jingan army units, which were under the strict surveillance of Japanese instructors.

Meanwhile, we strove to build the ARF in the KPRA areas of operation, and using them as stepping stones, to expand the organizational network into the neighboring areas and deep into the homeland.

Immediately after the founding of the ARF we convened a meeting of the officers and men within the main force of the KPRA at the secret camp. At the meeting we took measures to admit all the men and officers of the KPRA into the ARF in response to their unanimous request that we do so. They said that as their Commander had been elected Chairman of the ARF, they should also become its members and make contributions to the united front movement. So we admitted all of them into the ARF and encouraged them to become propagandists and organizers for rallying the people behind the anti-Japanese national united front.

Filled with a sense of their historic mission, every one of them became a standard-bearer for the united front movement, working to rally people of all political parties and walks of life around the ARF.

Thanks to these standard-bearers we were able to form our ARE organizations in nearly every village in West Jiandao in a short time.

The main part in the construction of the ARE organizations in those days was played by the political operatives selected from the KPRA units. They included certain people who had worked on the preparatory committee for the founding of the ARE. These people served as the kindling for the united front movement that was to engulf Manchuria. In the autumn of 1936 the ARE struck root in Wangqing, Helong, Hunchun, Yanji and other counties in eastern Manchuria.

The Binlanggou district committee of the ARE was formed, with members of the peasant association as the core in Binlanggou, situated in Hunchun County and the seat of the former Dahuanggou guerrilla zone. The inaugural number of Samil Wolgan carried news that a political operative dispatched to North Jiandao had finished the preparations for setting up branches of the ARE and an armed unit in the four major villages under the enthusiastic approval and unanimous agreement of the revolutionaries in Helong. From this fact alone, one may easily imagine how ardently the people there supported our line of united front.

Those who had participated in the Donggang meeting went on to take charge of the building of the ARF organizations in southern Manchuria. They admitted the men and officers of Korean nationality in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army first, equipping them for our united-front line. Then from amongst these they selected those with a high political consciousness and agitation ability, and dispatched them to the Korean settlements. The dispatched men made contact with local revolutionaries and formed ARF organizations in many towns and rural areas in southern Manchuria, among them Panshi, Huadian, Tonghua, Jian, Mengjiang, Huanren, Kuandian and Humnan.

The ARF network struck root in northern Manchuria as well.

Soon after the founding of the ARF in Donggang, I sent the Inaugural Declaration and Ten-Point



Programme of the ARE to Kim Kyong Sok, who was engaged in party work at a unit of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in northern Manchuria. In his days in eastern Manchuria he had also done party work in the area of Sandaowan, Yanji County. I had met him for the first time when I paid a visit to the Secretariat of the East Manchuria Special District Party Committee, situated in Sandaowan.

At that time he had been in low spirits, having been suspected of being a "Minsaengdan" member. I heard that he had shed tears of emotion at the news of the Dahuangwai meeting. I had sent him to a unit in northern Manchuria at the request of Zhou Bao-zhong. Kim Kyong Sok disseminated the Inaugural Declaration and Ten-Point Programme of the ARE among the Korean officers and men in the 5th Corps, and formed an ARE chapter from a selection of hardcore elements. At our request, Zhou Bao-zhong gave active support to the formation of the chapter in the capacity of its corps commander.

This was followed by successive formations of ARF organizations in Fangzheng, Tonghe, Boli, Tangyuan, Ningan, Mishan and several other counties in northern Manchuria. As a part of this rising tide of enthusiasm, the Anti-Japanese Union of Emu County was reformed into an ARE organization. It was Choe Chun Guk, who was operating in the Kuandi area in command of the Independent Brigade with Fang Zhensheng, that had initially propagated among the union members the Inaugural Declaration and Ten-Point Programme of the ARE and had led them to reform the union into an ARE organization.

As I describe the building of the ARE organizations in northern Manchuria, I feel obliged to mention the painstaking efforts made by Kim Chaek. As soon as he received a copy of the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, he carved each letter of the programme on a wood block and printed hundreds of copies. The pamphlets were distributed widely amongst the Anti-Japanese Allied Army and revolutionary organizations in every county of northern Manchuria. At several meetings he took positive measures to expand the ARF network, and to train the organizations in practical struggle.

The Korean communists in Sanyitun, Raohe County, issued a declaration expressing support for the ARF movement. The declaration read as follows: "Compatriots! Do not forget your motherland. Let all of you who are against Japan unite and promote the anti-Japanese common front, be you men or women, young or old, free from party affiliations and regional and personal prejudices. Make your contribution to the anti-Japanese front for national independence, those of you with money donating money, those with weapons offering weapons, and those with labor contributing labor." This declaration could well have been made in our own voice: the comrades in southern Manchuria expressed our views exactly.

In this way the Korean people living in Manchuria accepted our united front for what it was: a fair and patriotic line that would realize national unity at the earliest date possible.

The major target in the campaign to build the ARE organizations was, to all intents and purposes, the homeland and our 20 million compatriots. This was in line with the spirit of the Nanhutou meeting, which had laid a special stress on building both the party and the ARE organizations, and on developing an armed struggle in which the homeland was the main theatre and its people were the main force.

The political operatives from the KPRA played a decisive role in expanding the network of the ARE deep into our native land. Great contributions were also made by the hardcore revolutionaries in West Jiandao, whom the KPRA had trained with so much care, and by the pioneers in the northern border areas, who had thrown themselves into the united front movement as a result of our direct influence.

The building of the ARF organizations in the homeland had to be conducted under very arduous and complicated circumstances, owing to the merciless oppression by the Japanese aggressors and the mistaken line put forward by the factionalists.

The Japanese imperialists feared the expansion of the ARF organizations in the homeland more than anything else, and they made desperate efforts to check the tide of the united front movement rushing deep into Korea. Their first attack was directed at the patriots in the border areas. They blacklisted as most dangerous and put down most brutally those organizations and individuals they considered to be within reach of our political campaign, together with the patriots and campaigners who sympathized with our line and sought national resurrection through our armed struggle.

Even as the sound of gunshots and bugles reverberated, and flames lit up the sky above the walled towns and villages in West Jiandao, the people in the homeland south of the River Yalu were forbidden to listen or look: the enemy cordoned off the river banks on the days when the People's Revolutionary Army was attacking walled towns and villages on the opposite side of the river. They were very afraid that the people might witness their defeat and spread news of it further afield. You can imagine what a nervous eye they kept on possible infiltration by political operatives of the revolutionary army into the homeland!

Nevertheless, the people in the border area, curious about the activities of the People's Revolutionary Army, found countless excuses to cross the River Yalu and visit the battle sites by stealth. According to people in Samsu, Kapsan and Huchang, the number of those who crossed the river through the customs office to West Jiandao went up considerably each time the People's Revolutionary Army swooped in to annihilate the enemy, then swooped out again in withdrawal. This is a perfect example of how greatly the people in the homeland were encouraged by our armed struggle.

The factionalists placed great obstacles in the way of developing the anti-Japanese national united front movement. Engrossed in expanding the area of their own influence, they divided the anti-Japanese patriotic forces. While asserting dogmatically conventional theories inapplicable to the situation prevailing in our country, they gave a wide berth to the patriotic intellectuals and conscientious non-comprador capitalists, and regarded them with hostility. They contended that a revolution could be carried out only by a small number of special people with sound class backgrounds.

Our only way to enlist patriotic forces from all strata in the mass movement that was being confused by the Leftists, and to show a ray of light to communists groping in the dark, was to increase our influence on the revolution back home and expand the ARF organizations across the entire country.

To build the ARF organizations in the homeland, we started first in the northern border areas on the

River Yalu, where political guidance by the KPRA could be provided most easily, and then spread them further south deep into the homeland. Kapsan, Samsu and Phungsan were selected as the main areas for this undertaking, for they were close to us geographically. It was also a region in which campaigners and forerunners of all kinds had gathered together from all parts of the country, and the people who lived there had relatives, friends and acquaintances in West Jiandao.

I myself directed the building of the ARF organizations in Kapsan and Phungsan, using Kwon Yong Byok, Lee Je Sun, Park Tal and Park In uin as intermediaries. I have already mentioned that Park Tal, after meeting me, reformed with his comrades the Kapsan Working Committee into the Korean National Liberation Union, an ARF organization in the homeland, and built up scores of its subordinate organizations.

The Changbai County Committee of the ARF and its subordinate organizations also did their bit in building the ARF organizations in the Kapsan area.

The Zhujingdong chapter of the ARF in Shibadaogou, Changbai County, played a great role in organizing a chapter of the ARF in Kanggu-ri, Kapsan County. Kanggu-ri was situated opposite Zhujingdong. The chapter won over a peasant lad who crossed the river every day from Kanggu-ri with a lunch-box at his waist to till the land in Zhujingdong. Back in Kanggu-ri, the peasant organized an ARF chapter with like-minded young people.

The Paegam-ri chapter in Unhung Sub-county, Kapsan County, was also organized by the initiative of an ARF organization active in Changbai County.

The Korean National Liberation Union and other organizations subordinate to the ARF in Kapsan County managed to rally a great number of forestry labourers, slash-and-burn peasants and religious believers to the cause.

The Changbai County Committee of the ARF was also deeply involved in building the ARE organizations in the Samsu area, across from Xiangangqu. The ARF chapter in Kwangsaeng-ri was formed under the guidance of Choe Kyong Hwa, head of the youth department of the Wangjiadong chapter in Shiqidaogou, Changbai County. He was later a commanding officer of the KPRA.

The ARF had its greatest growth in Phungsan, which had long been well known for its strong anti-Japanese spirit. In this area there were many slash-and-burn peasants from North and South Kyongsang Provinces, who had been deprived of their farmland by the Japanese imperialist occupation of Korea and who had wandered northwards to make a living, and contract labourers at the construction site of the Hochongang Power Station.

The Japanese imperialists had brought in the newly-emerging Noguchi financial group to build the Hochongang Power Station, which was to have hundreds of thousands of kilowatts of generating capacity. The station was to be one link in the chain of their effort to mobilize the economic potential in

Japan, Korea and Manchuria for the expansion of their aggressive war. The thousands of laborers engaged in the project were a great force, easily rallied around the united front.

Hundreds of patriotic Chondoists and Christians were also living in the Phungsan area. Our strategic view of Phungsan was that once the area was covered with the ARF network, we could expand the Paektusan Base to the area of Kaema Plateau. This would provide us with a stepping stone for building ARF organizations in the region to the east of Huchi Pass. Once the area of Kaema Plateau had been transformed in a revolutionary way, it could serve us as a foothold for placing the east-coast area in South Hamgyong Province under the revolutionary influence and for expanding the anti-Japanese national united front movement deep into the homeland..

After the KPRA's advance into the area around Mt. Paektu, a number of our supporters in Phungsan frequented the Changbai area to make contacts with us. These supporters included people who hoped to join the revolutionary army.

Park In Jin, Lee Chang Son, Lee Kyong Un and other men related of the Chondoist faith, who spread the seeds of the ARF in the soil of Phungsan, were patriots hailing from Phungsan; they lived in Changbai and yearned for political leadership from the KPRA. Lee Chang Son succeeded first in joining the army, and thanks to his introduction and good offices, Park In Jin met me and discussed the matter of the united front; Lee Kyong Un joined our unit and was dispatched to the Kaema Plateau area as a political operative.

In Phungsan, Lee Kyong Un mixed with the labourers working on the power station project and introduced them to both our united front line, and the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF; in this way he rallied comrades together and organized the Phungsan chapter of the ARF in spring 1937. With Park In Jin he later organized a paramilitary corps of hardcore Chondoist Youth Party members. The chapter absorbed hundreds of Chondoists in a short period of time. In Chonnam Sub-county an Anti-Japanese Workers' Association of the Honggun area was brought in as a subordinate organization of the ARF.

A member of the ARF, Kim Yu Jin, whom Kim Jong Suk dispatched to the Phungsan area in the summer of 1937, when she was working in the Taoquanli-Sinpha area, organized with Lee Chang Son the Paesanggaedok chapter of the ARF. The latter brought in the hardcore workers of the Hwangsuwon dam project.

The building of the ARF organizations in the Kaema Plateau area was the most successful in Phungsan, largely because of the attentions paid to it by the political leadership of the KPRA. Many small units and teams from the KPRA went to Phungsan to help the revolutionary organizations there. On my way back from a meeting with homeland revolutionaries in the Sinhung area, I also dropped in at the Phungsan secret base and worked with the Chondoists. The ARF also struck root in the Sinhung area, where the coal-miners' revolt in 1930 had aroused the sympathy and support of people across the country. ARF member Lee Hyo Jun, who had been dispatched from Taoquanli, Changbai County, to the homeland, was the first to develop ARF work in the Sinhung area.

The creation of ARF organizations, begun along the River Yalu and in the Kaema Plateau area, gradually spread out to the urban and rural areas on the east coast. The political operatives of the KPRA displayed unexcelled organizing ability and drive in developing ARF work in this area. From the summer of 1937 on, they came to Rangnim, Pujon, Sinhung, Hongwon, Pukchong, Riwon, Tanchon and Hochon on many occasions, setting up ARF organizations in close cooperation with Lee Ju Yon, Lee Yong, Ju Tong Hwan and other revolutionaries in the homeland.

Ju Tong Hwan had been back and forth to West Jiandao to establish contact with us and had been absorbed in Kwon Yong Byok's line of work in West Jiandao through the good offices of the village head of Wangjiadong. Kwon and Ju had been classmates in the days of Taesong Middle School in Longjing. Knowing that Ju had been engaged in anti-Japanese propaganda in Changbai and Yanji, and had been imprisoned for more than two years in Sodaemun prison for his involvement in the revolutionary movement in his native land, Kwon entrusted him with the formation of ARF organizations in the Pukchong-Tanchon area.

In the homeland Ju Tong Hwan and Jo Jong Chol won over Kim Kyong Sik and others to organize a district committee of the ARF. Ten branches were formed under the committee in a short period of time. Later Ju returned to his native town and set up with his colleagues the Tanchon chapter of the ARF with branches in various places, including Tanchon county town. They organized friendship societies like the Northern Friendship Society and Southern Friendship Society, and recruited many people there.

After the eruption of the Sino-Japanese War, the Xiagangqu committee of the ARF in Changbai County dispatched a large number of operatives into the homeland. At that time Wi In Chan, along with many of his comrades, was sent to the Hungnam area. The secret operatives from Xiagangqu succeeded in forming the Hungnam district committee of the ARF in Hungnam, an industrial centre, in which many munitions factories were concentrated.

Around that time the political operatives who had infiltrated into Wonsan rallied around the ARF the members of the Koryo Society, a progressive anti-Japanese youth organization. While raising the consciousness of the masses, the society organized the strike for expelling the evil Japanese headmaster of a school, and against the Japanese imperialist policy of "transforming the Koreans into imperial subjects".

The underground operatives from the ARF chapter in Taoquanli also formed an organization subordinate to the ARF in the Hongwon area. The name of that organization was the Hongwon Peasant Union. It had several ri chapters under its authority.

The ARF also struck root in other places - for example, Riwon, Pujon and Hamhung - and was built on a large scale in industrial centers, rural areas and fishermen's villages in northern area on the east coast.

Of the provinces in the northern border area, this region was swept up most strongly by the "Jirin wind" of the early days. When we were carrying out our armed struggle from our guerrilla bases in eastern

Manchuria, we made a great revolutionary impact on the people in the province.

Under the direct influence and encouragement of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, the people there took an active part in the early anti-Japanese struggle for national salvation. The peasant union movement in this region attracted our attention for its persistence and stubbornness. In all respects the province was advantageous for raising the awareness of the masses and for organizing them in a relatively short space of time.

In order to spread out ARF organizations in this region we dispatched a great number of able political operatives into the area. We even sent small units to the northern towns and counties on the border. The small KPRA units and teams built secret bases and centres for their activities in many places in North Hamgyong Province from which they provided guidance in building up ARF organizations and in the creation of mass movements.

Meanwhile, we brought to our bases the anti-Japanese campaigners and the leaders of the mass organizations in the province and gave them several days of education before sending them back to their native areas to act as guides for the united front movement. Local people from such places as the town of Chongjin and Musan County were highly advantageous to our movement in that they could provide guidance best suited to the local situation.

Training local people was also a very good way to replenish the required number of operatives, in increasing demand as the anti-Japanese revolution grew in intensity.

Thanks to patriotic fighters and the political operatives from the People's Revolutionary Army, the flame of the ARF flared up in North Hamgyong Province - first in Musan, Chongjin, Odaejin and Yonsa, all great working class areas, as well as in southern cities and counties along the Kilju-Hyesan railway line, where the peasant unions were strong. In the summer of 1937 subordinate organizations of the ARF were formed in these areas, the number of which further increased to the point where in the first half of the 1940s they could be numbered by tens.

The campaign for building ARF organizations in the province was conducted both most extensively and intensively in Yonsa and Musan. That was because we were engaging in political and military activities on the River Wukou, across from Yonsa and Musan, after leaving West Jiandao in the latter half of the 1930s. We frequently dispatched small units and teams to that area at the time to breathe life into the revolutionary movement on the border area. Choe Ii Hyon had been to Yonsa at the head of a small unit, and O Il Nam, too, had been there with a team of seven to eight men. Regimental commander Oh Jung Hup went to the area with his 4th Company of 50 men and began operations there. Each time our small units and teams were in the area, another chapter or branch of the ARF was organized.

Choe Won Bong and Yun Kyong Hwan were underground operatives who greatly contributed to the building of ARF organizations in the Yonsa area. Choe Won Bong was in charge of the ARF organization in Yonsa, while Yun Kyong Hwan looked after party organization in the area. Both of them

had been trained by us in Changbai. Among the anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans buried in the Taesongsan Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery is a man named Choe Won Il: his elder brother was Choe Won Bong.

Choe Won Bong was man of principle and deep thought, a strong revolutionary spirit. Kim Ju Hyon recognized these merits in the man before anybody else had done so, and valued them highly. When he came to Changbai from Donggang with his advance party, Kim introduced Choe Won Bong to Kwon Yong Byok and Lee Je Suns Yinghuadong, in Shibadaogou, Changbai County, was renowned for its generous aid to the guerrillas and for producing many anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters. Choe Won Bong worked there as head of the chapter of the ARE and of the party sub-group. Kim Ju Hyon and Kim Se Ok oversaw his activities. With their support and guidance, Choe formed an organization of the ARE and the party sub-group, and founded a paramilitary corps. Whenever he came to Shibadaogou, Kim Ju Hyon stayed in the back room of Choe's or Kim's house and helped the work of the underground revolutionary organizations.

Choe Won Bong persuaded all of the guerrillas' families to join the ARE organization. After the battle in the vicinity of Sanzhongdian in autumn 1936 I met Choe Won Bong at a secret camp. He was visiting us in the company of some other people who were bringing in aid goods. From the first moment I saw him, I realized that he was very intelligent and had a high sense of responsibility. He was not very big or tall, yet he was able to command people with a word, and they gathered and dispersed at his order. He sent us military information on several occasions.

Around May 1937 we dispatched him to the Yonsa area to promote the building of the ARE organizations in the northern area, including Musan County. There he and other operatives set up several branches of the ARF with memberships from the raft builders and raftsmen from upstream on the River Yonmyonsu.

Yun Kyong Hwan, a faithful assistant to Choe Won Bong, worked at an ARE organization in Jiazaishui, in Badaogou, Changbai County, when Kim Il was also operating there. He was closely connected with Kim Il, and was on very friendly terms with Kim Song Guk. Like Choe Won Bong, he came to our secret camp several times, carrying provisions. As we withdrew to our camp after attacking Jiazaishui, Yun followed us, helping to carry our booty.

The enemy tried their best to hunt down, to the last man, those who carried goods for the guerrillas so as to find out the line of our organization from them. Aware that he might be arrested at any time, Yun moved with his family to eastern Manchuria and settled at a village called Xinkaicun, in Yushidong, on the River Wukou.

Later we dispatched him to the Yonsa area and nominated him head of its party organization. I was told that once he had come carrying aid goods with the members of his organization to our unit, which was stationing in Zhidong, and discussed the matter of organizing a district committee capable of providing unified guidance to the ARE branches in the Yonsa area.

I had already given appropriate advice to the comrades in Yonsa on this matter at the meeting held on Kuksa Peak. I had told them that a well-regulated system of giving unified guidance to the scattered organizations was needed to further develop the building of the ARF, and they all had received my advice positively.

As far as I remember Yun Kyong Hwan visited my unit, carrying goods, before the arrest of Lee Tong Gol (alias Kim Jun). Lee Tong Gol had been punished for a mistake he had made in the secret camp in Qingfeng, and had been sent to do political work in the Yonsa and Musan areas. He directed the revolutionary movement in Yonsa in close touch with Choe Won Bong.

As a successor to Lee Tong Gol we sent Kim Jong Suk, who had the experience of working in the homeland to Yonsa. An armed group accompanied her on the way to Yonsa. She convened a meeting of the revolutionaries in the Yonsa area and organized the Yonsa district committee of the ARF. I still remember that having got back to Headquarters from the meeting, she produced a sewing-machine, declaring it was a present from the Yonsa organization.

Choe Won Bong and other patriots of the ARF organization in Yonsa rendered much help to us at the battle in the Musan area.

Since the death of Lee Tong Gol, Choe Won Bong and Yun Kyong Hwan, the inside story of the organization activities in the Yonsa area remained a secret until the early 1970s, when the work of collecting materials related to the revolutionary history of our Party was conducted on a mass scale.

Once our effort to build the ARF organizations had come to fruition in western Korea and in southern Korea, we began to pay due attention to building up the ARF in the western, central and southern regions of Korea, as well as in the north.

North and South Phyongan Provinces, along with Hwanghae Province, were areas in which the nationalist force was strong, while Chondoist and Christian forces prevailed in western Korea. These religious forces did not confine themselves only to religion; they were highly patriotic as well. It is known to the world that at the time of the March First Popular Uprising the three religious forces of Korea - Chondoism, Christianity and Buddhism - took an active part in the uprising.

The region produced Kim Hyok, Cha Kwang Sn, Kang Pyong Son and many other communists of the new generation. From early days on we had exerted our influence there through Kong Yong and Kang Pyong Son. Our operatives also went to the Ryongchon area - widely known across the country for the tenant dispute at Fuji Farm?and raised the consciousness of the masses there. The tenant dispute demonstrated the fighting spirit and patriotic enthusiasm of the people in this area in their struggle against Japan.

Sinuiju occupied an important place in the construction of ARF organizations in northwest Korea.



In early July 1937 the Sinuiju chapter of the ARF was formed in this city. In August the Risan Anti-Japanese Association was formed in Wiwon, consisting of poor peasants and raftsmen. The secret operatives formed one subordinate organization of the ARF after another in several places along the mid-stream of the River Yalu. Kang Pyong Son's family and relatives were Chondoist believers, and he drew upon the religion to form several organizations.

ARF organizations took root in Huchang and Cholsan Counties as well, and we also dispatched small units and political operatives to build the ARF organizations in Yangdok, Tokchon, Pyongyang. Haeju and Pyoksong.

Lee Ju Yon, Hyon Jun Hyok and Choe Kyong Mmn performed great exploits in the formation of the ARF organizations in Pyongyang and South Phyongan Province.

Lee Ju Yon came to Pyongyang from Tanchon with the aim of conducting the anti-Japanese movement on a larger scale in a new place. The Workers' Anti-Japanese Association in Jongchang Rubber Factory in Pyongyang, the Labourers' Anti-Japanese Association of Pyongyang Cornstarch Factory and the Anti-Japanese Association in Nampho, were all subordinate organizations of the ARE formed by Lee Ju Yon.

Hyon Jun Hyok, moving to Pyongyang after being released from a prison in Taegu, accepted our line on the united front and participated in forming a chapter of the ARF among the workers of the Sunghori Cement Factory.

The Fatherland Liberation Corps, to which my cousin Kim Won Ju belonged, and the Ilsim Association for Liberation, formed in Kangso, were subordinate organizations of the ARF. Choe Kyong Mmn, who had once sincerely helped my father in his revolutionary work in Fusong, and who had come to the homeland, conducted brisk activities for the united front in the Yangdok area. He even mixed with believers of Confucianism, educated them in order to awaken them and admitted them to the ARE.

A subordinate organization of the ARF was also formed in Onchon, South Phyongan Province. The building of the ARE in Hwanghae Province was performed mainly by Mm Tok Won, who had been won over by our operatives. Hwanghae Province had many temporary secret bases built by our political operatives. Thanks to Mm and other patriots in Hwanghae Province, a string of organizations subordinate to the ARE came into being across the province.

The centre for the ARE organizations in the central part on the east coast was formed by Chonnae, Yangyang, Kosong and Munchon, where many workers lived. The Anti-Japanese Labour Association of the Chonnaeri Cement Factory was well-known, both for its scope and for its efficient practical struggle. The Sokcho National Salvation Association in Yangyang and the Jangjin Anti-Japanese Association in Kosong were organizations affiliated to the ARE.

Materials related to the building of the ARE organizations in southern Korea have not yet been fully brought to light because of the division of the country, but their number recorded in Japanese police

documents is great.

Recently a great deal of information has been discovered on the building and activities of the ARE organizations in Japan. I was told that ARF organizations existed in Okayama, Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and Hokkaido. These might well be the tip of the iceberg.

The ARE, which pressed on for an all-people resistance with its more than 200,000 members, is a monument put up by the Korean communists during the struggle for the liberation of the Korean nation. Its organizations rendered truly great contributions in rallying and enlisting the broad sections of the patriotic population to the cause of national liberation under the banner of the restoration of the fatherland.

Their first and foremost contribution is that they increased the revolutionary consciousness of the popular masses. Through the united front movement our people had become firmly equipped with the ideas that the liberation of Korea could be achieved only by the united efforts of the Korean people, that an armed enemy must always be countered with arms, and that in order for the Korean people to win national independence, they must unite as one. Moreover, this unity had to transcend differences in class, sex, age, party affiliation and religious belief, and form an allied front in cooperation with the oppressed masses throughout the world. The rapid development of the ideological consciousness of the masses was a factor that gave a strong impetus to the national liberation struggle in the latter half of the 1930s.

In the transformation of the people's ideological consciousness, it is worthy of special mention that they regarded the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, which was fighting bloody battles against Japanese imperialism as the main force for liberating the country. They also realized that by casting their lot with us, they supported our leadership more faithfully. From the latter half of the 1930s on, the national liberation struggle and communist movement in Korea was conducted with Mt. Paektu, the central base of the activities of the KPRA, as an axis.

The popular masses of Korea accepted the slogans put forward on Mt. Paektu as an absolute truth and carried them out unfailingly, no matter how great or small they were and regardless of their importance. They even risked their lives to help those fighting on Mt. Paektu.

The masses' loyalty to the leadership of the Korean revolution was expressed by their material and moral support for the KPRA. People across the country enlisted their talent, money, labor and mental powers in our support.

The ARF organizations unfolded a vigorous all-people campaign to assist the guerrillas. From the latter half of the 1930s the Kapsan chapter of the ARF sent in an organized way to the KPRA the rice which the Chondoist believers had formerly donated to the Chondoist center. When the people of West Jiandao heard that the KPRA soldiers were suffering food shortages, they sent us the grain they had stored for wedding ceremonies and 60th and other birthday parties without the slightest hesitation.

The members of the Sinuiju chapter of the ARF shipped aid goods by boat to the area of our unit's activities until 1938, when the dam of the Suphung Power Station on the River Yalu was constructed. The goods included cloth, shoes, salt, gunpowder, detonation caps, detonating fuses, and various other items. After the dam had been commissioned and the shipping routes were blocked, they set up special aid-goods stores in the third and sixth streets of Dandong, China, and sent goods by rail or lorries to the large and small units of the KPRA active in Kuandian, Xingjing and Tonghua. A member of the branch in Majondong bought a sailing vessel of 0.5-ton capacity; he hired it out as a goods-transport vessel during the day, and by night carried goods collected by his organization members to KPRA units.

The ARF members in Seoul, more than 250 miles from Mt. Paektu, sent goods needed for the activities of the revolutionary army.

Jon Jo Hyop, a member of the Pukchong organization of the ARF, had been imprisoned for being involved in the "pioneer incident" in Sokhu, Pukchong County; from 1937 on he was entrusted by his organization to carry out underground activities in Seoul.

While working to expand organizations, he also worked as a water-carrier, hauling a large metal container of water on his back and selling it to raise fund for the guerrillas. Originally the people of Pukchong had been well-known for carrying around water to earn school fees for children who studied in Seoul. Jon had no son of school age, but he carried water for the sake of the revolution. With the money he earned in this way, he bought cloth, shoes, white paper, medicines, copying ink and other goods for the guerrillas. He sent them to Pukchong, and the organization there forwarded them to us.

Early one morning, while climbing up a hill with his water, he found a lady's gold watch. It was the kind of high-quality watch that even a high-class person rarely possessed. Determined to find out the owner, he visited the houses along the road on the hill, finally discovering that it belonged to a shopkeeper's daughter who had got it as an engagement gift. The shopkeeper rewarded him with an amount of money that was even greater than the price of the watch itself. He bought a large quantity of aid goods for the guerrillas with the money.

After this event he got on intimate terms with the shopkeeper's family. Under his influence, they began to sympathize with the anti-Japanese guerrillas and spared no effort to help them. They would procure by themselves the goods required by Jon Jo Hyop and send them to Pukchong. Thus the family of a simple petty-bourgeois family in Seoul participated in the campaign to support the guerrillas, thanks to the guidance of a member of the ARF.

The ARF organized and guided an unremitting country-wide mass struggle by the use of various methods - slowdowns, walk-outs, demonstrations, revolt and tenant disputes - against the plundering banditry of the Japanese imperialists, against their policy of "transforming Koreans into imperial subjects", against their continental aggression and the execution of their policy of war.

Another achievement made by the Korean revolutionaries in building the ARF organizations was to

further consolidate the organizational and ideological basis for building the party organizations. With the hard core trained in our ARF organizations, we formed party circles in every part of the country. These circles in the long run provided guidance for both the ARF organizations themselves and for the mass struggle. The party organizations, born out of the struggle and trained ceaselessly by it, became the cornerstone on which a powerful political party of the working masses could be built after liberation.

In addition, the building of the ARF organizations gave the Korean revolutionaries a chance to gain a rich experience in building mass organizations. Had it not been for this experience, they could not have built in such a short period of time after liberation such mass organizations as the Democratic Youth League, the Trade Unions, the Women's Union and the Children's Union.

In the struggle to build the ARF organizations, the Korean communists created for the first time in the long history of our nation a truly united front, one that was unfailingly patriotic, revolutionary and powerful. The anti-Japanese national united front, with Mt. Paektu as its axis, started the tradition of the national united front movement in our country and demonstrated the undaunted spirit of our people.

The entire process of building the ARF organizations confirmed that our people preferred unification and harmony to division and confrontation, and that they had the willpower to fight by uniting under a single banner, regardless of the differences in party affiliation or religious belief.

Our people, living in the era of the Workers' Party, have long achieved the single-hearted unity of society as a whole, the highest form of unity. What remains is the reunification of the country which has been divided into north and south.

The reunification of our country is the one inflexible belief running through my life. It is our stand on the national reunification that our nation, which boasts 5,000 years of history, can, and must, live as one unified country. What guarantee do we have when we say that the reunification of north and south is feasible? We have a powerful weapon, the great national unity, and the rich experience of a national united front, gained through the building of the ARF organizations.

There is no reason why our nation, which admirably realized the cause of the united front already half a century ago, cannot achieve the great national unity.

We must achieve the united front at any cost wherever we live, in the north, in the south or overseas. Only the united front is the way for the survival of our nation in this world, where the law of the jungle prevails, the eternal way for us to live and prosper and survive as one. This is what I want to tell our compatriots at home and abroad.

## 16.5. Kwon Vong Byok

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Kwon Yong Byok was a reticent man. A propagandist is assumed to be an orator, but this man spoke little even when he was the head of the propaganda section of his division. He always made his point succinctly; he never used superfluous words or reiterated what he had said. One could hardly judge his thoughts and feelings by his looks.

He hated lies and bombastic speeches more than anything else, and he kept his word under any circumstance. He suited his actions to his words, and this was his excellence and his personal charm.

It was this charm that won him our confidence and the heavy responsibility of leading the Changbai County Party Committee at the time we were fighting on Mt. Paektu and around West Jiandao, the major theatre of our operations.

The job of the man in charge of the Changbai County Party Committee is highly important for several reasons. The Changbai County Party Committee was one of the pivotal party organizations. It was the first to be informed of and to implement any line or any pressing task laid down at meetings of the Party Committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in the Paektusan Secret Camp. Our tasks and decisions were conveyed to West and North Jiandao, and to the homeland, mostly by the Changbai County Party Committee, the Homeland Party Working Committee and the East Manchuria Party Working Committee, and the results of their implementation were also reported to the KPRA Party Committee mainly through these channels.

The important position and role of the Changbai County Party Committee is explained by the fact that, staying in the secret camp on Mt. Paektu, we had to use West Jiandao as a stepping stone to develop the revolution in the homeland and Manchuria; also by the fact that the KPRA Party Committee had to guide Party-building and the anti-Japanese revolution as a whole through the HPWC, the EMPWC and the CCPC, since a party of a new type had not yet been founded after the dissolution of the Korean Communist Party.

Just as Xiaowangqing was the center of the anti-Japanese revolution in the first half of the 1930s, when we fought by relying on the guerrilla base in eastern Manchuria, so the Paektusan Base, which included West Jiandao, served as the center of the anti-Japanese revolution in the latter half of the decade. The Paektusan Secret Camp was the core, surrounded as it was by a wide area of the homeland adjoining Mt. Paektu and by the Changbai area. In Changbai there were many of our secret camps. In order to protect and maintain these camps, it was necessary to bring Changbai under our control and train its inhabitants as revolutionaries.

A sharp confrontation with the enemy was inevitable in our effort to develop the ARF organization in Changbai. The Manchukuo authorities were crude in their statecraft, but Japan's intelligence services and

the "punitive" forces, consisting of Japanese and Manchurian armies and police, were formidable. Just as we had to pass through Changbai to advance to the homeland, so the enemy had to come by way of Changbai to attack us, hence this area was of great strategic importance for both friend and foe.

That was why we set a high standard for the selection of the man to lead the Changbai County Party Committee. In order to be equal to the heavy responsibility, he needed guts, magnanimity, organizing ability, untiring energy and the ability to agitate for the revolutionary cause.

Leadership of an underground front also called for accurate judgment, a meticulous work method, flexible tactics, and a wide mental horizon in particular.

In choosing a man with these qualifications, I immediately thought of Kwon Yong Byok. Kim Phyong also recommended him.

Kwon was neither my schoolmate nor my fellow townsman, nor had we shared bed and board, good and bad days in our struggle in the guerrilla zone. In the first half of the 1930s, when the guerrilla zones were thriving, I was in Wangqing, whereas Kwon was in Yanji. He had been on the expedition to Jiaohe, and only in October 1936 did he come to the Paektusan Secret Camp to join the main force.

He had participated in the anti-Japanese movement early in his middle-school days. After he was blacklisted as a rebellious student and expelled from school, he fully committed himself to the revolution, as I had done. While I was in eastern Manchuria in 1930. I heard an anecdote about Kwon, either from Oh Jung Hwa or from Park Yong Sun. The anecdote was about his tragic experience at his father's funeral and his extraordinary power of self-control.

Hearing the news of his father's death one day, he left the place of his work and hurried home at dusk. He had scarcely positioned himself in his mourning robe before his father's coffin, when the mounted gendarmes came for him, having guessed he would return. They dragged him and his family out of the house and asked him whether he was Kwon Chang Uk, his childhood name.

Instantly seeing that none of the gendarmes knew his face, he answered politely that his younger brother Chang Uk had left home long before and that he had not even sent a death notice to him because there was no knowing where he was. His elder brother Kwon Sang Uk was away at the undertaker's shop at the time, so he assumed his role.

The gendarmes, furious at their failure to capture Kwon Yong Byok, set fire to the house in which the coffin lay. They kept a watch on the house until it burnt down to the ground before they left.

Watching his father's dead body burning, Kwon bit his tongue and lips, swallowing his grief and wrath. On returning to his work place, he was unable to drink the liquor his comrades offered to him. His lips and tongue were so badly hurt, he was unable to eat even porridge for days.

Kwon was known among the communists in eastern Manchuria as a young fighter with an unusual power of self-control. They said that to defeat the enemy and achieve a great cause, a revolutionary needed Kwon's self-restraint of overcoming any impulse or mental agony.

However, not all the people who heard of the atrocity at the funeral praised Kwon. Some people said they did not understand why Kwon had not resisted the enemy. "How could a son behave like that?" they demanded. "He should have prevented the insult to his father's remains by whatever means."

Those in favor of Kwon brushed aside the protest. "If an ordinary man resists the gendarmes, it is understandable, but Kwon could not expose his identity to the enemy. If he had resisted, he would have been shot then and there, or at best he would have been imprisoned. Then he would have been unable to fight for the revolution."

I heard that when leaving home to take up the revolutionary cause, he had said to his wife: "I am not a man to return home alive. Or even if I did, I can't tell how long it will be until the revolution emerges victorious, perhaps ten or twenty years from now. So please don't wait for me. Earn your own living. I won't blame you if you cross my name from the list of living people in this world and marry another man. The only thing I ask of you is to bring up the boy properly and tell him to follow in my footsteps when he is grown up."

His farewell greeting to his wife became yet another cause for disputes. Some people said it was a too cold-hearted, others protested that it was an insult to women in general. "Why didn't he tell her to wait for him until his triumphant return home? If he really loved his wife he should have said so. Does he think that Korean women haven't enough sense of honor and loyalty to wait for their husbands who were devoting themselves to the revolution until the country wins independence? It is shameless of him to look down upon women.

If his words of farewell were interpreted straightforward, he might have been criticized more severely.

In my opinion, however, only a man determined to dedicate himself to the revolution without hesitation could say such things, and only a man who truly loved his wife could ask such a thing. None but a man ready to fight to the death to carry out the revolution is capable of such a grim and honest self-expression. I found true humanity in his words.

Many years after, that is, in the spring of 1935, I met Kwon Yong Byok for the first time at Yaoyinggou. At that time a short military and political cadre training course was under way for selected comrades from the guerrilla units and revolutionary organizations in eastern Manchuria. Kwon was among the trainees.

Making his acquaintance at a time when many young patriots had been killed in the foreign land during the violent anti-"Minsaengdan" orgy, I felt as overjoyed as if I had met an old friend. We introduced ourselves to each other. I remember we had a very intimate talk, for a first interview.

He mentioned his farewell to his wife.

"You should have bid a fonder farewell to her to spare her distress," I said.

"Her distress was inevitable, so why should I have tried to put it off?" Kwon said, shaking his head.

"Do you still think then that you won't return to her alive?"

"I want to see my country independent and I also want to return home alive, but I don't think I shall be so fortunate. I have no desire to stay in the background in the final battle with the enemy. I must always stand in the front ranks just to take my father's revenge. How can a man, determined to fight to the death in the front ranks, think of survival? I don't hope for such good luck."

He spoke the truth.

As subsequent events proved, he was always in the thick of the most dangerous fighting, both in the underground and on the bloody battlefield. When the 2nd Regiment was on an expedition to Jiaohe, Kwon Yong Byok was the secretary of the party branch of the 2nd Company. More than once the regiment found itself in danger of total annihilation from enemy encirclement, but each time Kwon, along with Oh Jung Hup and other comrades, saved the day.

Kwon Yong Byok was also the first man to cross the Yalu, breaking through the tight line of border guards to deliver my message to Park Tal.

Another reason for placing him in charge of the Changbai County Party Committee was that he had had some experience of underground work in Jiandao in the early 1930s.

The greatest of his merits was his ability to work among the people. He was good at rallying people and gave them efficient leadership.

Hwang Nam Sun (Hwang Jong Ryol) still clearly remembers how skilful Kwon was in dealing with an elder of the village of Wengshenglazi. The elder was a man of furious temper.

Operatives had often visited the village in an effort to establish a foothold in it, but they had failed, having been confronted by the old man and expelled. They had tried to infuse political ideas into the minds of villagers before becoming familiar with the people. Worse still, they had failed to behave properly towards the village elder. They had simply given him a wide berth and said he was feudalistic, instead of trying to win him over. The old man was obviously a diehard, like old man Pyon "Trotsky" in the village of Wujiazi. Kwon Yong Byok approached the old man quite differently. Knowing that the village elder refused to deal with ill-mannered people, Kwon greeted him politely on his first visit. He knelt down on the floor and bowed according to the Korean custom, then introduced himself, saying,



"Venerable elder, I am a poor migrant laborer. I came here because I have heard that the people of this village are kind-hearted. I hope you will look after me and lead me."

Pleased with the well-mannered, good-looking young man, the old man said, "You are a decorous young man. I don't know whose offspring you are, but I can see from your manners that you are well-bred. The villagers are kind people, so let us live in harmony here." The old man even treated him to lunch.

To win over the old man of Wengshenglazi was considered as difficult as occupying a height on a battlefield. Kwon occupied the height without difficulty by bowing to him once in the Korean manner. He was now able to give revolutionary education to the village with ease. Pending his appointment as the head of the Changbai County Party Committee, we let him inspect the county to give him an opportunity to study the situation there.

After a month of field inspection, he came back to the secret camp.

In February 1937 we had a meeting with him and other underground workers at the Hengshan Secret Camp, where we organized the Changbai County Party Committee. At the meeting Kwon Yong Byok was officially appointed head of the county party committee. Lee Je Sun became his deputy. At the meeting it was also decided to expand subordinate district party committees and party sub-groups.

That day I pointed out to Kwon Yong Byok that he must widen the area of his work, extending the tasks of party building and the formation of ARF organizations deep into the homeland. I set out various other tasks, such as recommending volunteers to the revolutionary army, winning over people in the service of enemy establishments and admitting them to revolutionary organizations, collecting military information, and so on. I also specified the duties of the Changbai County Party Committee.

After the meeting I immediately sent Kwon off to the enemy area along with his assistant Hwang Nam Sun. For the sake of their work, they were disguised as man and wife. This was necessary also for their own personal security.

Hwang Nam Sun had some experience in underground activities, having worked underground at the village of Chicangu, Shirengou, when she was fifteen.

One day, while she was helping a peasant at his house in the village, she was surprised to see that the cooking pot in the kitchen was the same one that she had used at her house in the village of Fuyancun guerrilla zone.

"How come my cooking pot is in the kitchen of this house?" she wondered. "Did the peasant get it from the 'punitive' troops? Is he working with them?" This thought kept her awake for several nights.

Learning of her suspicion, the members of the underground organization at the village concluded that he must be the enemy's running dog and suggested that the family be expelled from the village. But Hwang

Nam Sun said she would try to find out the truth by being patient. She finally learned that cooking pot had been stolen, then thrown away by punitive” troops who had attacked her village in the Fuyancun guerrilla zone. They had destroyed the villagers' household goods and set fire to every house.

Her cooking pot had been picked up at a burnt-down house and carried away by the suspected man, who had been forced to carry the enemy's supplies as a carter. The peasant, cleared of suspicion, was now admitted into the Anti-Japanese Association. His wife was allowed to join the Women's Association.

By contrast, Lim Su San, sent to the same village of Chicangu for underground work, failed dismally. Though a man of theoretical knowledge and sleek in appearance, he did not know how to mix with the people. He was given the cold shoulder and treated as a parasite.

Cooped up in the house of a member of the Anti-Japanese Association and eating three meals a day at the expense of his host, he ordered the people about. Even when he came out of the house once in a long while, he used to walk around pompously, hands clasped behind his back, firing unpleasant questions at the people he met, as if interrogating them. Even passers-by were irritated by him. Failing to establish a foothold among the villagers, he was compelled to return to the guerrilla zone.

A man who sees himself as a special being reigning over the heads of the people is doomed to be rejected by the masses. He who floats like a drop of grease on the surface of water instead of mixing with the people will never win their sympathy or trust.

At the time Kwon Yong Byok and Hwang Nam Sun were being prepared for their work in Changbai, many underground workers from Changbai County were at our secret camp. They all received their missions for the underground from me that day. Kwon accepted his assignments gladly, but I did not feel light-hearted, for I thought I had overburdened him. Changbai was a wide area covering Qidagou through Ershiwudagou, so extensive that even a legal party worker would find it difficult to deal with. In addition to guiding party work in the county, he had to involve himself deeply in the homeland movement.

What I remember most vividly about the underground workers' leave-taking at the time of their departure for Changbai is the farewell party at which they ate pieces of potato candy, a gift from the Diyangxi peasants on the occasion of the lunar New Year's Day. As we were short of food, we were unable to treat them to a sumptuous feast, but the candy party made a strong impression on me, somehow.

Seeing off Kwon Yong Byok, I spoke to him as follows:

"I entrust Changbai to you. You must bring Changbai and the whole area of West Jiandao under our influence. This will give us the support of the people and build up our manpower reserves. If we fail to win over West Jiandao, we shall be unable to carry out large-unit operations in the homeland across the Amnolc We must advance to the homeland this spring or this summer, come what may. From now onwards, you must work well among the people. Your mission is to build party organizations and at the same time rally the people behind the ARF. It is a difficult job to win over the people, and success in this

work depends on you. I trust you...."

On the morning of Kwon's departure we had fought a battle, so he left us in an unsettled atmosphere. Going by way of the dashifu's house at Shiqidaogou and Lee Je Sun's house at Ershidaogou, Kwon arrived in safety at Tuqidian-li, Shiqidaogou, his base, as designated by Headquarters. Shiqidaogou was located in the heart of Changbai County. The village was also called Wangjiagou because a Chinese landlord surnamed Wang had thrown his weight about in the village. From there it was also easier to infiltrate deep into the homeland via Hoin and Hyesan across the Yalu. Wangjiadong is one of the villages in Wangjiagou.

Kwon took up his residence in Tuqidian-li in the guise of So Ung Jin's maternal nephew, a nephew who had lost his job after working as a day laborer at the railway construction site between Kilju and Hyesan. So Ung Jin was an experienced underground worker who had been engaged in revolutionary work as a member of an anti-Japanese organization in Yanji after finishing middle school.

He had moved to West Jiandao when his identity had been discovered. So Ung Jin, Choe Kyong Hwa and other members of the revolutionary organization in Shiqidaogou helped Kwon to settle in Wangjiadong without being suspected. They obtained a house and a small area of farmland for him, as well as a residence permit from the police station by bribing the head of the police station with opium.

From then, Kwon Yong Byok and Hwang Nam Sun began a "conjugal" life in the cottage provided by organization members under assumed names, Kwon as Kwon Su Nam and Hwang as Hwang Jong Ryol. Later Kwon confessed that he had addressed Hwang as Comrade Hwang more than once, to their embarrassment.

Kim Ju Hyon, who had been to Shiqidaogou at the head of a procurement party for military supplies, told me that the "newly-married couple" had been greatly praised by the villagers because they had thrown themselves wholeheartedly into both the pleasant and unpleasant work of the village as soon as they moved in.

Whenever he found anything in any family that needed a man's hand while going from house to house for his underground work, he helped the family, by chopping firewood, cutting fodder and sweeping the yard. At homes where a wedding or funeral ceremony was in preparation, he helped by making cakes or butchering pigs.

People who saw him skinning, dismembering and gutting a pig said unanimously that he would humble a butcher's pride. The villagers invited him whenever they had an ox or a pig to butcher.

The two operatives won people's hearts with their manner and work enthusiasm. They declined other people's offers of assistance, but they considered it natural to help others. Kwon believed that to be a burden to his neighbors meant a failure in his work as an underground operative. He therefore did his own farm work with the enthusiasm of a real farmer.

In the early days of Kwon's activity in Wangjiadong, members of the ARF in that village gathered firewood for him to help him in his busy underground work. But he declined even this assistance.

"I am grateful to you, but you must not do that," he told them. "If you bring firewood to an ordinary peasant, the enemy may begin to suspect us. So you must stop helping me even though you want to do so. Only in this way can you really help me."

The ARF members devised an alternative. They did not bring the firewood straight to Kwon's house, but left it by stealth on the edge of Kwon's barley field on their way back from the mountain. Again he dissuaded them. He got his own firewood and carried manure to the fields by himself.

He went to bed late and got up early all through his work in Wangjiadong. He was said to sleep no more than three to four hours each night in other places of work as well.

Frequently one saw him traveling around with a shabby bundle slung on his shoulder. People who did not know the secret of his work concluded that he was in the habit of sleeping outside because he was not happy with his wife. He had to make the rounds of the area under his charge every month, walking a hundred miles from Qidaogou, Xiagangqu, to Ershiwudaogou, Shanggangqu. There were many villages in Changbai County, and he visited nearly all of them. That was why he had to sleep fewer hours than ordinary people.

Once when he came to the secret camp to report on his work, I noticed his bloodshot eyes. I advised him to take care of his health so as to be able to work many more years for the revolution. He answered that it was extremely interesting work to build up organizations. Kwon Yong Byok and his comrades' energetic activities resulted in the formation of underground party organizations in nearly all the major villages of Changbai County by the early spring of 1937.

A large number of party teams, ARF chapters and branches came into existence under his care and grew up and expanded quickly. The paramilitary corps also worked briskly under the protection and guidance of party organizations. During the night hours our people, led by Kwon Yong Byok, not by Manchukuo officials, worked freely to build up public support for the revolutionary cause.

Kwon was now under heavier pressure of work than ever before. Many reliable operatives he had trained went to the homeland. The underground revolutionary organizations in Shiqidaogou became a veritable breeding ground for underground operatives.

Kwon also trained young people through the paramilitary corps. Its members did farm work during the day and acted as guards for underground revolutionary organizations at night, making preparations for participating in the armed struggle when necessary.

In consultation with the village heads, who belonged to his organization, Kwon ensured that the night

patrols of the Self-Defense Corps were formed with the members of the paramilitary corps. The members of the paramilitary corps, in the guise of lawful night patrols, protected the underground revolutionary organizations instead of serving the enemy.

Under Kwon's direct guidance many paramilitary corps members were trained to become fighters. Also under his direction Choe Kyong Hwa developed, then became the head of the youth department and the head of the special members in the Wangjiadong Chapter of the ARF, and took charge of the organizational affairs of the party branch in Wangjiadong. His son also grew into a fighter in the Children's Corps. Knowing Choe's cherished desire to fight in the army, Kwon recommended him to me.

Although he was always upright, conscientious and honest with his friends, Kwon Yong Byok was extremely skilful at deceiving the enemy. He did this by means of disguise and dissimulation at every critical moment, protecting himself, his comrades and his organizations against discovery. Planting hardcore members of his organizations in important posts within enemy establishments was one such form of disguise.

In order to provide safe working conditions for the village headmen belonging to the underground party organization and the ARF, as well as conditions for supporting the guerrilla army without losing the confidence of the enemy, Kwon sent letters signed by the KPRA supply officer to the village heads, which the heads then handed in to the police station. The letters demanded that they, the village heads, should prepare certain aid goods and bring them to certain places by certain dates. The letters also warned that if any of them told about the message to the police, they would not be safe.

The police took the village heads to be loyal and praised them for bringing in the letters. But the headman of Wangjiadong kept the letter to himself in accordance with one of Kwon's schemes. This exception attracted the enemy's attention. One day the chief of the Banjiegou police station summoned him and roared in a furious temper, "You are in secret communication with the 'communist bandits'. We have evidence. Confess!"

The village headman replied with composure, "I am serving as a village head for you in spite of the danger of being shot by the revolutionary army. I am disappointed to hear you say that I am in secret communication with the 'communist bandits'."

"You are dishonest. If you were honest, you would have brought this kind of thing to me. Other village headmen have all brought them. Why do you feign ignorance?" The police chief took out letters signed by the supply officer from his desk drawer.

Only now did the village head produce a letter from his pocket. He said, "I have also received this letter of warning. Why should the revolutionary army make an exception with me in their demand for supplies? This is the letter. I did not hand it in for your own sake. When you are given a letter such as this, you have to take certain measures.

What measures can you take? Even hundreds of well-trained 'punitive' troops have been defeated and have retreated. Can this small police station take any sort of effective action? This letter will only embarrass you. The best way to deal with the revolutionary army is to let well enough alone. We will deal with the matter ourselves, so I suggest that you feign ignorance."

The police chief accepted his advice and from then on placed special confidence in him. Kwon's scheme worked without a hitch.

From my own days in the underground, I knew what a struggle it was to disguise oneself, one's comrades and organization in an enemy-held area. It was a task that demanded enormous intelligence and creativeness.

Kwon Yong Byok carried out this heavy task reliably.

In anticipation of our advance to the homeland, we organized a reconnaissance of the town of Pochonbo in the spring of 1937 through cooperation between the army and the people. The Changbai County Party organization was assigned to carry out the same reconnaissance.

Fully aware of the importance of the operations for advance to the homeland, Kwon made up his mind to undertake the assignment himself, and plunged into preparations for departure. He had to find some excuse for leaving home. In order to carry out the reconnaissance mission, he had to stay away for many days, and if he were to make a long journey without a plausible excuse, he might be suspected or even shadowed by the enemy. For a peasant to be absent from farm work in the busy season would be considered abnormal. Kwon hit upon a bright idea.

He dispatched a member of the organization to the post office in Changbai to send a telegram to him with the message that his father died. The telegram was delivered to Kwon on the same day. The postman had revealed the message at Wangjiadong, so that all the villagers and even the enemy learned of the "news".

Old men came to Kwon with condolences and asked him sympathetically why he was not going to his father's funeral. Kwon replied that he, a sharecropper, was apprehensive of leaving his crops unattended for many days in the busy season. The neighbors urged him to go, saying that nothing was more important than a father's funeral, and that they would take care of his crops for him.

He left Wangjiadong, carried out the reconnaissance mission and reported the results to me. Nobody suspected him. He pleaded so earnestly with me to take him along to the battle of Pochonbo that I permitted his participation.

By the time he got back to Shiqidaogou from the battle, members of his organization had made all the arrangements for him to play the part of a mourner. Like a son who had just buried his father, he wore his mourning robes and met sympathizers from the village. One can imagine his feelings at having to tell a lie to the good-natured, innocent village elders.

Kwon Yong Byok carried on his underground work carefully and skillfully, toeing the basic line laid down by Headquarters, sending reports of the matters that needed reporting to his superiors, and dealing at his discretion with those problems which were within his jurisdiction. In those days, when modern means of communication, such as telephones and radio transmitters, were unavailable and when inconvenient means, such as notes, had to be used for communication with Headquarters, operatives often had to deal with problems by making their own decisions in the field rather than reporting to superiors for instructions. Kwon Yong Byok reported to Headquarters only on important problems relating to the political line, which needed our decisions.

He settled most of the problems in the field through consultation with the members of his organization, then reported only the process and results to us. Because of the great distance between his workplace and our secret camp, and because of our occasional absences from the secret camp, it was impossible to report all problems to Headquarters or deal with them in accordance with its decisions.

As he knew the situation better than anyone else, Kwon never raised problems or did anything that might be a burden to Headquarters.

Only once did he ask for my advice on the measures to be taken in connection with the construction of internment villages. The enemy pressed on by force with the construction of internment villages in West Jiandao for the purpose of "separating the people from the bandits" just as it had done in eastern Manchuria. The people in Changbai hated to be forced into these villages. Kwon felt the same way. In internment villages the peasants would suffer greater hardships, and underground work and the movement to support the revolutionary army would be much more difficult to carry out.

Nevertheless, it was impossible to oppose the construction of such villages without considering the consequences. The enemy set fire to the houses of the people who refused to enter the internment villages and evacuated the people by force. Those who resisted were shot. What was to be done? The county party committee held a meeting and discussed the matter, but was unable to reach a decision.

I told Kwon that opposing the scheme of internment villages was a reckless act and advised him to persuade the people to enter the villages. In a way, the misfortune might be a blessing. Obviously in internment villages our activity would be greatly hampered, but I told him not to worry, for the enemy would not be able to stem the current of sympathy between the army and the people, nor would it be able to check the torrent of support for the guerrilla army, just as it was impossible to dam up a river with a barbed wire fence or to stop a gale with merely a wall.

Back at his workplace, Kwon led the people in the construction of an internment village in Guandao. Even the most obstinate people followed his example and built the houses and the wall surrounding them with enthusiasm. Under Kwon's direction the members of the underground organization feigned obedience to the enemy's scheme. Ironically, the Guandao internment village was finally evaluated as the No. 1 peaceful people's village" by the county police authorities.

The members of the underground organization in Shiqidaogou occupied all the important offices in the Guandao internment village. So Ung Jin became the commander of the Self-Defence Corps, Song Thae Sun his deputy, Jon Nam Sun the village headman, and Kwon Yong Byok headmaster of the village school. It was the same situation in other such villages. Kwon's underground front extended beyond the bounds of Changbai deep into the homeland, including North and South Hamngyong Provinces and North Phyongan Province. Kwon distinguished himself not only in military action but also in the strained underground struggle to inculcate the idea of revolution in the popular masses.

In the summer of 1937 he sent a letter to me through a correspondent. The letter reads in part:

"Comrade Commander: To be candid, I was annoyed at having to leave the unit, for I thought I was being relegated from the first to the second line. How could I express my sadness at that time? Although I had heard until my ears burnt that rallying the people behind the ARE was the way to hasten the victory of the revolution against Japan, it was still impossible to take leave of you, Comrade Commander, with a light heart when you offered me a farewell handshake. But I soon lost my prejudice while working here, and I now no longer feel that the underground front is only a second line.

In fact, I would now say it is the first line. I realize the value of this life as I see the daily expanding organizations and the growth of people. I am grateful to you, Comrade Commander, for sending me to work on this fertile land."

When he said he felt the value of life while organizing people and inspiring them with the revolutionary idea, he spoke the truth. I can say that organizing and mobilizing people is an ongoing task the revolutionaries must not overlook even for a moment. Giving people constant ideological education and organizing them is the lifeline of our revolution, the key to its victory and its imperishability.

If a revolutionary shuns this work or slights it, he will go stale politically and cease to be a revolutionary.

Being well aware of this principle, Kwon put all his heart into the work of organizing people, and was arrested by the enemy while fighting heroically along that path. His greatest regret in prison was that the organizations, which he and his comrades had developed in the face of such hardship, were being destroyed en masse. He thought that the best thing he could do was to save every single man possible and safeguard the organization.

Kwon Yong Byok tried to save the bleeding revolutionary organizations as much as possible, even at the cost of his own life. He sent to Lee Je Sun a secret note written with his fingernail. The note said, "Shift all the responsibility on to me!"

Knowing Kwon's intention and decision, Lee Je Sun sent a reply note without delay, which said, "We are one in mind and body!"

Kwon knew well what the note like a telegram message meant.



The two comrades were locked up in different prison cells, and no more slips were exchanged. But their hearts throbbed as one, and with single-minded determination to fight to the death, they started the operation to save the organization.

When the prisoners were being examined at the Hyesan police station, Kwon Yong Byok said in secret to Tojong Park In Jin:

"Your visit to Mt. Paektu is known to nobody except the General, you and me, so if only you keep silent about it no one will incriminate you."

Lee Je Sun whispered to Lee Ju Ik about a similar case.

Thanks to their self-sacrificing rescue operations, Park In Jin, Lee Ju Ik and many other prisoners were released without being dragged on trial, or were sentenced to much lighter punishment than expected. They were able to outlive their prison terms and greet the liberation of their country. Such secrets as the vertical chain of leadership by which Kwon was in contact with organizations in Changbai and in the homeland, together with the content of his work with them, remained a mystery that the turncoats were never able to discover. Therefore these organizations and their members survived intact and continued to work in secret. In order to save the organizations and his comrades, however, Kwon Yong Byok resolutely chose death, along with Lee Je Sun, Lee Tong Gol, Ji Thae Hwan, Ma Tong Hui and other fighters.

While he was being transferred from the Hyesan police station to Hamhung, on the train, Kwon continued to show his solicitude for his comrades. At that time he had seven won. Resolved to spend his last money on his comrades, he said to a police escort:

"Officer, buy me fruit and biscuits with this money. You have handcuffed us, so you have to do it for us on behalf of the Japanese authorities, even though you may be reluctant." The other comrades also produced thirty-odd won to add to his sum.

Strangely enough, the policeman complied with the request without any fuss.

Kwon distributed the fruit and biscuits equally among the comrades. The hundred-odd fighters ate them, exchanging silent glances and smiles. That was a spiritual closeness only communists could enjoy. The police escorts were surprised at the family atmosphere. "Communists are strange people. Are you continuing to share close friendship even while on your way to punishment? Is that communism?"

"“Yes, we communists are like that. When Japanese imperialism is defeated, we will build a country where all the people are brothers."

"But Mr. Kwon, the authorities will not give you the freedom to build such a country. You will have to

mount the gallows some day."

"I myself shall die, but my comrades-in-arms will carry on to build an ideal country." Kwon repeated this with emphasis in his statement at his public trial:

"I am not a criminal. We are Korean patriots and legitimate masters of this country. We have launched a great war against the Japanese to drive out the piratic Japanese imperialists from our country and bring a free and happy life to our nation. Who dares to put whom on trial? You are the real criminals, those who must be tried. You are criminals who have committed acts of robbery and murder, who have occupied our country, slaughtered our people and plundered our country of its wealth. The day will come when history, making a fair judgment, absolves us as defenders of our nation and buries you.

Kwon Yong Byok died, shouting "Long live the revolution!" on the gallows of Sodaemun Prison, Seoul, even as the Soviet armed forces advanced westward, liberating lesser nations in East Europe, as Tokyo was submerged in a sea of fire under American bombing, and as the Korean People's Revolutionary Army at Mt. Paektu and in the maritime provinces of Siberia prepared for an all-out offensive against Japan to liberate the country. His only son, who was 15 or 16 years old, was then driving a manure cart in the streets of Chongjin.

In the summer of 1950, when the Fatherland Liberation War broke out, I stayed in Seoul for some time, directing the work of the liberated area. On my first visit to the city, I wanted to see many places. The first thing I did, however, was to visit Sodaemun Prison. Many of my friends and comrades had had bloody experience of the prison. As soon as they marched into the city, the heroic soldiers of the People's Army smashed the prison gates with their rumbling tanks and freed the prisoners.

Sodaemun Prison was the shameful site of crimes and atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese imperialists in this land. It was in this notorious prison that Kwon Yong Byok, Lee Je Sun, Lee Tong Gol, Ji Thae Hwan and other fine sons and daughters of the Korean nation, who had courageously resisted the Japanese imperialists, lost their precious lives. My uncle Hyong Gwon died in Mapo Prison. When I was fighting in the mountains, I thought of paying a visit to their graves in Seoul when the country was liberated.

I was not able to realize my wish until five years after the liberation because the country was divided along the 38th parallel. It was impossible to find out their nameless graves, but the sight of the roofs and walls of the prison seemed to calm my aching heart. To relive my long-pent-up sorrow, I burst into tears as I stood there, haunted by the souls of comrades who for five long years after the liberation of the country had had no opportunity to be mourned over by their comrades-in-arms.

"I leave behind me my only son. If I have a wish, it is that my son take up the cause where I left off." This was Kwon's last will and testament, made to his comrades-in-arms in Sodaemun Prison.

As I came out into the street after the inspection of the prison, his words echoed in my mind. Noble

words such as these could be uttered only by revolutionaries like Kwon Yong Byok, who lived an exemplary life. Even now I still recollect these words now and then.

## 16.6. Events to Which I Could Not Remain Indifferent

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Towards the end of May 1937, on our return to Changbai from the expedition to Fusong, we began making preparations near Xinxingcun for the advance into the homeland. One day, in company with my orderly, I left for Jichengcun, a village not far from Xinxingcun. We had established contact with the village upon our arrival in the Mt. Paektu area in the previous winter.

In Changbai, we had done a great deal of work among the masses: we met the people who brought aid goods to the secret camp, called people to liaison points or rendezvous as the situation required, and even visited inhabited areas to mix with the people. In the course of this, we were able to study the mood of the public and discover enemy movements. We were also able to enlighten the masses.

I visited many villages in Changbai then. On my first trip to Jicheng-cun, I stayed there for three days. It was a small community about 10 peasant households, and I became familiar with all the villagers. Here we conducted political work among the people and met our operatives from the homeland.

A Japanese spy, Tanaka, who had wormed his way into the village disguised as a hunter, was tracked down and executed at that time. The spy had been trained by special secret services before he was sent to Changbai. He was sly and foxy. Born and grown up in Korea, he spoke our language as fluently as a Korean. He was very familiar with our custom and manners, so that the people of Shijiudaogou and Ershidaogou had no reason to think of him as a Japanese, even though they saw him traveling around Changbai with a hunting gun on his shoulder for months. It was the underground organization in Jichengcun that revealed his identity.

While at the village, I stayed at the house of an old man surnamed Jang. The old man's house had spacious rooms and the family was better off than the other people. During my stay in the house, old men of the village came to visit with me almost every day. Arriving with long tobacco pipes tucked in the back of their waists, they sat and talked about the old days and about current events, commenting on Governor General Minami and on Manchukuo. Though not very informed, they were pretty good at analyzing current events. It seemed to me that the people, who had been robbed of their national sovereignty, were developing their political consciousness more quickly than any other things.

One evening a young peasant of about 30 with closely-cropped hair came with the old-timers to the house of old man Jang. In contrast to his sturdy build, which reminded me of a wrestler, the young man was very simple and nice. Usually people his age boast of their knowledge of the world. In a crowded room such as this, the voice of a lively thirty-year-old is normally the loudest. They look down upon the opinions of youngsters in their teens and twenties, saying that they smell of the suckling pig. They denounce instructions given by elders in their fifties or sixties as smelling of feudalism.

But this young man stayed huddled up behind the old men, listening to me and saying nothing. While the old men were answering my questions about the village situation, the young man did not utter a word. The old men asked me various questions: "How many soldiers are fighting under your command, General Kim? Is it true that the guerrillas have machine-guns? How long do you think it will take to defeat Japan? What is your father doing, General?" But the young man only smiled, and if my glance happened to meet his, he flinched behind someone else or ducked his head.

I noticed that now and then he looked as if he were going to ask something, but held back, looking, embarrassed. I wondered if he was perhaps a mute. His awkward manner was somehow infectious and I felt myself becoming awkward as well. While asking the old men about their living conditions, I directed a few questions to the young man as well, but he still said nothing. The old men in the room kept looking at him disapprovingly.

"General, he is a hired farmhand," an old man said on his behalf, "a lonely bachelor. His name is Kim Wol Yong and he comes from a southern province, but the poor fellow does not know where he was born or who his parents are. He says he is about thirty, but he does not know his own exact age."

The young man, never having known independence, apparently lost his freedom of self-expression as well. What inhuman treatment he must have suffered in the past to have become such a poor wretch, unable even to answer a simple question!

I went up to him and took his hand in mine: it was as stiff as a metal hook. What a life of hard toil he must have had to have ended up with a hand in this state! His back was bent like a bow, and his clothes were unspeakable. He had probably hidden himself behind the old men because he was in such rags. Nevertheless, he had come to visit the commander of the guerrilla army, and although shy of answering questions, I thought he must have his own view of things and his own way of dealing with them, a frame of mind which should not be totally ignored. I was thankful for it.

To my question as to when he had started working as a hired farm-hand, he simply answered, "From childhood." He spoke like a man from Jolla Province. There were many people from Jolla Province in West Jiandao and other parts of Northeast China. The Japanese imperialists had forced tens of thousands of Korean peasants to emigrate to Northeast China as "group pioneers" in accordance with their notorious policy of moving Korean peasants to Manchuria, a policy aimed at plundering Manchuria of its land en masse.

When the visitors were gone, I asked my host why the young man was not yet married. "Since he has worked for hire from childhood, moving from place to place, he is still a lonely bachelor, although he is over thirty. He is a true man, but he has no life partner. Nobody wants to give him his daughter. It is a great pity to see him living a life of hardship all alone. Even the boy over there is married and treated as a man...."

I looked out through the window at the boy the old man was pointing at. Through a pane as small as the

page of a notebook, a pane pasted with paper strips in the center of the door, I saw a 10 or 11-year-old boy playing shuttlecock with his feet. I was surprised to hear that the boy, who was as short as a pencil stub, was already married. I could not help clicking my tongue in disapproval, even though it was an age of early marriages, forced marriages and paid marriages.

To cite later instances, even in my own unit there were a few "little bridegrooms" who had been married when they were not much older than that boy. Kim Hong Su, a guerrilla from Changbai, became a "little bridegroom" at the age of about 10. He was a very short fellow, as his nickname indicated. I felt indignation and sorrow at the extraordinary contrast between the 30-year-old bachelor and the 10-year-old "little bridegroom". Their lot was similar in that both of them were the victims of the times, but I felt more sympathetic with the bachelor who was unable to make a home at the age of 30. Though a victim of early marriage, the "little bridegroom" did have a wife and was leading a normal, conjugal life.

Thinking of Kim Wol Yong, I could not sleep that night. A man's lifetime had been wasted in misery. This thought would not leave my mind, and it irritated me. His existence was somehow symbolic of the sufferings of my country, which also was treading a thorny path. His precarious life corresponded to the sad history of a ruined Korea. That night I was gripped with the desire to find a spouse for him. If I were unable to help a man to build his home, how could I win back my lost country? This was the thought that ran through my mind.

Of course, there were many other bachelors in my unit who had gone beyond the marriageable age, but that was because they had taken up arms for a long, drawn-out struggle for which the day of victory could not be foretold. Guerrilla warfare is the most arduous and self-sacrificing of all forms of struggle. It is an extremely mobile form of warfare covering a wide area of action under extremely unfavorable living conditions. For an ordinary man to build up a home while fighting such a war is pretty well impossible to imagine or put into practice.

Women who took up arms left their children in the care of their parents-in-law or gave them away as foster-children. While some husbands and wives did fight together in the guerrilla army, their marriages were in name only. We were living an abnormal life imposed by foreign forces.

The Japanese imperialists pushed the Koreans (except for a handful of pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation) off the track of normal life. The loss of national sovereignty crushed the life of the nation, and such fundamentals as freedom, the right to a decent life, basic living conditions and traditional customs were all obliterated. The Japanese imperialists quite simply did not want Koreans to eat well, live well or live like human beings.

They wanted to make them into dogs, pigs, horses or cattle; they were making the people "stupid". They did not care a damn what happened to the Koreans - whether children went to school or not, whether the streets swarmed with beggars and vagrants, whether young people were unable to marry because of poverty, or whether husbands and wives suffered hardships in mountains, unable to make a home.

All these miseries, however, were matters of the greatest concern for us. While circumstances did not permit us guerrillas to make a home, there was no reason for bachelors like Kim Wol Yong not to marry. Should the ruin of our country also ruin their chances for a married life?

In my teens when I was involved in the youth and student movements and working underground, I helped some young people with their marriage affairs. I have mentioned one such instance in the second volume of this memoir - the case of Son Jin Si<sup>1</sup>, the eldest daughter of the Rev. Son Jung Doh.

I had a hand in her marriage by sheer accident, but the incident was the subject of gossip for some time in the community of Korean compatriots in Jirin. When I went home during my school holiday, my mother repeated the old saying, as my schoolmates in Jirin had done: "A matchmaker deserves three cups of wine when successful, and three slaps across his face when not." I bore my mother's warning in mind.

Up to then, some of my comrades had looked upon love affairs and marriages as somewhat commonplace, the result of petit bourgeois sentimentalism. They had banished from their minds all thoughts they considered to be irrelevant to the revolution, to study and to labor. Their attitude was: What is a love affair to a ruined nation? How can love make anyone happy when the country has no sovereignty over its own affairs?

Of course, people with such an attitude went too far to some extent, but the attitude was firmly entrenched in the minds of my schoolmates, for they had seen certain nationalists and communists of the previous generation getting into trouble or dropping away from the revolutionary ranks because of love affairs and family problems. The fact that quite a few of their schoolmates neglected schoolwork or became too engrossed in family affairs added to this conviction.

For all this, however, love could not be left to die because the country had perished. Even within the bounds of a conquered country life has to go on and love has to blossom. A young man and woman get married, love each other, make a home, have children, and go on living and complaining that childless couples are lucky.... That's life.

I often witnessed love affairs tormenting or delighting DIU members, either dividing them or knitting them together in bonds of alliance. Kim Hyok fell in love with Sung So Ok in the course of the revolutionary struggle; Ryu Pong Hwa loved Lee Je U so ardently that she joined him in committing herself to the revolutionary cause. While engaged in the work of the Young Communist League, Sin Yong Gun married An Sin Yong, a member of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. Choe Hyo Ii and his wife stole a dozen weapons from a Japanese weapons dealer and came to us in Guyushu to help us in the preparations for the armed struggle. Cha Kwang Su dreamed of having a girl friend like Jemma, a character in *Gadfly*.

Love did not interfere with the revolution; it encouraged the revolution and gave it an impetus. In my recollections on expedition to southern Manchuria, I mentioned Choe Chang Gol as a man with a family. He always thought of the family he had left behind in Liuhe and derived strength from the thought. Sung

So Ok's youthful charm was the source of poetry and music for Kim Hyok, a man of ardor. Jon Kyong Suk left home, went to Dalian and stayed there for nine years to look after Kim Lee Gap, who was serving a prison term there. She became a weaver in the Dalian Textile Mill solely for the purpose of taking care of him. Love changed the daughter of a devout Christian and turned her into an exemplary woman who is widely known now.

Through these events my comrades gradually changed their views on love, marriage and family. They realized that a man with a family was perfectly able to work for the revolution, that a family and the revolution were not separate but closely related to each other, and that one's family was the original source of one's patriotism and revolutionary spirit.

When I was in Wujiazi I helped Pyon Tal Hwan to arrange his marriage. In those days he was very busy working as the head of the Peasant Union of Wujiazi. Because he had to work on his farm and deal with the affairs of the organization at the same time, he was always under the pressure of work. Both he and his father were widowers, so they were leading a lonely life. He belonged to the generation of Lee Kwan Rin in terms of age. Whenever I saw this man of my father's generation washing rice, picking out small stones from the rice with a hand as large as the lid of a cooking pot, squatting like a tree stump, or moving in and out of the kitchen carrying a water jug, I felt sorry for him.

Nowadays, a lot of youngsters are happy-go-lucky, not caring a straw about marriage until the age of thirty or so. Even when their neighbors commiserate with them and advise them to find a wife, they usually shrug it off as not a very pressing matter. By contrast, girls in those days regarded a 30-year-old bachelor as middle-aged and refused to regard him as a possible match.

Pyon Tal Hwan was uncommonly handsome and good-natured. If he had wished to marry he could have married any girl he wanted. The trouble was, he never even dreamed of remarrying. In these circumstances, his father should at least have prodded his son to find a wife, but he was totally helpless, so I volunteered to find a kind-hearted woman for him, and did so. I ventured to involve myself in this important affair of another man purely out of sympathy for him.

His second marriage encouraged Pyon Tal Hwan to put greater enthusiasm into his work for the peasant union. His father Pyon Tae U and other public-spirited persons of Wujiazi were full of praise for us, saying that the young men from Jirin were not only good revolutionaries but also kind-hearted people. By helping Pyon Tal Hwan to find a solution to his home problem, we benefited in many ways. Marriage was not something that had nothing to do with the revolution.

That was why I was never indifferent to other people's love affairs or friendships. One day when we were fighting in the Wangqing guerrilla zone, I left Xiaowangqing in command of O Paek Ryong's company on a march towards Gayahe. As we were climbing a pass, a girl came walking in our direction, her head lowered. Seeing us, she stopped, a faint smile on her face. As the marching column approached her, she trotted by, eyes downcast. For a country girl she was pretty and neat in appearance.



The company marched on. But the rearmost man looked back for a moment, and then marched again, head bowed in deep thought. Approximately 100 meters further down the road, the man again glanced back towards where the girl had disappeared. His eyes were clouded with faint gloom and longing. I called him out from the ranks and asked in a whisper what he was thinking about so deeply. Was he related to the girl in some way?

His face brightened suddenly and a smile formed at the corners of his mouth. He was a simple and straightforward man. "She is my fiancée. I have not seen her since I joined the army. I can't bear seeing her disappearing like the wind, even without raising her head. Had she raised her head at least, she could have seen me in uniform."

The man again looked back. I thought I must help him. "Go back and see her quickly. Show her how you look in uniform and chat with her for a while. Then she will be very happy. I will give you enough time to talk to your hearts' content. We will take a break down at the village until you come back."

The man's eyes grew moist. He thanked me and darted away after the girl. As I promised, I ordered the company to break at the next village. The man returned in about 30 minutes and began to report what he had done. I told him that he need not report such a thing, but he would not listen to me.

"Seeing me in uniform, she said that I was a different man. She said she would work hard to be worthy of the fiancée of a guerrilla. So I said, 'As you see, I am dedicated to the revolution until Korea wins independence. You are going to be the wife of a revolutionary soldier. If you want to live like the wife of a revolutionary soldier, you must enter the organization and work for the revolution.'

Since that moment the man distinguished himself in many battles, and the girl worked hard as a member of a local revolutionary organization. Certainly, love is one of the mainsprings of enthusiasm, the driving force of creative work, and an element in making life beautiful.

Before leaving the village of Jichengcun, I said to old man Jang: "Sir, I have something difficult to ask of you. The thought of Kim Wol Yong kept me awake last night. What about you village elders helping him to find a good wife and making arrangements for his wedding?" Old man Jang was much embarrassed at my request.

"General, I am sorry to have worried you over such a thing. We will do our best to help him find a wife and get him married. So please don't worry." The old men of the village kept their promise.

The ARF organization informed me that Kim Wol Yong had married. Apparently the news of my concern over the marriage of the bachelor at the village of Jichengcun had spread beyond the bounds of Ershidaogou to Shibadaogou. Hearing the news, old man Kim said he would give his daughter to the man who was held dear by me, and came to Jichengcun and discussed the matter with old man Lang. Thus the wedding was arranged more smoothly than had been expected. Old man Kim was unusually broad-minded.

Although he was only a poor peasant tilling mountain fields for his livelihood, old man Kim suggested that he make all the arrangements for the wedding ceremony for both sides. But the guardians of the bridegroom objected to the idea doggedly, so that it was agreed upon to hold the ceremony at old man Lang's house in Jichengcun.

I told Kim Hae San, the logistics officer, to choose the best fabrics and foodstuffs from the captured goods and send them on to Jichengcun. Kim Hae San seemed to accept my instructions reluctantly. He said yes, but kept standing around in my room instead of dismissing himself.

"General, must we send the goods for the wedding ceremony?" He asked beyond all my expectation.

"Yes. Why? Don't you like the idea?"

"A bowlful of rice has been all that we could afford for the wedding parties of our comrades-in-arms. It's this thought that holds me back from sending the goods. Think of how many of our fallen comrades had to be satisfied with merely a bowlful of rice at their wedding party, the most jubilant moment of their life!"

I understood his feelings. It was natural for him to feel unhappy about sending a wedding present to a total stranger when we had offered so little to our own comrades.

"The thought of it pains me, too. But Comrade Hae San, there is no reason why the people should follow our footsteps in offering a bowl of rice as a makeshift for a wedding party, is there? For that matter, I have been told that many people do, in fact, have to celebrate in this meager way. Don't you feel indignant at this state of affairs? True, it would be impossible to deliver all the Koreans from their poverty with our secret store of booty, but why should we not arrange a splendid wedding party for one man, Kim Wol Yong? Korea's young men who have taken up arms to revitalize our nation?"

Kim Hae San made a bundle of the wedding presents and, in the company of one of his men, went to the village with it. When he left the secret camp with the gifts - a quilt cover, rice and tinned goods - I gave him all the money from my purse. From his beaming face on his return from the village, I could see that he had been well treated by the villagers and that the wedding ceremony had been a great success. He told me that on receiving the wedding present, the bridegroom had cried himself blind, and that the villagers were very warm-hearted. He did not report anything else; instead, he said significantly:

"General, let us prepare wedding presents for all the young people in West Liandao." Later, the man who had accompanied him told me that Kim Hae San burst into tears when clinking cups with the bridegroom. I did not ask why. No doubt it was a burst of national sorrow, often felt by Koreans everywhere on such occasions.

Hearing Kim Hae San's account of the event, I wanted to take time and pay a visit to the newlywed

couple. I was eager to see how they were living and wish them happiness. That was why I intended to visit them with my orderlies, leaving the unit in the secret camp, and taking time out from the pressure of making preparations for the advance into the homeland. simple-mannered should attract my interest. He had no particular charm, either, except perhaps a kind of unstained innocence. Nevertheless, I felt an irresistible impulse to see him again.

Old man Jang showed me to Kim Wol Yong's house that day. The house was a restructured shed, which had belonged to somebody else. To my regret, Kim had gone to the mountain to gather firewood. His newly married wife, a daughter of old man Kim of Sigu, met me with hospitality. She was not a beauty, but looked good-natured, like the eldest daughter-in-law of a large family. She was a lively woman, and I thought she would no doubt soon assimilate her husband to herself.

"We are grateful to you for your decision to be Wol Yong's life companion. I hope you will convey my greetings to your father," I said. The woman made a deep bow to me.

"It is we who should thank you.... I will help my husband and build up a good home."

"My best wishes to you. I hope you become the mother of many children and live long." While I was talking to the woman, my comrades chopped a heap of firewood in front of the house.

Having met Kim Wol Yong's wife, I felt much relieved. I left the village, convinced that the couple would live in perfect harmony all their lives. The day's visit had a lingering effect on me, being still with me even as we climbed the ridge of Konjang Hill to attack Pochonbo.

The news of the hired farmhand's success in marriage through our agency and the wedding present we had made spread far and wide in West Jiandao. Since then, the people placed much greater confidence in the People's Revolutionary Army. The quantity and variety of aid goods sent to our secret camp increased with every passing day.

An old man who was living outside the wall gate of Shisandaogou sent to us the barnyard millet which he had stored for his son's wedding party. To my surprise, the prospective bridegroom and his elder brother brought the millet to us, and no matter how flatly we declined to accept the gift, the young men would not listen to us. They insisted, saying that if they returned home with the millet, they would be thrown out by their father. We could not decline any further.

There is no knowing how the young man, Kim Kwang Un by name, arranged the wedding party. I think he must have had a lot of trouble obtaining the necessary cereal for the celebrations. Even now I still regret that I could give him nothing as we parted from him at the Fuhoushui plateau.

I have never met Kim Wol Yong again since I left West Jiandao. I have never met Son Jin Sil either since I left Jirin. I got wind that she had gone to the United States to study, but I have no idea what her family life after marriage was like. I wished her happiness in my mind. I have never forgotten Son Jin Sil, Pyon

Tal Hwan and Kim Wol Yong. Perhaps a man is destined to retain as much affection for his relatives, friends, comrades and pupils as he loved them in the past.

Son Jin Sil died in the United States. Having received her death notice, I sent a telegram of condolence to Mr. Son Won Thae. How much it would have been better if I had met her in her lifetime and talked to her and inquired after her.

Kim Wol Yong was a healthy man, so he must have enjoyed a long life.

## 16.7. The Mother of the Guerrilla Army

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Among the comrades-in-arms who shared their life with me on Mt. Paektu for many years was a woman guerrilla who used to be addressed as "Mother". Her real name was Jang Chol Gu, a cook for Headquarters. There were dozens of women soldiers and several cooks in my unit, but only Jang Chol Gu was addressed as "Mother".

She was a little more than 10 years older than I, so I could safely have addressed her as "sister" or "comrade". Usually, however, I called her "Mother Chol Gu" rather than "comrade". Even old man Tobacco Pipe, who was much older than she, used to call her "Mother Chol Gu, Mother Chol Gu", and this provoked laughter among us.

Jang Chol Gu became a cook for Headquarters after we had destroyed the files of the "Minsaengdan" suspects at Maanshan in the spring of 1936. While going through bunches of these files, which had been produced by Kim Hong Bom, I got to know her name of Jang Chol Gu. For some reason, her file was the only one to be written in red ink.

The information collected on her stated that her husband, a party worker in Yanji County, had been proved guilty of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" and had been executed two years before, and that among the "crimes" committed by Jang Chol Gu herself were those of starving guerrillas by burying army provisions deliberately while she was working as the head of the Women's Association in Wangougou, Yanji County.

The red ink in which the document was written and the manly name of the middle-aged woman were enough to arrest my attention. Her appearance was also very conspicuous. She was the shortest of all the women soldiers and had very sparse eyebrows, so sparse that she looked as if she had had none at all.

Love for her husband brought her into working for the revolution. She had so keen an affection for her husband that she even relished what her husband was doing. At his request she put up leaflets, conveyed secret notes, provided hideouts for revolutionaries, learned how to read and write, and attended secret meetings. In the course of this she herself became a revolutionary.

Unfortunately, however, her husband, whom she had believed in and followed with all her heart, was executed on a false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". She was also arrested and imprisoned, accused of a "Minsaengdan" member, while working in Wangougou.

"Comrade Wang", who had once eaten a delicious dish of hot barnyard millet and leaf-mustard kimchi with her husband at her home, beat her with a stick and yanked her about by the hair. But both the guerrillas and the revolutionary masses were against her execution at her public trial. Thus she escaped death, but could not get rid of the label as a "Minsaengdan" suspect.

Crossing out the label of "Minsaengdan" suspect which had' been imposed upon her by hangmen who defiled the sacred revolution and massacred innocent people, I appointed Jang Chol Gu as a cook for our Headquarters. Since she began to cook for us, our dishes increased greatly in their variety. She had a knack for brewing bean mash and kimchi quickly.

People nowadays would not believe it if I said soy sauce or bean mash had been brewed in only a day or two. If moderately roasted beans are soaked in hot water, the water turns red. By salting and boiling it down, you can get soy sauce. If boiled beans are put into a pot and kept in a hot place, they ferment. Salt them and boil them, and you can get ssokjang (a kind of bean mash). It tastes like bean mash soup spiced with Pollack. We treasured her bean mash and anise kimchi as if they were festive food. She also used to press oil from roasted maize germ.

Once my orderly Paek Hak Lim was seriously ill and bedridden. Usually he had such an appetite, he could chew and swallow up bark, but now he did not even touch well-boiled maize porridge, saying he was sick of it. Jang Chol Gu gathered dry leaves of wild vegetables in the snow, retted them, rinsed them, boiled them, and then fried them in oil she had pressed from the maize germ. Thanks to the dish, Paek Hak Lim recovered his health and appetite.

Jang Chol Gu really was a "Mother" to the guerrillas. She used to scrape the scorched crust of cereals from the bottom of her cooking pot and slip it into the trouser pockets of young guerrillas when the unit was going to fight.

Even veterans like Oh Jung Hup and Lee Tong Hak, not to mention Choe Kum San, Paek Hak Lim and other young orderlies, used to confess without reserve to her that they were hungry. Lee 0 Song, the youngest boy in my unit, was Jang Chol Cu's pet, the "most favored with pot scrapings".

If the boy hung around at a considerable distance, she brought the scrapings to him in the folds of her skirts and slipped it into his pocket. The boy shared it equally with his mates.

Whenever I saw the scene, I pondered why women were always on more familiar and intimate terms with their children than men were. Probably, I thought, mothers usually feed their children, clothe them and take care of them. That is their duty, so to speak. The word "mother" therefore means the benevolent guardian of her children, one who feeds them and clothes them. Jang Chol Cu, who performed the duty of the guardian in good faith, became a most intimate "Mother" to us all.

Till late at night, while the rest of us slept, she prepared the next day's meals, sorting and trimming wild vegetables, milling grain, and winnowing it. If she had to pound grain in a mortar at midnight, she did it in the open, in the howling snowstorm. She had to work over the fire most of her time, and her clothes wore out twice as fast as other people's.

Once at a party held in the secret camp, she was asked to sing. All her comrades wanted to hear her and clapped their hands in anticipation, wondering how well the excellent cook could sing. To everyone's

surprise, she leaped on her feet and ran off into the bush. Her behavior puzzled all her comrades.

"Don't blame her for not singing," I said in her defense. "She was probably embarrassed to appear before a large audience because of her clothing. As you see, she wears patched-up clothes. Just imagine how she must have felt, knowing how she would look as she stood before you." All the gathering agreed with me. Later, she herself confessed that she had run away because she was ashamed of her ragged appearance.

Later, on my way back from battle in command of a small unit, I obtained a piece of good cloth for her. I had sent one of my men to buy it, telling him to choose the best one without minding the price. He had bought gray cotton serge suited for middle-aged women. To my relief, women comrades who had an eye for cloth felt it and said that it was good material.

I had not bought a set of clothes for my own mother when she was alive. Even the one mal of foxtail millet I gave her as I took leave of her on my expedition to southern Manchuria - she was ill, lying in a ramshackle, straw-thatched house in a field of reeds in Xiaoshahe - had been obtained by my comrades. About the only thing I had ever given her was a pair of rubber shoes, which I had bought when we were living in Badaogou. However, the money for these shoes was not my own earning, but money she had given me to buy sports shoes. She had never received a gift from me during her lifetime. She was buried in a solitary grave on the River Xiaoshahe without receiving a handful of dirt or a drop of tears from her mourning son even after death.

As I was carrying the cloth for Mother Jang Chol Gu, I had mixed feelings of relief for Jang and remorse of having done nothing for my own mother, either during her lifetime or after her death.

On my arrival at the secret camp from the battle, however, I found that Jang Chol Gu had been suddenly transferred to a hospital in the rear by Kim Ju Hyon's orders. Nobody knew why she had been ordered to the out-of-the-way supporting camp from the cooking unit of Headquarters. The news of her departure saddened us all.

In those days, all the supporting units such as the cooking and sewing units, hospitals, and arsenals were supervised by the logistics officer. So it was natural and not much surprising that Kim Ju Hyon, a man in charge of logistics, had decided to order one of the persons under his supervision elsewhere.

The point in question was why the woman cook, who had been respected and loved by everyone and had been loyal in her duty, was reappointed to a hospital in the rear. I asked Kim Jong Suk, who had been staying with her at the secret camp, why Jang Chol Gu had been removed. She did not know either.

"Perhaps the hospital wanted her, or there was some other unavoidable reason. She wept as she left here. She was so sad that I felt embarrassed for her."

Explaining how Jang left for the hospital, Kim Jong Suk wiped her own tears in spite of herself, eloquent proof that Jang's leave-taking was no doubt a painful shock to the other members of the cooking unit as

well. My own heart ached, as if I had seen the woman leaving only moments before. I thought bitterly that if she had to be sent to the hospital, she should at least have been sent after my return. Then I could have dressed her in new clothes.

I was really angered when I heard from Kim Ju Hyon why she had been sent away: "Since the incident of the hatchet I thought that there should be only people with clean records by your side, Comrade Commander." That was Kim Ju Hyon's own explanation. Admittedly, he had been shocked by the hatchet incident and decided to take better care of Headquarters, for he was exemplary in the care of security for Headquarters. That was why I held him in special confidence and great affection.

In the autumn of 1936, when the whole of West Jiandao was bubbling over with enthusiasm for joining the guerrilla army, I had organized a few replacement companies with young volunteers and appointed instructors for a short period of training for them at the secret camp in Heixiazigou. Among the trainees of a replacement company there was an assassin who had wormed his way into our ranks, armed with a hatchet and some poison, to make an attempt on my life. He was a young, simple-minded peasant.

Judging from his class origin, there was no reason for him to become an enemy agent; probably he had been deceived by enemy tricks. One day a gang of enemy agents, disguised as soldiers of the People's Revolutionary Army, had broken into the young man's house and behaved like bandits. They had robbed him of the money he had earned by selling firewood to buy medicine for his ailing mother, and plundered his food grain, chickens and everything else they could lay their hands on. In the wake of the gang, an enemy agent had come to him and pretended to console him for his loss, flinging mud at the communists and intimidating him until he agreed to do what the agent asked him to do. That was how the young man had become a minion for the counterrevolution in spite of himself and infiltrated our ranks.

None of us were aware that the young man was a hired enemy spy. As he had hidden the hatchet he had smuggled in the waistband of his trousers in the bushes near Headquarters, none of us had noticed anything suspicious.

One day, on my visit to the secret camp in Heixiazigou, I learned that the recruits of the replacement companies had been eating only dried vegetable porridge for several days on end.

Although they had joined the guerrilla army with a determination to endure hardships, the recruits had not yet become accustomed to difficult conditions in the few months since their enlistment. They might become weak-minded or waver unless they were given good education beforehand. So I gathered them together that night and said:

“Shivering as you are from the cold away from the comfortable homes of your parents, wives and children and allaying your hunger with dry vegetables, your resolution may waver. But you young men who have come out to win back the country must know how to endure these hardships in order to achieve the great cause. Although we are now going through hardships, we shall feel the pride of having fought when the country is liberated.



We are going to build a people's country that is good to live in on our beautiful land after the liberation, a people's paradise where there are neither exploiters nor exploited people, where everyone has equal rights and leads an equitably happy life. We are going to build a country where the people are seen as number one, where factories and land belong to the people, and where the State provides the people with food and clothing, education and medical care. At that time visitors to our country will envy us."

Among the recruits was the young man who had been given an espionage mission by the enemy. Listening to my words, he realized he had been deceived by the enemy into making an attempt on a good man's life. He resolved to confess and live honestly, even though he might be punished severely. The young man brought the hatchet and the poison before me and confessed. Because he had made an honest confession, I forgave him.

The incident awakened our commanding officers to sharp vigilance. They each learned a lesson in his own way. Some of them thought that they should safeguard Headquarters with greater care, others felt that security checks on new recruits should be carried out more effectively so as to deny undesirable people the chance to infiltrate the revolutionary ranks. Others still believed that a mass campaign should be launched throughout West Jiandao to wipe out the enemy's stooges and reactionaries and to prevent even a single enemy spy or agent from approaching the secret camp.

Kim Ju Hyon thought of an even more elaborate scheme.

"I thought that in order to safeguard Headquarters we must watch both inside and outside. We cannot say with assurance that the enemy will always stay only outside our ranks, or that the external enemy will not get in touch with disguised reactionaries or waverers within our ranks, can we? This is why I thought that anyone with a chequered record should be removed from Headquarters."

According to him, a person like Jang Chol Gu, a "Minsaengdan" suspect, was not entitled to work as a cook for Headquarters.

I could not repress a surge of indignation. How could he be so cruel to a simple and good-natured woman who had been working hard for the revolution with heartfelt loyalty? At the thought that Kim Ju Hyon, who was broad-minded and careful in dealing with most things, had made such an absurd mistake, I grew even angrier. I dressed him down, saying:

"I am grateful for your constant watch over our security, but I have to make a bitter reproach at you today. You yourself praised Mother Jang Chol Gu as an honest, diligent and kind-hearted woman. What banished your trust in her so easily? She has been a mother and sister to all of us. Who cooked three hot meals and three hot soups for us each day? It was Mother Chol Gu.

If she were a bad woman, we would no longer be in this world. She has had a host of chances to harm us, but we are hale and hearty even though we have eaten hundreds of meals she has cooked. This fully

testifies that she is a good woman beyond all suspicion, and that the charge laid against her in the past as a 'Minsaengdan' suspect was totally unfounded."

Later he confessed that he had never sweated so hard under my reproach as he did that day. In fact, I had never thought that Kim Ju Hyon would make such a blunder. He was a seasoned military and political worker with a long revolutionary record. We had always shared bed and board and discussed our work around the same table as one in mind and purpose. I could not understand why he who was aware of my policy and intention better than anyone else had dealt so cruelly, contrary to communist obligation and morality.

I criticized him further: "It is already half a year since we destroyed the files of 'Minsaengdan' suspects. The wounds in the minds of these people have almost healed up. Why did you prod them open again? If she left the mountains Jang Chol Gu could marry again and live comfortably by her fireside, eating hot meals. But she is living a life of hardships with us in the mountains because she is determined to carry out the revolution and because she trusts us. For all this, you have dismissed her from Headquarters and, by so doing, you have made a mockery of our trust in her. Are we so stupid as to feign confidence in people in fair weather and kick them out without hesitation when we are in danger? Sham can have no place in our confidence."

Kim Ju Hyon went to the hospital and brought Jang Chol Gu back with him that same day. The next day he got the sewing unit to make new clothes for her.

Jang Chol Gu kept herself aloof from Kim Ju Hyon, although she carried out his orders in a responsible manner every time. When she met him alone occasionally in the camp lane or in a mess hall, she simply saluted, refraining from talking to him. When she needed a decision from him, she used to send another cook to him.

The few days she had spent in the hospital might be an instant in the endless flow of time, but the gloom that the short span of her stay had lodged in her mind was not dispelled for a long time. The destructive effect that distrust has on human relations is enormous indeed. A faint distrust can cause lifelong grievances to people or destroy 10 years of friendship in an instant.

Jang's return to the cooking unit at Headquarters animated the atmosphere of the secret camp again. The food acquired a new flavor. To tell the truth, she was not a talented cook, but even the uncrushed maize porridge tasted much better because she was cooking it with all her heart.

She worked harder than ever. No distance deterred her from going to get things to improve our appetite. One day, passing through Shijiudaogou, I ate *Miricacalia firma* at Lee Hun's. The rice ball wrapped in the leaves of this herb, which I ate for the first time in my life, tasted better than lettuce wrappings. During my leisure talk back at the camp, I mentioned the herb-leaf wrappings. Hearing this, Jang went many miles to Shijiudaogou and returned with a large bundle of the herb on her head.

Later we found the habitat of the herb around the Paektusan Secret Camp.

Jang Chol Gu used to sleep huddled up on twigs and dry leaves on the moist ground near the kitchen. In the course of this her right arm gradually became paralyzed. On top of it, she soon caught a fever. We sent her to Wudaoyangcha, Antu County, for treatment. Park Jong Suk and Paek Hak Lim kept her company as her "nurses". Later, Kim Jong Suk nursed her. They went through a lot of trouble to look after her. In company with my chief orderly Ji Pong Son, I also paid a visit to her grass hut at Wudaoyangcha.

Jang Chol Gu recovered from her fever in a few dozen days, but not from the paralysis of her right arm. Because of this handicap she was unable to do kitchen work properly and handle her rifle as she should. She was tormented by the thought that she had become a burden to the unit, and came to a conclusion that she had to leave the unit so as not to be a handicap to her comrades.

In the early 1940s, when disabled soldiers and old and infirm people were being evacuated to the Soviet Union, she joined the evacuees of her own accord. At her leave-taking she gave her favorite silver ring to Kim Jong Suk, promising that they would meet again when Korea became independent. But the promise remains unfulfilled, for she heard in a far-off foreign land the news of the death of Kim Jong Suk. (*Lee Wha Rang note: Kim Jong Suk, married to Kim Il Sung and mother Kim Jong Il, died while giving birth to a baby in 1948*). The silver ring she had given to Kim Jong Suk is now on exhibit in the Korean Revolution Museum.

Among Jang Chol Gu's fellow cooks for our Headquarters was a Chinese comrade named Lian He-dong. He was an expert in Chinese cuisine. While Jang Chol Gu was a devoted cook, he was a first-rate one. He came to us in the winter of 1936.

For some time in the early days of his service in my unit he learned the cooking methods of the guerrilla army from Jang Chol Gu. Jang learned Chinese cuisine from him. In the course of this they became great friends.

He was very sad when Jang was evacuated to the Soviet Union. He prepared a large bundle of Chinese food and slipped it into her pack.

Jang was also very sorry to take leave of him.

The story of how Lian He-dong came to join us is dramatic. The hero of the drama was Ma Jin-dou, a Muslim, who relished liquor and pork, both Islamic taboos, in Jirin. Ma was my classmate in Jirin Yuwen Middle School and my schoolmate in Badaogou Primary School.

I had many impressive acquaintances in my days at Badaogou. Li Xian-zhang, a son of the head of the Badaogou police station, was on very good terms with me. He was also one of my schoolmates at Badaogou. His father used to get medical treatment from my father as one of the "regular customers". He

used to pay visits to my home on festive occasions and make my father presents by way of payment.

When I was operating in command of my unit in West Jiandao, I got in touch with the head of the Badaogou police station through the agency of Li Xian-zhang. In those days his father was no longer the head of the police station. His father's successor was also an honest man. He promised not to fight against us. Since then he did not touch the aid goods the people were sending to the revolutionary army. That was why we did not touch his police station, although we attacked other places in Changbai County.

Ma was a man of special character, and his private life was also unusual. He was already married in middle school to two women at the same time. His wives were sisters.

At first he fell, in love with the elder sister and they were engaged. Her younger sister, who used to go on errands for her, fell for him and even became lovesick. Seeing this, the girls' parents left their two daughters to his care. Thus Ma, who had plenty of money, became rich in wives as well.

After I left Jirin, released from prison, I had no idea where Ma was living or what he was doing. However, fate played a monstrous trick on us: we found ourselves hostile to each other, fighting on opposite sides with guns leveled at each other.

In the first winter since our advance to Mt. Paektu, Ma was in command of the "punitive" force of the puppet Manchukuo police, entrenched in Erdaogang, the enemy's "punitive" operation base nearest to our secret camp in Heixiazigou. In addition to the puppet Manchukuo "punitive" force, hundreds of Japanese "punitive" troops from the 74th Regiment in Hamhung were also stationed in the base.

At first I did not know that Ma was the commander of the puppet Manchukuo "punitive" police force. During our second or third raids on Erdaogang in the autumn, my men searched the house of the escaped commander of the "punitive" police force and captured the commander's wife who was hiding with a pistol in her hand and his cook. To my surprise, the captured woman was the younger sister who had been married to Ma.

I had been invited to Ma's wedding ceremony in Jirin, so I recognized her at a glance. She, too, recognized me. It was a dramatic reunion.

According to the woman, Ma was already the father of four children. The woman had given birth to two sons, and her elder sister to two daughters. She said' that her husband used to talk about Mr. Kim Sung Ju, and asked me why I had been inveigled into joining "Kim Il Sung's gang of communist bandits". She was unaware that yesterday's Kim Sung Ju was none other than Kim Il Sung. I said:

"I am the man, Kim Il Sung, whom you refer to as the ringleader of the communist bandits. We are not communist bandits but a revolutionary fighting against Japanese imperialists, the common enemy of the Korean and Chinese peoples. Remember me to your husband when he comes home. Out of our old friendship and as a classmate of his I want you to tell him that he should keep away from us, instead of

fighting battles which he has no chance of winning.

If it is impossible to avoid fighting, he should merely pretend to be doing it when forced to take part in 'punitive' operations. We strike stubbornly resisting puppet Manchukuo forces but deal leniently with the puppet forces who do not resist. I do not wish to see Ma acting as a shield for the Japanese, nor do I wish him to be killed by the revolutionary army. He is a man to be our friend, not our enemy."

The woman said that her husband knew well that "Kim Il Sung's gang of communist bandits" did not shoot at the puppet Manchukuo army indiscriminately. The night raiding party of the People's Revolutionary Army had not touched the tents of the puppet Manchukuo army while attacking the bivouacking enemy during the battle at the edge of I-Ieixiazigou; they had shot at the tents of the Japanese army only.

Knowing this, the commanders of the Japanese "punitive" troops shot all the officers of the puppet Manchukuo army involved in the battle, giving vent to their anger. Her husband had avoided the tragic event because he had not participated in the "punitive" action under the excuse that he had caught a bad cold. Probably this incident had awakened her husband somewhat to the truth of our policy towards the enemy.

The woman said: "I now clearly understand why your army is lenient to the Manchukuo army. I know well that in your school days you always emphasized Korea-China friendship and were on good terms with your Chinese schoolmates. My husband also often talked about this point. I am only grateful to you for your kindness to Chinese people and for your lenient policy towards the Manchukuo army. I will persuade my husband not to level guns at the revolutionary army again. When he learns that Commander Kim Il Sung is yesterday's Kim Sung Ju, he will act prudently."

I reiterated my advice that she dissuade her husband from leaving a stain on his name as a traitor, then released her and her cook and withdrew from Erdaogang.

The cook refused to return with her and asked to be admitted into our revolutionary army. The cook was none other than Lian Lie-dong. He said he was tired of being torn between the two sisters quarrelling for one husband.

"I have heard a lot about Mr. Kim Sung Ju from Commander Ma. Now that I know that Mr. Kim Sung Ju is General Kim Il Sung, I don't wish to leave you, General. Please let me fight in your unit," he said.

I granted his request. Around that time Wei Zheng-min was receiving medical treatment at the Hengshan Secret Camp. I was glad that a cook who was capable of making Chinese food had come to us. Kim Ju Hyon and I had been embarrassed because we had had no cook to prepare palatable food for the Chinese patient.

I sent the cook to work for Wei Zheng-min for some time. Wei was delighted with him, saying that he

was very talented, a cook worthy of a fashionable restaurant.

Since then, Lian He-dong worked by our side as a member of the cooking unit until we returned to the homeland in September 1945 after the defeat of imperialist Japan. He was capable of making a variety of dishes out of the same materials. He always carried a cauldron with him, saying that meals cooked in a cauldron were tastier.

In the first half of the 1940s we were at a training base in the Soviet-Manchuria border area. We occasionally formed an allied force with both Chinese and Soviet comrades and had joint exercises. On these occasions Lian He-dong's cooking skill became so renowned that even Soviet commanders, to say nothing of Chinese commanders, frequented the field mess hall of my unit.

One day after eating the Chinese food prepared by the cook, Zhou Bao-zhong asked us jokingly to give him our cook. Comrade An Kil, also joking, agreed.

The joke went from mouth to mouth until it reached the cook's ears as truth. The cook came to me with a tear-stained face and asked me if it was true that he was going to be transferred to a Chinese unit.

"I don't know to which unit you might have to go. I am in a difficult position because too many people want you. The Soviet comrades also want you. If they are really insistent on having you, you may have to go to the Soviet side," I said.

He leaped up at these words, refusing to go anywhere, neither a Chinese unit nor a Soviet unit. He glowered at me stubbornly.

I realized after Japan's defeat that he had meant what he said. Pending our triumphal return to the liberated homeland, I summoned him, praised him and thanked him for nearly 10 years of his devoted service, and then conveyed to him the decision of the party organization to transfer him to Zhou Bao-zhong's unit. Zhou Bao-zhong had promised that he would promote him to a regimental commander.

Lian He-dong entreated me to take him to Korea.

"I cannot live away from you, General" he said. "There is no reason why I should live in China just because I am a Chinese. I don't want to be a regimental commander or anything else. Please let me stay by your side. There is no need to break our friendship deliberately, a friendship that even Japanese guns and swords and Manchurian gales failed to break."

I was moved by what he said. His words contained the essence of his view of life, an outlook that could be conceived by only people who have shed tears, spilt blood and gone through hardships for their comrades on the path of revolution. As he said, people live by the bonds of friendship rather than within the boundaries of a country. It was friendship and love that united the anti-Japanese fighters into a large family throughout the forests of Mt. Paektu and in the wilderness of Manchuria. If a human community

is devoid of friendship and love, mountains and rivers will be dark as well.

Lian He-dong's insistence on going with us was also an expression of his noble spirit of internationalism.

I on my part was also reluctant to part with him, so I said, "If you really wish to come with us, do so. I have no wish to bid farewell to you, I am not particular about one's nationality. I am only giving some prudent thought to the matter because I'm afraid the situation might be awkward for you. As you know, China is on the eve of a civil war. We have promised with Zhou Bao-zhong that we will send Kang Kon and many other Korean military and political cadres and soldiers to assist the Chinese revolution. In this context, if you, a Chinese, shut eyes to the Chinese revolution and go to Korea, everyone will think it strange. You, too, might regret it."

He decided to remain in China. He even asked me jokingly to choose one of the Pyongyang beauties for his wife when he came to Korea after the triumph of the Chinese revolution. But I was unable to comply with his request, for he died fighting heroically as a regimental commander against Chiang Kaisek's Kuomintang army. At the sad news I regretted that I had not taken him to Korea. However, he will live forever in the memory of the Chinese people as a man who laid down his noble life in the revolutionary war to found a new China.

Instead of Lian He-dong, Jang Chol Gu came back to us after the Korean war from a far-off corner in Central Asia. Soon after her arrival her comrades-in-arms in the days of Mt. Paektu got together. She told me on the telephone: "General, the comrades from Mt. Paektu have all gathered here. Could you take off time to come here? I wish to offer you, General, a bowl of my porridge after an interval of twenty years. As I came from a foreign land thousands of miles away, I have nothing to offer you except uncrushed maize porridge."

I wanted to go very much, but circumstances would not allow it. "Thank you, but I am about to leave for the provinces. I have to keep the appointment with the people, so let's make it at a later date."

Her old comrades-in-arms were all said to have enjoyed the porridge cooked with firewood, just as they had done on Mt. Paektu. Whenever I pined for the days on Mt. Paektu after that, I asked her to cook uncrushed maize porridge for me. She lived in a house perched on the hill across from the gate to my house. She often came to see me, and I, too, visited her in my leisure hours.

Back in the homeland, she spent most of her time telling the younger people the story of her old comrades-in-arms who had fought on Mt. Paektu.

She passed away in 1982. Her death gave me a great shock. I grieved over her death as I had mourned over my own mother's death. She had taken care of me as if I had been her brother, and she had loved me as my own mother loved me.

We accorded her a grand State funeral just as we had done for the death of the veterans who had rendered

distinguished services in the building of the revolutionary armed forces. Her bust was set up in the Taesongsan Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery and a film, Rhododendron, was produced with her as the heroine. We wanted her to be remembered down through the generation.

All our people were delighted at the renaming of the Pyongyang University of Commerce after Jang Chol Gu. They were deeply moved by the fact that a university could be named after the ordinary member of a cooking unit. Such a title of honor, they said, could only be given under our socialist system, which does not discriminate between jobs, but holds in high esteem workers as unassuming heroes who work hard to provide their fellow people with a comfortable life, good food, good clothing and good housing.

When renaming the Pyongyang University of Commerce as Jang Chol Gu University, we hoped that the younger generation would be workers as loyal to their revolutionary duty as Jang Chol Gu had been.



# 17.1. Flames of Pochonbo - Part I

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Many people have already discussed and made full studies of the Battle of Pochonbo from the point of view of history. As one who organized and commanded this battle, I clearly recall my mental processes at the time, together with the events that took place. Scenes of battle from half a century ago still unfold clearly before my eyes.



*Photo: A Japanese building burning in the Pochonbo Battle.*

The Battle of Pochonbo can be compared to the reunion of a mother and her children who have been separated by force. The gunshot at Pochonbo precipitated the reunion between my motherland and her loyal sons and daughters who had loved her most. In other words, this battle marked a decisive turning point in the liberation of my conquered nation.

Whenever I was asked on my return to the liberated homeland to recount some of the battles we had fought in our armed struggle against the Japanese, I used to describe the Battle of Pochonbo. In terms of results, we had fought innumerable battles much larger than this one. As a matter of fact the number of enemy soldiers and policemen we killed here was not very large. Nevertheless, I always give the first place to Pochonbo when discussing the major encounters in the anti-Japanese war, because I attach special importance to it.

This battle was of great interest to many people. Enemy losses were not worth mentioning, since they had been covered by newspapers immediately after the battle, but everyone was curious about the motive for this operation. For instance, what made us fight this battle, and why? In a broad sense, our attack on Pochonbo was designed to bring about the revival of the nation; in a narrow sense, it was to open up a decisive stage and make a leap forward in the revolutionary struggle against the Japanese.

The history of the Korean nation had been streaked with blood and tears, brought about by the Japanese imperialists. It was in reaction to this that our nation started its resistance. Armed struggle not only expressed the will of the sons of Korea to fight against Japan but it was a means to an end as well. Under the banner of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, we waged the armed struggle; at the same time we promoted the building of the party and launched a united-front movement and an anti-imperialist common front movement, thus pushing forward the revolution against the Japanese.

This road was fraught with difficulties. Some people went so far as to want us to obey only their party interests and strategy, incriminating the Korean people who were fighting under the slogan of the Korean revolution.

From the first days of our revolutionary struggle we focused on the Korean revolution as the starting point of all our thinking. Physically we may have been in a foreign land, but spiritually we had never left our homeland and our fellow countrymen. Everything we did from the second half of the 1920s on was for our homeland and for its liberation. To fight under the banner of the Korean revolution was the legitimate right and duty of every Korean communist: we strongly asserted this.

The Nanhutou meeting dealt mainly with the task of extending the armed struggle into the homeland.

The meeting expressed the aspirations of the Korean communists to make the Loud sound of gunfire in Korea, that is, to extend our activities

into the homeland so as to push forward the Korean revolution. During the first half of the 1930s, Manchuria was our main theatre of operations. Both before and after the founding of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, we had made forays into the occupied territories of our homeland on several occasions, but these activities had been limited in scope.

Our preparations in the first half of the 1930s could be viewed as the stage of gathering our strength. In this period the armed force of the Korean communists grew to the extent of forming several divisions, and we felt that if we advanced into the homeland now we would find almost nothing impossible to deal with. Should we establish our base on Mt. Paektu and from there launch armed units to other areas - for instance, one division to Mt. Rangnim, a second to Kwanmo Peak, a third to Mt. Thaebaek and a fourth to Mt. Jiri - to set up bases and strike the enemy one after another, then the whole of the Korean peninsula would be brought to the boil and 23 million Korean people would feel encouraged to turn out in an all-people resistance.

This would pave the way for achieving national liberation by our own efforts, an event required by our national history and the high point in the development of our anti-Japanese revolution. An event also that had been the topic of repeated discussions at a number of meetings held in Nanhutou, Donggang and Xigang.

At Xigang in the spring of 1937 we summed up the years of our armed struggle, set the immediate task of advancing into the homeland by large force, and took some practical measures to carry it out. We drew up detailed military operations for the revolutionary armed force to move in three directions.

According to the plan of operations, Choe Elyon's unit was to move from Fusong to the northern border area across the River Tuman, via Antu and Belong; another unit was to advance to the Linjiang and Changbai areas; and the main force, led by me, was to march to Hyesan and harass the enemy from the rear while neutralize the poison of the drug it was necessary to shatter the myth of the Japanese forces. We had to show clearly that Japanese, though strong, could be both defeated and destroyed.

Approximately five years of armed struggle in North and West Jiandao between our forces and those of the Japanese had smashed the myth of the enemy's might. However, owing to strict news blackouts and

misleading propaganda, the outcome of the battles for our army was never shown to the public deep in the homeland in their true light.

We had precisely one strategic intention in pushing for an advance into the homeland: If we launched an attack with a large force into our own home territory, the whole country would be caught up in excitement and admiration for the feat. The people would be delighted at the arrival of an army of their own countrymen capable of destroying the Japanese imperialists and liberating Korea. The pride they took in such an army would inspire the 23 million people with strength and will to join courageously the front of national liberation.

In those days my mental efforts were directed at two goals: one was to shock the entire country by making an armed attack on major strategic points in the homeland; the other was to form a ramified network of underground organizations that would prepare the people for anti-Japanese resistance. Consequently, when the decisive moment for national liberation came, we would destroy the Japanese imperialists and achieve independence by combining the armed struggle with an all-people uprising. These were difficult tactics requiring much blood and sweat, but there was no other alternative. All our activities in the areas of Mt. Paektu and West Jiandao were thoroughly geared to the implementation of this strategy.

My greatest concern on the eve of our advance was to find out the homeland situation in detail. Publications could not provide me with all the information I needed, so I talked with many operatives who had been to the homeland. Occasionally I called members of underground organizations in the homeland to learn the situation from them. Newspaper reports of new statistics and shocking events were not the only data I needed. Scenes in the marketplace and women's complaints from inns and public houses were additional useful sources of important information ignored by Japanese-controlled news media.

The most valuable information we obtained was public opinion. Our major concern was about the people's sufferings and their thinking. A member of an armed detachment, while making his work report to me in April or May of 1937 on his return from the Manpho area, gave me an account of what he had witnessed in a mountain:

"I saw boys about ten years old, whose legs were as thin as chopsticks, gathering dead twigs in a pine grove. They said they had been beaten and were picking up firewood to pay the penalty for carelessly speaking Korean at school. They were all second-year boys from a primary school."

The children said that the Japanese teacher had beaten their legs and backs with a wooden sword until they were covered with welts and then had made them sit on the playground for hours their heads covered with buckets. On top of all this, they had been fined. In that particular class, a pupil who spoke Korean once was fined five jon; twice, ten Jon; and if he spoke three times or more, he was expelled. Other schools or classes did not yet follow such regulations, only the class under the charge of the Japanese teacher. He was the only one to enforce the use of the Japanese language.

The penalty the Japanese imposed upon the Korean pupils who spoke their mother tongue was in itself not very surprising. What would they not do, the Japanese imperialists who had robbed the Koreans of their whole country?

I had heard that the Government-General in Korea was bent on forcing the Koreans to speak Japanese. In a primary school in North Kyongsang Province the use of the Korean language had already been forbidden since late 1931. In the spring of 1937, the Government-General ordered all the government and public offices in Korea to begin writing official papers in Japanese.

All this was an inevitable development under Japanese rule. It was nothing new.

Nevertheless, I could not repress a surge of indignation at the thought of it.

If a man is robbed of his language, he becomes a fool, and if a nation is deprived of its language, it ceases to be a nation. It is recognized worldwide that the most important characteristics of a nation are a common language and ties of blood.

A common language is the soul of a nation. Therefore, depriving the nation of its language by obliterating it is a brutal act which is as good as cutting away the tongues of all its members and depriving them of their souls. Its language and its soul are all that remains to the nation that has been deprived of its territory and state power.

Hence, the Japanese imperialists were attempting to turn the entire Korean nation into a living corpse. Their attempt to make the Korean people "imperial subjects" did not consist of feeding them rice or rating them "first-class citizens", similar to the Japanese, but of making them slaves who were forced to bow in the direction of the Japanese imperial palace, visit a Japanese shrine and chant the pledge of an "imperial subject" each morning.

Taking away the Korean language was not a matter that concerned the suffering or death of only a few people. It concerned the destiny of a whole nation, for it was nothing short of genocide in that it resembled the act of lining up 23 million Korean compatriots and cutting off their heads at a single stroke.

It is common knowledge that the primary features of colonialists are barbarity, greed and shamelessness. Those who rob another nation of its sovereignty are savage, cunning and brazen, irrespective of their nationality or color of skin. Nevertheless, I had never before encountered colonialists as barbarous and shameless as those who were depriving our nation of its spoken and written language and forcing our people to bow to their shrines. Where was the destiny of the Korean nation headed? The facts I learned from the member of the armed detachment made my blood boil.

I said to myself: Let us advance on the homeland as soon as possible to teach the Japanese a lesson. Let

us show them that the Korean people are alive, that they will not abandon their spoken and written language, that they do not recognize the idea that "Korea and Japan are one" and that "Japanese and Koreans are of the same descent." Let them see and understand that the Koreans refuse to be "imperial subjects" and that the Korean nation will carry on an armed resistance till the fall of Japan. The sooner this advance is made, the better.

Early in May 1937 I received more surprising news from the homeland: a detailed account of the arrest of Lee Jae Yu, an important figure in the Korean communist movement, carried in a special edition of Maeil Sinbo. It was a full four-page edition and it explained in excessive detail how the man who had been arrested six times and escaped each time had been arrested for the seventh time. The newspaper vociferated that Lee Jae Yu had been in the "last ditch of the destroyed Korean communist movement", that he had been the "last bigwig in the 20-year-long communist movement", and that his arrest had put an end to the Korean communist movement for good.

Bourgeois politics in general are characterized by intellectual trickery, and as an official mouthpiece on the pay-roll of the bourgeoisie, the press makes it a rule to hide the real intent of the ruling class behind the printed words of the newspaper. The special edition of the Maeil Sinbo was no exception. A cursory glance revealed that it was an evil masquerade masterminded by conniving anti-communist schemers huddled behind the backdrop of the Government-General.

Lee Jae Yu was a renowned communist from Samsu. He had crossed to Japan, where he worked his way through school and participated in the labor movement. After his return to Korea, he committed himself to the communist movement in Seoul. Mainly in charge of the organizations under the Pacific Labor Union, he guided the labor union movement and the peasant union movement in various provinces, traveling as far as the Hamhung area.

Rumor had it that he had escaped each time he was arrested, thanks to his courage, quick wits and talent for disguise. The newspaper claimed that since it was now impossible for him to escape any longer, the final curtain had come down on the Korean communist movement. The Japanese imperialists' misleading propaganda and persistent repression of the communist movement were actually confusing a large number of people. In this respect the enemy had considerable success. As the communist party had been disorganized, due to large-scale roundups, and as it was reported that Lee Jae Yu's arrest meant an end to the activities of a few remaining individual communists, the people's disappointment and frustration were beyond expression. Even among those who had been studying the communist movement as a branch of knowledge, not a few felt somewhat lost and dispirited.

The enemy had chosen the right target, which was to disarm the Korean nation spiritually. They spared nothing to achieve this objective, alternating violence with words of honey. The Japanese imperialists threatened the Koreans, leveling guns at them and demanding,

"Will you obey or die?" At the same time they tried to appease them with honeyed words, such as: "Well, the Japanese and Koreans are of the same descent, and Korea and Japan are one, so let us bow to the

shrine together."

"Manchuria flourishes as a paradise of righteous government and a concord of five nations, and in Japan a blessed land full of cherry blossoms is awaiting you. You should therefore go to either Manchuria or Japan to get rich." "Plant cotton in the south, raise sheep in the north, and lord it over the whole of Asia as subjects of imperial Japan."

The most dreadful part of the tragic situation the Korean nation found itself in was the crumbling of the national spirit. Everything, from the Japanese imperialists' dictatorial machinery to records of pop songs, was concentrated on destroying Korea and uprooting its very soul. Korea turned into a living hell. Endless darkness, like a pitch-black night, reigned over Korea, and the night did not give way to daybreak despite the passage of days, weeks and months.

Unless we put an end to this tedious night of slavery and humiliation, how could we call ourselves men of Korea? We had to advance into the homeland as soon as possible and revitalize the soul of the nation suffering from the long, drawn-out nightmare.

This was the thought that pressed our commanders and men on during the preparations for advance. Passing through Tianshangshui and Xiaodeshui to the tableland of Diyangxi in the middle of May, we reinforced the unit and conducted propaganda to encourage the advance to the homeland. Meanwhile, I summoned Park Tal and met him in order to learn in depth what the situation was in our native land.

Park Tal gave me a surprising piece of information. He said that a large force of the enemy's border guards from the direction of Hyesan and Kapsan had been moving northward towards the Musan area, to which Choe Hyon's unit had been marching. If the information was correct, Choe Hyon could not avoid being encircled. Of course, we had anticipated such situation, but it was a surprise that the enemy had reacted so quickly to the movement of the revolutionary army. Choe Hyon, in command of his unit, had left for his area of operations in April 1937 after the Xigang meeting. As he was leaving, I had told him that he should guard against Lee To Son's unit in Antu, for this was the most stubborn of the "punitive" forces in Manchuria.

To begin with, Lee To Son had served a large landowner of Xiaoshahe, Shuang Bing-jun, acting as the commander of his private army. I had often heard that he suppressed the tenant farmers at the point of bayonets while living a dissolute life. Attacked by the guerrilla army several times, Lee To Son would often make surprise raids on villages, setting fire to them or beheading the villagers because, he said, the poor were all on the side of the communists. The inhabitants harbored a hatred for him that grew greater with each passing day.

Fully aware of the bestial temperament of Lee To Son as a top-level vassal, the Japanese imperialists had appointed him commander of the Antu "punitive" force under the Jiandao Garrison Headquarters. His unit was composed of scoundrels from the propertied class who hated the revolution. Lee To Son's special feature was that he never took prisoners - never sent back alive those who had been caught in his

web. He was a top marksman, recognized as such by both friend and foe.

Choe Hyon moved northward along steep mountain ranges, fighting battle after battle and luring the enemy deep into Fusong. Here he suddenly changed direction to march into the Antu area. But in Jinchang his unit was faced with a difficulty. The river the unit needed to cross was flooded, and while some of his men were improvising a bridge, the rest took a break. No sooner had the exhausted soldiers fallen asleep than RI To Son's unit swooped down on them and opened fire. Heavy fighting went on between the two sides, both taking cover behind slag-heaps dumped from a local goldmine.

In this battle Ju Su Dong fell. At first the enemy took the initiative and appeared to be winning. However, Choe Hyon, who took the command in Ju Su Dong's place, immediately reversed the unfavorable situation and dealt a heavy blow at the enemy with a powerful counterattack. While the two sides were fighting, the gold miners shouted that Lee To Son was getting away. They probably knew him well. The guerrillas chased after him and shot him dead with a barrage of machine-gun fire. Choe Hyon's unit pursued the fleeing enemy for four miles and annihilated them.

The battle of Jinchang became famous, for it took vengeance upon the people's enemy. The news of Choe Hyon killing Lee To Son and wiping out the "punitive" force was given wide publicity by the newspapers of that time. Choe Hyon was a renowned soldier, but the advance of his unit to the Musan area was at the expense of a painful loss: they lost Lee Kyong Flui, known as the "flower of the 4th Division".

The news of her death brought everyone to tears.

Lee Kyong Hui's family were all ardent patriots who laid down their lives fighting for the revolution. When she was a child, she lost her brothers, uncles and grandmother. Her father was a guerrilla. Lee Kyong Hui, too, joined the army in order to avenge the death of her relatives. At first the commanders were reluctant to admit her into the army: she was too young for one thing, and for another, if she took up arms as well, there would be no one to carry on the name of her family. They could not dissuade her, however, and finally accepted her into the army.

The soldiers were as devoted to her as they would have been to their own daughter or sister, calling her the "Flower of the 4th Division" because she was not only pretty and charming but also hardworking and kind-hearted. Her dancing and singing - her special skills - were the pride of the unit. When she joined the guerrilla army the commanders had given her a pistol, thinking that a rifle was not suited to this weak girl of small stature. But she was not satisfied with the pistol in battle and carried a carbine with her. It is said that whenever she danced with the carbine on her shoulder, her comrades-in-arms clapped and cheered and requested her that she do an encore.

Lee Kyong Hui had an extraordinary ability to cheer up the unit. If a soldier was angry or dispirited she would joke with him and buck him up. When she danced or sang a song, soldiers who had broken down from exhaustion would get back on their feet. She was adept in needlework and embroidery, and the

tobacco pouches she made were everyone's pride and joy. Even coarse herbs were said to become a delicious dish when cooked by her.

In battles with the "punitive" forces, Lee Kyong Hui usually took her place at a small distance from her comrades-in-arms and picked off the enemy by taking careful aim and counting the number of troops she killed. In one battle she shot six enemy soldiers. As she was reloading her rifle, two or three more of them escaped. Exasperated at missing them, she shed tears and bit her lips.

When the three units that had been operating from three different directions held a joint celebration of guerrillas and people at Diyangxi after the Battle of Pochonbo, Choe I-lyon told me about the death of Lee Kyong Hui. As he spoke, he wiped his eyes with his handkerchief. Seeing the tears falling silently from the eyes of this tiger-like man, I was aware of how painful the loss of Lee Kyong Hui was to all of us.

As Choe Hyon held the mortally wounded Lee Kyong Hui in his arms, her blood flowed in a stream through his fingers.

"This is the homeland, isn't it? I am lucky to have trodden our native soil at last. All of you, please fight wdl. Fight for me."

These were Lee Kyong Hui's last words as she died in Choe Hyon's arms.

Later on her father was killed by the enemy as well, when he came to the Hoeryong area on a mission to the homeland. Thus, father and daughter were both buried in their native soil. After the liberation of the country, Lee Kyong Hui's comrades-in-arms went to the Musan area at my request and made every effort to find her remains, but failed. They could not recall the exact place of her death, for she had been buried level with the ground in the midst of battle, and so it was impossible to discover her whereabouts.



*Photo: Choe Hyon's unit.*

Thus we advanced into the land of our birth, treading the stepping-stones laid so tragically at the cost of the lives of our comrades-in-arms Choe Hyon's unit advanced into the Pulgunbawi area in Musan, Where it hit the enemy, then disappeared over the Manchurian border for some time.



It resurfaced to attack lumber yard No. 7, at Sanghunggyongsuri of the Japanese lumber business, southeast of Mt. Paektu, and moved swiftly in the direction of Pegae Hill. The enemy's special guard forces and military and police forces in J-Iyesan, Hoin and Sinpha proceeded in quick response towards Pegae Hill along the road on the border. Choe Hyon sent a messenger to us with a brief report of the situation, but did not request support. He got in touch with us just to inform us of the enemy's movements, for our reference in the operations. Choe Hyon was not a man to admit difficulties or ask for help.

There was not a shadow of doubt that Choe Hyon, a veteran soldier, would extricate himself from the difficult situation. However, we could not afford to be optimistic about the changing battle situation. This unexpected situation had a serious effect on our operations. We had to work out flexible tactics that would save Choe Hyon's unit from the danger of complete encirclement and simultaneously push ahead with the advance into the homeland.

I summoned the commanding officers and put a series of questions to them: The 4th Division has been surrounded by the enemy, I told them. Choe Hyon says that he can break through by himself. Should we do nothing to help him, believing his decision to be a correct one? Or should we put off our advance into the homeland to save his unit first?

Another possibility is to advance into the homeland first, then take action to save his unit. If none of these solutions is desirable, should we divide our main force and undertake the operations in two directions at once? Which area in the homeland will be ideal for us to attack in order to save Choe Hyon's unit from encirclement?

Everyone focused his attention on me. With things being so serious and pressing, the argument that followed was heated from the start. The officers were mainly of two opinions. One was that we should first save Choe Hyon's unit by striking from behind the northward-surging enemy and then push into the homeland when developments permitted it.

Many other comrades rebuffed this opinion, however. They said that while there was no doubt the main force would succeed in the rescue operations, the shooting would attract the attention of the enemy forces in the border area and West Jiandao, which would then dash along the shortest roads available and surround the main force.

The other opinion was that since Choe Hyon's unit was strong enough to break through the encirclement by itself at any cost, we should keep to the original plan and attack Hyesan on the enemy's first line of defense along the border as soon as possible. This action would throw the enemy into confusion and force it to lift the encirclement in order to turn back to where the battle was raging.

However, this idea was also rejected as being too risky. Strong as Choe Hyon's division was, it might have become exhausted in the course of repeated battles and long marches and might have been unable to break through the encirclement. In addition, it was not certain that the enemy forces, which were moving

northward far away in the Musan area, would lift their encirclement if the main force attacked Hyesan.

I proposed a plan combining the two operations into one: "We have to advance into the homeland at any cost, hence we cannot change or cancel this plan of operation. At the same time, we must save Choe Hyon's unit quickly. It is inconceivable that we abandon our revolutionary comrades in the jaws of death because the advance into the homeland is important. There is only one way out. We must strike at one specific point in the homeland, the point that will enable us to attain both goals at once."

The officers could not hide their curiosity about the "one specific point". Lee Tong Hak asked me on behalf of everyone which place I had in mind.

I continued my explanation over the map.

"In choosing our point of attack, we must take into account the following aspects: The place must be close to Pegae Hill, on which the enemy forces are concentrated. Only by attacking here can our advance into the homeland have an effect on the two objectives. The key point closest to Pegae Hill is Pochonbo, situated midway between the hill and Hyesan. If we attack Pochonbo, the enemy concentrated on the Pegae Hill area will find itself in a danger of being surrounded by both our main forces and Choe Hyon's unit.

They will then be forced to abandon their plan of encirclement and pursuit and will withdraw from the line they have reached. Moreover, an attack on Pochonbo will have as strong an impact on the homeland as an attack on Hyesan. Therefore, our aim of advancing into the homeland will also be achieved. The key to solving the problem is an attack on Pochonbo."

The commanding officers nodded approvingly.

I then put the following questions to them.

"In order to attack Pochonbo we have to take several things into consideration. First, can our force of several hundred break through the enemy's tight borderline surveillance in such a way that we hit them like lightning, then withdraw at the same lightning speed? Second, this battle is not a mere firefight. Our main task in this battle is to inspire the people back home with confidence in our victory; this means that we must combine the firefight with strong, swift political propaganda.

Can we undertake a quick propaganda campaign such as this? Third, on this occasion we intend to create a model of joint operation between our revolutionary armed force and our underground organizations to strike at the same target. Is that possible?"

The commanding officers were once again enveloped in an atmosphere of tense concentration: the three challenges were not simple. Kwon Yong Byok broke the silence in a voice that carried weight.

"Comrade Commander, we can do it. Just give us the orders!"

"Can you say that with absolute certainty?"

"Of course. Pochonbo is a part of the homeland, isn't it?"

I felt elated, as if I had shouted the answer myself rather than heard it from someone else. What a coincidence that he should be thinking just as I was. The other comrades no doubt would have answered the same way, for it was a reply that was in everyone's heart. There was no reason why we should not win the battle in our beloved homeland, the land that had given us our lives and our souls? we, the communists of Korea, who had been victorious in every battle, fought in the rains and snowstorms of a foreign land.

Our meeting was brief but full of discussion. The exact details of what was said have slipped my mind with the passage of time, but I still remember clearly Kwon Yong Byok's confident voice declaring, "Pochonbo is a part of the homeland, isn't it?"

Even as we set out on our historical advance into the homeland, our hearts were heavy with resentment and anger at the thought of our ruined nation, the land of our forefathers, deprived of its great entity.

## 17.2. Flames of Pochonbo - Part II

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At Diyangxi, Shijiudaogou, Changbai County, we grouped our forces for the advance into the homeland, and dressed all the soldiers in summer uniforms. Our unit, attired in their new uniforms, left Diyangxi in a long procession. Frankly speaking, I do not believe we had ever been so finely arrayed as we were on that march.

The march was not simply an operational movement, but something for which the Korean communists had prepared for many years after spilling much blood. Our intent was to stir up the homeland with the roar of our gunshots - we the communists who, mourning over the loss of our national sovereignty, had made every effort in the foreign land to win back our lost country. That was why, feeling as if we were about to visit our beloved families after a long separation, we had dressed and equipped ourselves in our best: we intended to show our compatriots in the homeland the gallant appearance of the revolutionary army.

Previously some of us had been dressed in makeshift clothes, for the clothing of the revolutionary army was usually made by its sewing unit. But when the unit was short-handed, the housewives in nearby villages rendered assistance, and some of the clothes were, therefore, not as neat as the uniform. Sometimes men in civilian clothes could be seen among our ranks.

After devising the plan of operations of advancing into the homeland, I decided to have new military uniforms made, as designed by Headquarters, for all the army units. Red-star badges were sewn on caps and insignia on the tunics. Men soldiers wore riding breeches somewhat restyled to suit guerrilla activities, while the women soldiers wore both pleated skirts and trousers. Both sexes wore tunics, as they had done previously.

At Yangmudingzi we had sent the members of the supply department, including the sewing unit, to Changbai after deciding to make 600 uniforms. The situation being what it was in those days, we had had to march toward Fusong despite hardship and danger and could hardly afford to pay attention to clothing. Where our next meal was coming from was a more pressing issue at the time. Nevertheless, we went ahead and arranged the work of getting the clothing ready for hundreds of our men and women soldiers in preparation for the planned advance into the homeland.

Oh Jung Hup and Kim Ju Hyon had worked their way through untold problems to carry out the assignment of making 600 uniforms.

The hardships suffered by the supply-service detachment, led by Oh Jung Hap, on their journey from Xigang to Changbai have been recounted by certain veterans of the war against the Japanese, but the full picture has not yet been given. When we left northward for Fusong we had taken along some food obtained after the battle of Limingshui.

However, Oh Jung Hup's detachment heading for Changbai did not have even a bowlful of cereal, and his men were too famished and exhausted to move on. One can get along for a few days with no food, but not for too many days. Unable to endure their hunger any longer, they turned their steps towards Duantoushan. Apparently they calculated that they would be able to find the heads of the oxen they had buried after the battle at Duantoushan.

However, when they reached the burial place, they found only bones, for the meat had been gnawed away by wild animals. Still, the detachment boiled the bones and drank the water to regain their energy to some extent.

Hunger soon threatened them again, and they were faced with the threat of death from both starvation and cold. All of them were nearly frozen to death, their clothes torn to pieces by the sharp ice-crust that covered the deep snow drifts and their bare flesh exposed to the cold.

If it had not been for their great ambition to be a part of the impending advance into the homeland - an ardent desire they did not forget for even a moment - the members of the supply-service detachment might never have been able to make it over the mountains and might have remained buried in the snow on a ridge in Fusong or Changbai.

Kim Ju Hyon said that he had nearly burst into tears when Oh Jung Hup's detachment arrived at Xiaodeshui, for their appearance was so appalling, they looked to be near death. The villagers of Xiaodeshui met them, took them to their houses and cut their rags off with scissors. Their bodies were covered with blood and ice. Their wounds had to be sterilized with salt water, and their chilblain had to be treated before they could be dressed in new clothes. Everyone, including Oh Jung Hup, was thoroughly frost-bitten.

Astonishingly, as soon as they came to themselves again, they sat down before their sewing machines. Hearing the news, the members of the ARF and the inhabitants of Xiaodeshui did their best to help them recuperate. The guerrillas and the people got some cloth and the 600 uniforms were made by joint effort.

At one point Park Yong Sun told me that when he recounted the hardships suffered by the army and people in Chechangzi during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, he used to omit the most tragic parts because the younger people might not believe him. I think I understand why he did that. Those who had no experience of the hardships during the revolution against the Japanese will find it difficult to imagine how hard the struggle was.

Once I read a military magazine published in the Soviet Union that defined Soviet patriotism as the essence of Soviet military thought. I thought this viewpoint was right. The essence of the military thought that underlay the character and actions of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was also love for the country and fellow Koreans. We always taught the soldiers of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army to act as genuine liberators and devoted protectors of their country and their people, at all times and in all places. Being ready to die for the country was the essence of patriotism which governed the life of the

anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

In late May Oh Jung Hup arrived in Diyangxi with 600 new suits of clothing for the soldiers. The marching force, dressed in the new uniform that had been created at the cost of so much blood and hardship, left Shijiudaogou in early June 1937, and marching by way of Ershidaogou, Ershiyidaogou and Ershierdaogou reached a place within a hailing distance of Mt. Kouyushui. Our guide at that time was Chon Pong Sun from Shijiudaogou. He said that the vista before us was the Yanchaofeng tableland and Opposite it, across the River Yalu, was Konjang Hill, a part of the fatherland.

Our unit stayed at a village near Mt. Kouyushui for a while, then ascended the slope of the tableland at dawn on June 3. The rolling ridges of the fatherland seemed to be greeting us. That day the unit took a rest on the tableland. Kim Un Sin and other members of the advance party went to the Kouyushui Barrage to build a raft bridge. We crossed the Yalu on the night of June 3.

A strange tension gripped my entire body, not leaving me till the last member of the unit was safely across. The border was said to have been tightly guarded by the enemies with four cordons, for the original three had been found to be unsatisfactory. There were as many as 300 police Stations and substations in the northern border area, manned by repressive, highly mobile forces several thousand strong.

The Hyesan police station had a special border-guard force to check the advance of the KPRA into the homeland. Okawa Shuichi, the then commander of this force, confessed in later days that it had been the best of the units, whose main mission had been to take “punitive” action against the guerrilla army.

The enemy had dug out trenches and built artificial barriers, such as earthen walls, barbed wire and wooden fences, around the buildings of police substations and agencies in the border areas, and in some vital places they had either set up observation posts or dug out communication trenches. The police guard forces of North Pyongahn Province were equipped with air planes and two motorboats equipped with machine-guns and searchlights.

It seemed as if they were determined to detect the stirring of even rats and birds, to say nothing of human movements. It was further reported that the guard force in North Hamgyong Province also had a motorboat ready. We had information that the police institutions by the river had been getting supplies of machine-guns, searchlights, telescopes and helmets. Under such circumstances it seemed almost impossible that one could make an advance into the homeland, especially a large unit.

The strict watch along the border, however, could not hold us back.

The Kouyushui Barrage covered the sound of our crossing with its roaring torrent of water. The turbulent current of the history of modern Korea seemed to be condensed into the rumbling, each thread of sound whispering the details.

We climbed up Konjang Hill, which was a flat hill covered with a thick forest. The unit posted a sentry there and bivouacked overnight.

On the morning of the next day we got ourselves ready for battle in the forest of Konjang Hill. We prepared proclamation handbills and appeals, held a meeting of commanding officers and assigned scouting duties. An important matter was to confirm in the field the information we had previously obtained on situation of the enemy. I sent Ma Tong Hui and Kim Hwak Sil into the streets of Pochonbo on a scouting mission. They were disguised as a good-natured, somewhat simple-minded peasant couple.

They wandered into various institutions on plausible excuses, talking nonsense while at the same time collecting information. Their scouting was so detailed as to even bring us the news that there was to be a farewell party for the head of a forest conservation office about to be transferred.

We had already obtained enough information of Pochonbo through different channels, such as those from Kwon Yong Byok, Lee Je Sun and Park Tal, so as to build up details on the enemy situation, in three dimensions.

After dark we descended Konjang Hill. Entering Pochonbo, the unit dispersed in several groups and occupied designated positions.

I took up my command post under a poplar tree that stood at the edge of town. The distance from there to the police substation, one of our major targets, was no more than 100 meters. It is a tenet of street fighting that the command post is seldom located near the street, as mine was at the time. Yet this can be said to be one of important features of the Battle of Pochonbo. My commanding officers had advised me to locate the command post a little farther from the town, but I had declined, for it was my earnest desire to be where I could see every move of the fight at all times and be able to throw myself into the battle if it was necessary.

Still vivid in my memory of the scene just before battle is a group of people playing chess in the front yard of a farmhouse near the command post. Had I been working underground then, I would have spoken to them and helped the players with moves.

At 10 p.m. sharp, I raised my pistol high and pulled the trigger.

Everything I had ever wanted to say to my fellow countrymen back in the homeland for over 10 years was packed into that one shot reverberating through the street that night. The gunshot, as our poets described, was both a greeting to our motherland and a challenge to the Japanese imperialist robbers whom we were about to punish.

My signal started a barrage of fire destined to destroy the enemy's establishments in the city. The main attack was directed at the police substation, the lair for the policemen of this region and the citadel of all sorts of repression and atrocities. O Paek Ryong's machine-gun poured out a merciless barrage of shots at

its windows.

As we knew that the enemy also gathered at the forest conservation office, we struck it hard as well. The town turned upside down in an instant. Orderlies came run-fling to the poplar tree one after another to report to me of the developments of the fighting. To each of them I stressed that no civilians were to be hurt.

Soon fires began to flare up here and there. The sub-county office, post office, forest conservation office, fire hall and various other enemy's administrative centers were engulfed in flames, and the streets were floodlit like a theatre on a gala night.

While searching the post office some of my men found a lot of Japanese coins in a tin box. As we withdrew from Pochonbo, they tossed them around everywhere in the street. O Paek Ryong broke into the police substation and came out with a machine gun inscribed, "Presented by the Patriotic Women's Association". He looked delighted at the find.

I walked down the middle of the streets, with Kim Ju Hyon just ahead.

People began to gather on the street from every corner. When they first heard the gunshots, they kept indoors, but later, when our agitators began shouting slogans, they came pouring out in a throng. Poet Jo Ki Chon described the scene by saying, "the masses swayed like a nocturnal sea." The line was quite apt.

As the people bubbled over around us, Kwon Yong Byok whispered at I should address a greeting to the compatriots.

Looking round the crowd, I found their eyes, as bright as stars, all focused on me. Taking off my cap and waving my uplifted arm, I made a speech stressing the idea of sure victory and resistance against Japan. I concluded with the words:

"Brothers and sisters, let us meet again on the day of national liberation!"

When I left the square in front of the sub-county office, which was a mass of flames, my heart felt heavy and full of pain, as if pierced with a knife. We were all leaving a part of ourselves behind in the small border town as we marched away, and the hearts of those left behind wailed silently as they watched us go.

On climbing up Konjang Hill, the entire unit did something unexpected: The marchers broke up suddenly without my orders and started picking up handfuls of their native soil to put in their packs. Even the commanding officers did it.

A handful of earth was little compared to the 220,000 square kilo-meters that made up Korea. Nevertheless it stood for Korea and our 23 million compatriots. It was as dear to us as the whole of our



motherland.

As we re-crossed the River Yalu, we made the following pledge to ourselves: "Today we are leaving after striking one town, but tomorrow we will attack hundreds of towns, thousands of towns. Today we are leaving With only a handful of earth, but tomorrow we will liberate the whole country and shout out cheers of independence!"

The Battle of Pochonbo was a small battle that involved no large guns, aircraft or tanks. It was an ordinary raid, which combined the use of small arms and a speech designed to stir up public feeling. It produced few casualties and none of us was killed in the battle.

The raid was so one-sided that it seemed to have fallen short of the expectations of some of my men. Nonetheless, the battle met the requirements of guerrilla warfare at the highest level. The selection of the objective, the timing and method to attack, especially surprise attack, the combination of brisk propaganda and powerful agitation through incendiary action - all the processes of the operations were perfectly coordinated.

The significance of a war or battle is determined not only by its military importance but also its political importance. I believe that those who know that war is the continuation of politics pursued by different means can easily understand why. From this point of view, it can be said we fought a very great battle.

The battle was a triumphant event in that it dealt a telling blow at the Japanese imperialists who had been strutting around Korea and Manchuria as if they were the lords of Asia. The People's Revolutionary Army struck terror into the Japanese imperialists by suddenly striking one of their bases in the homeland, where the Government-General had vaunted over their security, and destroying one of their local ruling machines at a stroke.

To the Japanese, this blow was a bolt from the blue, proved by the confessions made by the then army and police officers, who said such things as, "We feel as if we had been struck hard on the back of the head," and "We feel the shame of watching the haystack we had been carefully building for a thousand days go up in flames in an instant."

There was no doubt whatsoever that the outcome of this battle would make a great impact on the world: Korea, a lesser nation that had once exposed the crimes committed by Japan and begged for independence at an International Peace Conference<sup>2</sup> suddenly revealed itself to possess a revolutionary fighting force capable of dealing merciless blows at the army of Japan (which boasted of being one of the five world powers), a force that swiftly broke through the "iron wall" built by the Japanese imperialists and dealt a crushing blow of punishment to the aggressors.

The Battle of Pochonbo showed that imperialist Japan could be smashed and burnt up, like rubbish. The flames over the night sky of Pochonbo in the fatherland heralded the dawn of the liberation of Korea, which had been buried in darkness.

Tong-A Ilbo, Jason Ilbo, Kyongsong ilbo and other major newspapers in the homeland all reported the news of the battle under banner headlines.

The battle was also headlined by the Japanese mass media, such as Domei News, Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun, and Osaka Asahi Shimbun, and Chinese newspapers, including Manchurian Daily, Manchurian News and Taiwan Daily. Pravda and Krasnoye Znamya, not to mention TASS, of the Soviet Union also gave liberal space to this battle. One shot fired on the frontier of a small colonized nation in the East amazed the whole world.

Around this time Pacific, a magazine published in the Soviet Union, carried an article under the headline, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Northern Area of Korea" which dealt in detail with our struggle against Japanese imperialism. I think it was from then on that the Soviet publications began to give wide publicity to our names and Struggle.

An article on the Battle of Pochonbo was also carried by Orienta Kuriero, a magazine in Esperanto.

The aim of Orienta Kuriero was to lay bare the brutality and plunder of Japanese imperialism and to give publicity to the anti-Japanese war and Oriental culture. All the articles carried in the magazine could be translated into the readers' languages and reprinted. Thanks to these characteristics of the magazine, the news of the Battle of Pochonbo spread widely in the countries where the magazine was distributed.

The Battle of Pochonbo demonstrated to the public at home and abroad the revolutionary will and fighting spirit that drove our people to end Japanese imperialist colonial rule and win back national independence and sovereignty. Through this battle the Korean communists were able to demonstrate the staunch anti-imperialist stand and the policy of independence to which they had consistently adhered throughout their entire course of action. They showed their effective combat power and the thoroughgoing way in which they practiced what they preached.

The battle also proved that it was the communists, spearheading the anti-Japanese armed struggle, who were the true, most ardent patriots and the most devoted and responsible fighters capable of emerging victorious in the fight for national liberation. Pochonbo provided the needed impetus for the compatriots in the homeland to rise up nationwide against Japanese imperialism, with armed struggle as the main axis. It also created the necessary atmosphere for pushing ahead with the building of party and the ARF organizations in the homeland.

But the greatest significance of the Battle of Pochonbo is that it not only convinced our people, who had thought Korea was dead, that this country was still very much alive but also armed them with the faith that they were fully capable of fighting and achieving national independence and liberation.

Not surprisingly then, this battle had an enormous impact on the people of Korea. Hearing of the news that the KPRA had attacked Pochonbo, Ryo Un Hyong was said to have hurried to the battle site, greatly

excited by the news.

On meeting me in Pyongyang after liberation, he made following remarks: "When I heard of the news that the guerrilla army had attacked Pochonbo, I felt my distress as a citizen of a ruined nation, humiliated for over 20 years under Japanese rule, disappear into thin air in an instant. Walking around Pochonbo after the battle, I slapped my knee and shouted, 'What a relief! Tangun's Korea is alive.' This thought moved me to tears."

According to An U Saeng, Kim Gu's aid, too, was exhilarated by the news of the Battle of Pochonbo. He had long served the Provisional Government in Shanghai, working as a secretary for Kim Gu. One day Kim Gu, who had been leafing through newspapers, came across news of the battle and was so inflamed. He opened the windows and shouted over and over again that the Paedal nation was alive.

Kim Gu then went on to say to An U Saeng: "The situation is very frustrating: with the Sino-Japanese War so imminent, the so-called campaigners have all disappeared. How perfectly timed on Kim Il Sung's part to have led his army into Korea and struck the Japanese in this situation! From now our Provisional Government must support General Kim. I must send a messenger to Mt. Paektu in a few days."

This anecdote shows how Kim Gu and other well-known people in Korea and overseas held in high esteem the communists, who were taking part in the war against Japan, after the Battle of Pochonbo. This political climate created favorable conditions for us to rally patriots from all walks of life around the anti-Japanese national united front.

The battle left a good image of us in the minds of many nationalists, an impression that continued after liberation and helped greatly with our Cooperation in building a new Korea. The Battle of Pochonbo was of great benefit to us.

I heard that Kim Jong Hang, a close friend of mine during my days in Badaogou read the news of the battle in Asahi Shimbun in Tokyo, Where he had been studying while working as a newsboy.

Early one morning when he turned up at a branch office of Asahi Shimbun, he was told by his employer to deliver 100 extra copies. He wondered why and opened the newspaper to find the incredible news that Kim Il Sung's army had attacked Pochonbo.

Kim Jong Hang said that at the time he had no idea that Kim Il Sung, who had assaulted Pochonbo, was Kim Sung Ju from the old days in Badaogou.

Kim Jong Hang felt suffering as an intellectual when he had read about the battle: "When young patriots are fighting the Japanese, what the hell am I doing here in Japan? Is it right to be here, studying in university just to earn a living in the future?" he thought. His self-examination finally resulted in a firm determination to go off and join the guerrilla army to take up arms.

He left Japan immediately and returned home, where he tried his best to find the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. It was not until then that he realized that Kim Il Sung, who had attacked Pochonbo, was none other than Kim Sung Ju of his childhood. The knowledge of this, he said, redoubled his determination to go to Mt. Paektu. However, his attempt to join our army failed. We met each other only after the liberation of the country.

As the case of Kim Jong Hang shows, the Battle of Pochonbo brought about a great change in the lives of the conscientious intellectuals of Korea. The conflagration that illuminated the night sky over Pochonbo lighted the path for all conscientious people and patriots of Korea in search of a more genuine life.

## 17.3. Joint Celebration of Army and People at Diyangxi

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When we arrived at Kouyushuigou on our way back from the attack on Pochonbo, the rank and file suggested to me through their commanding officers that we take a day's rest. As far as I remember, the rank and file had never asked Headquarters for a rest in the whole period of the anti-Japanese war.

How tired they must have been to make the suggestion! To be candid, my men and officers had not had a day's rest in those days. The men and officers had spent a day on Konjang Hill, and they were too excited to sleep or to feel tired. Once a round of battle was over, however, the strain that had gripped the unit suddenly gave way, and everyone yearned for rest and relaxation. I myself felt exhausted from the lack of sleep.

Moreover, the peasants in the village in Kouyushuigou begged us commanders to stop and relax. They had prepared rice-cakes and slain hogs, they told us, hoping that we would accept their hospitality. The soldiers, who were hungry, were all the more eager at the mention of rice-cakes and pork. Even the political commissars of regiments fell in with the men's suggestion and advised me to accept their hospitality.

Nevertheless, I did not give the order for a break. Commander must be all the more vigilant at such a moment: we may have left the battle ground across the border, but we could still suffer disaster unless we were on the alert. The enemy's border guards must have got flurried under issued emergency mobilization orders, and they might attack us any minute. From past experience, it was pretty obvious that the enemy would chase us.

When would the enemy appear? A quick estimate showed that we had no more than half an hour to stay at Kouyushuigou. It was a small village with little space to accommodate hundreds of soldiers and civilians carrying booty, even if they ate quickly.

After ensuring that part of the booty was divided among the villagers, I ordered my men to put rice-balls in their packs. At the same time I sent back home some of the people who had followed us from Pochonbo to act as our carriers. Then, together with the few remaining people carrying our goods, we climbed Mt. Kouyushui. I had a hunch that a battle would have to be fought on that mountain. It was a rocky, steep mountain with a gradient of 60 degrees; climbing it with a heavy load was no easy job.

If the man in front loosened a stone by mistake, it might cause a chain reaction resulting in a disastrous rockslide. Several times I passed the message to my men through my orderly, Paek Hak Lim, to be careful not to dislodge any rocks; every man climbed the slope with care, helping the man in front by pushing him up.

As the unit reached the summit, I prepared the men for a possible combat even before they had cooled off their sweat. With a view to combine an exchange of fire and a rockslide to suit the terrain, the unit built several rock piles and settled down to wait. Then we had a light breakfast of rice-balls.

I looked down and found a horde of enemy troops climbing in our wake. It was a special border guard force under the command of Okawa Shuichi. The enemy was approaching in fairly high spirits. When they came within 30 metres of us, I gave the order to fire. The rifles and machine-guns went into action. I also took up a rifle and started shooting.

The enemy crawled up the mountain doggedly, taking cover behind rocks. In that terrain rifle fire was not effective. I ordered a rockslide, and my men began to roll down the stones they had gathered. We had employed the rockslide tactic on Mt. Ppyojok to defend Xiaowangqing and now again on Mt. Kouyushui. It was a powerful ploy.

This battle was another demonstration of the fighting efficiency of our men. As we had not given the enemy time to offer resistance during the Battle of Pochoribo, the battle ended too easily in our one-sided attack. But on Mt. Kouyushui the enemy's attack was so tenacious that it was worth fighting.

When the bugle sounded, O Paek Ryong charged down the slope and killed the enemy machine-gunner, waving the machine-gun he had captured at me. Kim Un Sin fought hand-to-hand with a bulky enemy soldier until he managed to wrest a grenade-launcher from him.

Our counterattack was so violent that one puppet Manchukuo army unit, which came later from the west of Mt. Kouyushui, flinched from attacking. They shot a few rounds without really aiming from afar, then looked on as the battle raged. I ordered my machine-gunners to fire a few shots at random in that direction. Firing random shots when the puppet Manchukuo forces lingered about us was a practice we had acquired in our days in Jiandao. The puppet Manchukuo army soldiers wanted it this way. When we complied with their request, they refrained from provoking a real fight with the revolutionary army and went back after firing a few random shots of their own.

That day our blocking party repulsed the attack of the Hyesan garrison led by Captain Kurita.

The civilians who had followed us from Pochonbo carrying booty witnessed the entire battle and were greatly impressed by the fighting power of the People's Revolutionary Army. They saw clearly how the enemy were vanquished. And what they saw that day became silent material for their education: they reaffirmed the combat efficiency of fighting efficiency of our army at the battles of Pochonbo and Mt. Kouyushui.

Later Park Tal told me that enemy personnel who survived the battle on Mt. Kouyushui were so terrified that they did not go to battle again anywhere for some time. He added that the survivors included a policeman of Korean nationality whom he knew well. Apparently he was a clever man. While climbing Mt. Kouyushui, the policeman saw the footprints of the guerrillas and perceived that the guerrillas might

be lying in ambush.

He pretended to be rearranging his puttees and dropped behind. When the Japanese policemen had nearly reached the summit, the sound of machine-guns, exploding grenades and screams reached him, and he fled down the mountain, hiding himself by the river until the battle was over. He told Park Tal proudly that he had remained alive because of his quick wits.

Okawa Shuichi, chief of the special border guard force, who miraculously survived the battle of Mt. Kouyushui, apparently lived in Japan as an ordinary citizen until just a few years ago. In his last years he wrote a reminiscence of the Japanese defeat in that battle. Reading the article, I learned that he had been seriously wounded: one of our bullets went through his tongue, which to my mind is one of the nastiest of all wounds. He was in hospital for a long time, but remained almost uncured.

I saw a picture of him and his wound. The wound had never really healed. Like many of the soldiers and policemen of old Japan, Okawa was one of the victims of the notorious "imperial spirit".

The victory we achieved in the battle of Mt. Kouyushui, along with the later success of the battle of Jiansanfeng, consolidated our victory at the Battle of Pochonbo and demonstrated once again the combat power and invincibility of the KPRA. The enemy on the border shook with fear of us. The statement in their documented records that they annihilated "a large number of the enemy" in the battle of Mt. Kouyushui is sheer fabrication. Not one of us was killed.

The enemy enlisted the people living near Mt. Kouyushui by force, plundering their sleeping quilts and the doors to their houses to carry off the dead bodies. All in all, we wiped out the enemy on Mt. Kouyushui, the enemy we had planned to annihilate in Hyesan. In other words, the objective of our attack on Hyesan was attained at Mt. Kouyushui.

After the battle we had an emotional reunion with Choe Hyon's unit, which had returned safely by breaking through an encirclement. Choe Hyon's shoes and clothes were tattered beyond description. He warmly congratulated us on our victories at Pochonbo and on Mt. Kouyushui. Then, he said abruptly, "We were encircled by the enemy near Pegae Hill, but all of a sudden they lifted the encirclement and ran away. What does that mean, General?" I briefly explained how we attacked Pochonbo to rescue his 4th Division.

He laughed loudly and said, "Seeing them running off like that, I wondered if it wasn't the hand of God, but after all we owe it to you, General. It is really wonderful."

He used the pronoun "they" whenever he spoke, in contempt of the Japanese soldiers and policemen.

When I asked him to take me to his division, as I wanted to see the soldiers, he pulled a face, saying that they were not presentable.

When I asked him what he meant, he answered that they were too ragged.

I called Kim Hae San and ordered him to issue uniforms to the soldiers of the 4th Division. They had been kept for Choe Hyon's unit from the 600 uniforms made before the advance to the homeland. As Choe Hyon said, the appearance of the soldiers in his division was indescribable. Their beggarly clothes and their heavily sunburnt faces told the true story of the arduous road they had traversed. Only after shaving and changing into a new uniform did he come to see me and give an official report about his past activities. Their battle results were great.

In Diyangxi we met the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps. That division, too, had fulfilled its mission satisfactorily. I thanked the soldiers of the 4th and 2nd Divisions for their flank and rear support and cooperation with the main force thrusting into the homeland. In this way the revolutionary army units, which had launched themselves in three directions in accordance with the resolution adopted at the Xigang meeting, assembled on the tableland at Diyangxi, fixed earlier as the place for reunion, and shared their friendship. The green plateau was full of holiday atmosphere as those present talked about their experiences in battle.

The extraordinary results achieved by the revolutionary army in the course of carrying out the policy put forward at the Xigang meeting brought great happiness to the people around Mt. Paektu who had witnessed them. According to information obtained through Park Tal's organizations, the people in Kapsan, Phungsan and Samsu, men and women, young and old, were bubbling over with excitement, declaring that the day when the revolutionary army would liberate them was near at hand.

What was notable in Choe Hyon's report was the story about a Japanese, named Kawashima, they had captured when raiding lumber yard No. 7 in Sanghunggyongsuri. The yard was merely a branch of the head office in Hyesan, and Kawashima was its chief. The 4th Division soldiers told me that they had taken him to Diyangxi because, first, he was an interesting man, as he spoke Korean well and his wife was Korean and, second, they wanted to take him hostage for ransom.

Choe Hyon said that he had had a quarrel over the man's fate with Jon Kwang and Park Tuk Pom, who had put pressure on him to execute the man. He asked my advice.

I curtly replied that executing him was out of the question, and said, It is untenable that Kawashima should be executed because he is a Japanese. Although he is chief of the lumber yard, he should not be killed if he is not guilty of any crime as a reserve soldier against our people. Such people must be dealt with prudently."

Choe Hyon said he agreed with me.

That day I saw Kawashima in person. I said a few words to him and found that he spoke Korean better than I had expected. I asked him if he was not afraid of the revolutionary army, and he answered that he had been at first, but now he was not. He continued, "The Japanese authorities call the guerrillas 'bandits'.



But while following the revolutionary army these days, I realized that this was a lie. Bandits plunder others of their property, but I have not seen them doing such a thing.

The guerrillas are fighting solely for the liberation of Korea. Even though they go hungry for days, they do not enter a grain field without the master's permission. If they happened to get something to eat, they put it in the mouths of their comrades. How can such soldiers be bandits?"

I advised Choe Hyon, Jon Kwang and Park Tuk Pom to return him in safety after giving him education, as he was not guilty of any serious crime and was a clever man.

According to information from our organization later, Kawashima on his return to the lumber yard said to his fellows that "The Korean guerrilla army is not a banditti but a well-disciplined revolutionary army and they are not so weak as to be conquered by the Japanese army." Even after he was taken off to the police station he said the same thing, insisting that this was what he had witnessed. The police authorities sent him back to Japan, labeling him a Red. But the gist of what Kawashima said about the People's Revolutionary Army was carried at that time in a newspaper published in the homeland.

Reading the article, Choe Hyon said to me with a laugh, "Kawashima is paying back what he owes to the guerrillas. I can now see why you advised us to release him."

My experience with Kawashima reconfirmed my view that not all the Japanese people were bad and that they should be dealt with discreetly, according to their acts and ideological inclination.

The day we arrived at Diyangxi, Lee Hun, head of Shijiudaogou, called on us. He said that his villagers had prepared some food, though frugal, and wanted to invite the guerrillas for a meal to celebrate the victories in Pochonbo and on Mt. Kouyushui. From the way Lee Hun spoke I sensed that the whole village was going to serve us a treat rather than a light meal, as before. Serving even a simple bowl of rice to each of the hundreds of guerrillas would be a great burden to the people of Shijiudaogou. We could not impose such a burden on them. So I advised him not to prepare the food.

However, Lee Hun, who had always been obedient to me, now stubbornly insisted that the people's offer of hospitality not be turned down. He said, "This is not my personal wish, General. It is the unanimous desire of the people of Shijiudaogou. Please don't decline our request. If I return with your refusal, even the women there will call me good-for-nothing and throw stones at me. I can endure that, but what can I do if the entire village sheds tears?"

I found it difficult to decline their invitation. If we said no to the people's hospitality and left Diyangxi all of a sudden, how disappointed both the people and the guerrillas would be.

I said to Lee Hun:

"Since things have come to this pass, it would be better for the guerrillas and the people to get together

and enjoy the day to their hearts' content. The day of Tano festival is just around the corner and it would be a good idea to hold a grand celebration in broad daylight out on the Diyangxi plateau as a joint celebration between the army and the people. Let them encourage each other and share their friendship. Let's have some entertainment and an athletic meet so that they can enjoy the festival and feel free from worldly worries."

Defudong, chosen as the place for the celebration, was a village that had been given revolutionary education by Lee Je Sun, Kim Un Sin, Ma Tong Hui, Kim Ju Hyon, Ji Thae Hwan and Kim Il. As it was situated on a tableland dozens of miles away from the county town, neither policemen nor the district head frequented it. The enemy administrative organs were relatively far away. The nearest police station to Defudong was situated in Ouledong, far away along a mountain path. When selecting the place for the celebration we took all of this into account. The place produced many guerrillas in later days.

I stayed with 50 officers and rank-and-file guerrillas in the house of An Tok Hun, chief of an ARF chapter. Lee Je Sun had joined hands with Lee Hun and An Tok Hun before anybody else in Shijiudaogou. We dropped in at his house before and after the Battle of Pochonbo and received much help from him. His family aided the guerrillas well. His younger brother, An Tok Su, was also a fine man who zealously helped us in our work.

In Defudong there lived a rich man, surnamed Song. He was a landlord with a strong pro-Japanese disposition. He did not care at all what happened to the country so long as he was well-off, that was his view on life. One day our operatives, having found out that the man had much money, called Song and Lee Hun to An Tok Hun's house and made an appeal to them to help the guerrillas. In summoning Lee Hun, a member of the secret organization, to that place, the operatives had a plan: if Lee Hun said that he would donate a certain amount of money, Song could not refuse.

Also, by shouting at Lee, they could further conceal his identity as a member of the secret organization. Things turned out as they had expected. When Lee said he would contribute his share of money on behalf of his village, Song, unable to refuse, answered reluctantly that he would contribute 150 yuan for fear of future troubles.

Unhappy with this forced contribution, Song, in reprisal, gave a hint to his wife's brother, who was working at a police substation, that operatives from the guerrillas frequented An Tok Hun's house. Informed of this, Lee Hun discussed the matter with the operatives. As a result, he sent An Tok Hun to the guerrilla army and An's family to Korea.

But for this emergency measure, his family might well have been exterminated, for in summer or autumn of 1937 the enemy burned Defudong down completely, calling it a "Red village".

At An Tok Hun's house I drew up the programme for the joint celebration in consultation with the influential figures in Shijiudaogou and the commanding officers of the 4th and 2nd Divisions. The young people in the village prepared about 50 noodle-presses at the same time. In each house the guerrillas and

the people got together and spent a night, singing and talking.

Chon Pong Sun's story of scouting out Pochonbo provoked a burst of laughter each time he told it.

At the end of May 1937, Chon Pong Sun got our order, through Kim Un Sin, a guerrilla from Ouledong, to find out the number of enemy weapons and equipment and the disposition of their forces. He learned from his relative living in Pochonbo that there were seven policemen in the police substation with one light machine-gun, five Japanese in the foresters' station (the station head would soon be transferred to another locality), and about 200 households in the town. But he wanted to confirm all this himself.

One day he went to Pochonbo and drank a cup of wine at a pub; then he walked reeling to a general store in front of the police substation. Pretending to be drunk, he searched his pockets with trembling hands, muttering to himself that there must be 1 won in there. Then taking out a 5-won note, he said, "Ah, here is 1 won," and demanded a packet of Mako cigarette. In those days a packet of that type of cigarette cost 5 jon. The change should have been 4 won 95 jon.

The wicked woman shopkeeper, however, gave him only 95 jon, thinking that he was too drunk to distinguish a 5-won note from a 1-won note. From then on, everything went as he had planned it. He demanded the storekeeper 4 won in addition to the 95 jon as a change, as he had given her 5 won. The storekeeper retorted, "What an impostor this guy is! You gave me 1 won, and you insist that you gave me 5 won, ha! No more nonsense, be off with you."

Thus they began a squabble. The storekeeper threatened that she would take him to the police, and he responded that they should, indeed, put this quarrel before the policemen. The storekeeper readily agreed, confident that the police would side with her.

In the station the two continued to argue, swearing at each other. As both of them insisted that the other was wrong, the policemen were at a loss as to how to judge. While all this was going on, Chon found out the number of policemen, machine-gun and rifles. After ascertaining what he had to, Chon said, "Then what about going to the shop with us, sirs? The 5-won note I gave her has a patch of paper in the center. If we find it, then I am right, and if not, she is right." They went off to the shop with the duty sergeant.

True to his words, they found a 5-won note with a patch of paper in its center. But the storekeeper insisted that she had got it from a customer that morning. At long last, the storekeeper won the suit.. Chon left the store, saying, "Madame, live in clover, cheating many more innocent people." She was a dishonest woman, yet he felt thankful to her; but for her, he could not have found an excuse for going into the police substation.

The members of the underground organization in Defudong were encouraged by Chon's story of scouting. It heightened their dignity. It was a source of great pride to them that a member of the secret organization in their village had contributed to the People's Revolutionary Army's advance into the homeland.

While the whole village was astir with preparation for the joint celebration, we received some disturbing information: the commander of a composite brigade of the puppet Manchukuo army had left Changbai for Hanjiagou for a "punitive" expedition against the People's Revolutionary Army.

My unit, along with Choe Hyon's, met the enemy and annihilated them with one swift stroke. The remnants of the brigade were so frightened out of their wits at our attack that they called the lane along the battlefield on which their colleagues had been killed en masse "the path of wolf's fangs".

This battle raised the prestige of the revolutionary army even higher. The booty we captured included a large amount of food that would be of help in preparations for the joint celebration.

On the fifth day of the fifth month by the lunar calendar the joint celebration was held on the Diyangxi plateau. The three units of the army filled the wide vista of the tableland. Hundreds of members of the ARF had gathered there, and the Korean National Liberation Union had sent its representative. The village heads had dispatched the enemy's agents to other places in advance for the sake of keeping secrecy, and the celebration proceeded in a free atmosphere from beginning to end.

That day the guerrillas and the people mixed freely. The presence of many old people made the occasion all the more pleasant. They all sat round food dishes and enjoyed the festivities to their hearts' content. Of all the foods the people prepared that day, rice-cakes made with mugwort and marsh plant leaves were most highly appreciated.

Along with Choe Hyon, I greeted every elderly man and woman, with the introductions being done by Lee Hun and An Tok Hun. We then passed on to the young and middle-aged men and women, whom I greeted in general. They all deserved many thanks for their sincere help to the People's Revolutionary Army in its advance into the homeland.

Some women guerrillas appeared at the celebration in Korean costumes. As they took off the military uniform, which they had worn day and night, and returned to the way they looked in their homes, they seemed as beautiful as fairies. They sat in pairs on the swings with the village girls. Songs were heard from forest and a dance was held. Some women beat the tune on dippers that had been overturned in large brass vessels filled with water.

"How could these strangers mingle with one another so warmly, like a family reunited after a long separation?" I thought, enjoying the sight of the plain, where guerrillas and people milled about, forming a living, moving garden of flowers. The enemy called us isolated beings, yet here we were, on a sea of people whose devoted love supported us. The Joint celebration on the Diyangxi plateau was a pinnacle in the anti-Japanese revolution which had managed to traverse the thorny path of history precisely because the guerrillas were loved by the people and the people were protected by the guerrillas.

I made a speech on behalf of the People's Revolutionary Army. It was a short impromptu speech to the

effect that the revolutionary army would exist and be victorious in every battle, since the army and the people had achieved unbreakable unity in mind and purpose. As far as I can remember, in this speech I gave an outline of the advance into the homeland.

A representative of the organizations in the homeland also made a speech.

After speakers from various circles had taken the floor, an old man from Ouledong handed over a congratulatory banner to us on behalf of the ARF organizations in Changbai County. Ma Tong Hui, who had performed the scouting mission so superbly at the Battle of Pochonbo, was authorized to receive the banner. The small banner of red damask silk with letters embroidered in yellow silk thread, had been made in a potato cellar by the members of the Women's Association in Xinxincun and Park Rok Kum.

They said that it had been embroidered stitch by stitch with a sentry posted outside the cellar, as enemy agents or policemen might come any minute. It was really a wonder that a tough woman operative such as Park Rok Kum could be so skilful at embroidery.

The joint celebration ended with a grand parade, considerably larger than any of the parades we had held since the start of the anti-Japanese war. During the military parades held in 1948 and after the victorious Korean war, I recalled with emotion the parade we held on the Diyangxi plateau.

The joint celebration of the army and the people held in Diyangxi showed the whole world that a great political unity existed between the army and the people.

Later, in the first half of the 1940s, the people who participated in this celebration refused to believe the Japanese imperialist propaganda that the revolutionary army had all been destroyed - a testimony of the deep impression the celebration had made on the people.

The antiJapanese guerrillas, too, were confident that the people would never lose their love for and trust in them. They turned to the people each time they faced difficulties. To our regret, Kim Chol Ho and some other soldiers of the 4th Division were late that day, being slowed down by hunger and weakness from the shortage of food, and missed the grand celebration. I was very sorry to miss them on this occasion, and on the Tano festival day in the liberated motherland several years later, I, with Kim Jong Suk, invited them all to my house.

## 17.4. Photographs and Memory

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It was probably on the Diyangxi plateau, Changbai County, that we posed for a photo for the first time during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. Towards the end of our joint celebration of the army and the people, many soldiers suggested having their photographs taken in memory of the reunion of the three units. Luckily, the 4th Division had a camera. We collected the machine-guns from all units, placed them in front of us for display and sat for a photograph. Everyone was happy, as if he had won commendation.

Nevertheless, the younger guerrillas were not satisfied with having only one picture taken. They wanted to have individual and group photos of squads; they also wanted to pose with friends in other units, whom they had met after a long separation. Some guardsmen were keen on having a picture taken with me alone as well.

But the unwilling photographer packed the camera and walked away, probably quite embarrassed: there were too many applicants and too few dry-plates to meet all their demands. The younger men went back, sulking. I thought of calling back the photographer, but I had no time to spare for it.

I understood the feelings of younger men who were disappointed not to have their photographs taken. At their age everyone wants to have his picture taken. I was no exception. I did not have many pictures from my childhood. I could hardly afford to eat my fill of coarse gruel, how could I think of having my photo taken?

In those days there was no photo studio in or around Mangyongdae, one had to walk nearly eight miles to Pyongyang city or to Ppaengtae Street if one wanted to pose for a photo. Once in a while photographers came from the city to the outskirts with tripod cameras to earn money, but even then they came only as far as Chilgol, not taking the trouble to come to Mangyongdae, an out-of-the-way village.

Once when I was a little boy, my grandfather gave me 5 jon. As it was the first money I had ever received, I walked many miles to Pyongyang city. I was fascinated by the flourishing city. The shops and bazaars on both sides of the street were filled with fancy goods. I was almost deafened by hawkers shouting, "Buy my goods!" But I ignored them and made for a photo studio with the intent of having my picture taken.

However, it was naive of me to think I could pose for a photo for only 5 jon. When I saw ladies and gentlemen in modem suits counting what seemed like wads of bank notes in front of the cashier, I realized that I had come to the wrong place. I hurried out, aware that it was a pipe-dream think one could have a taste of civilization with 5 jon. On walking away from the studio, I had a mental vision of the whole world sinking under the weight of money. I felt crushed by the vision, and since then I avoided photo studios whenever I went to the city.

In my days in Jirin, too, I tried to keep away from photo studios. Sometimes I went to cinemas, but I avoided photographers. The Jirin Yuwen Middle School was full of rich people's children. They spent money like water in the town's more entertaining quarters, and in restaurants and amusement parks. Their way of throwing around money for gourmands and merrymaking astonished me. I barely managed to pay my school fees with the money my mother sent me, which she had earned penny by penny. My most awkward moment was always when they suggested going to a restaurant or to a photo studio. I invariably turned down their suggestion on some pretext or other.

Once I received a letter from my mother with a notice of remittance. "I'm sending you some money," she wrote, "so that you could have your picture taken on your birthday and send it to me. That way, whenever I miss you, I can see you in the picture."

I could not but comply with her request. My younger brother, Chol Ju, had told me that she would bury her face in my worn-out underclothes and shed tears whenever she missed me. Proof of how much she was missing me lay in this extra expense for her, paid in addition to the school fee!

So I had my picture taken and sent it to Fusong, the only solo photograph I posed for in my days at the Jirin Yuwen Middle School still extant. It was later kept for decades by Chae Ju Son, one of my close acquaintances in Fusong and a member of the Women's Association. She finally gave it to a group of our visitors to the old revolutionary battle sites in northeast China. She had taken a great risk in keeping it for so long under the enemy's surveillance.

In later days I had my picture taken on various occasions, but most of them were lost. The photograph I posed for in Dabushanzi with Ko Jae Ryong was discovered a few years ago and made public in my memoirs.

And yet the photograph I had had taken in my days in the Jirin Yuwen Middle School fell into the hands of the enemy through a channel I did not know. The enemy police used it in their search for me. Once an enemy spy came as far as Kalun, carrying my photo, and asked the members of the Children's Expeditionary Corps, who were standing guard, whether they had not seen the man in the photo. The children told me about this in time for me to stay out of harm's way. The spy was killed by men of the Korean Revolutionary Army. After that, I refrained from sitting for a photo for some time.

This did not mean that I entirely gave up being photographed. When I had an unexpected reunion with comrades, or at moments of separation or joy, I wanted to imprint those moments so as to remember them. There were many dramatic instances worthy of photographing in my underground and guerrilla activities and there were many impressive events during my life at the guerrilla base.

However, not a single one of these events remains in the form of a photograph. It could not be helped: In those days none of us could afford to leave a memento or a symbolic piece of evidence for the future. As our struggle was arduous and pressing, more important and immediate tasks occupied us, we had no time for more extravagant thoughts.

As the saying goes, life exists even on a deserted island, and there was no reason for the guerrillas to live an austere life at all times.

When I saw the young guerrillas so eager to have their pictures taken, I felt dismay. The fact that my unit had no camera, while the 4th Division had one, made me reflect upon myself. It was a great surprise to me, who had been camera-shy for so long, that the guerrillas, who lived on the mountains and knew nothing but the revolution, were as eager to sit for a picture as were other people. Their interest was quite Unusual.

That day when I returned to my quarters I mentioned to some of the commanding officers that our young guerrillas had been following the Photographer of the 4th Division around, trying to win his favor. I added that we should have a camera of our own: I merely mentioned it in passing, but my words had an exceptional result.

One day in the summer of 1937, when we were away from Changbai, staying at the secret camp in Liudaogou, Linjiang County, Ji Thae Hwan, who was working underground in Changbai, came to see me. While making his work-report to me, he said all of a sudden that he had obtained a camera and had brought it along. I was beside myself with joy.

It was a cabinet camera on a tripod, just like the one the 4th Division had. He brought a middle-aged photographer with him. Evidently Ji had kept my passing remark in mind.

Ji had been picked, trained and sent to my unit by Kim Il, and like Kim Il, he was reticent and practical. Whenever he was entrusted with a task, he carried it out in silence, like a steadfast peasant. Kim Il and Ji Thae Hwan were very much alike in their character, in their work attitude and behavior.

Ji told me how he had gone about capturing the camera. It was a veritable adventure story: At first Ji, together with a guerrilla named Kim Hak Chol, called on Lee Hun, head of Shijiudaogou, and seriously discussed the matter of the camera. The village head also worked out the way to get one with the local members of the ARF. One day Lee Hun informed Ji that the police had brought a camera to their branch station in Ershidaogou in order to take photos of the residents for their resident cards and registration. He added that it would be like killing two birds with one stone if they got hold of the camera, for not only would it be useful to the guerrillas, but also removing it would delay the fuss of resident-registration for a long time.

In West Jiandao the Japanese imperialists attempted to enforce the system of internment villages and the medieval "collective culpability system" on hundreds of households, a system they had introduced in eastern Manchuria. It was for this purpose that they began the registration of households and photo-taking for ID cards. On top of this, they tried to issue passes and licenses for purchasing goods so as to bind the people hand and foot even further.



People between the ages of 15 and 65 could neither become residents nor move away without a resident card or a pass, nor could they buy grain, cloth or shoes without a license for purchasing goods. If a person was revealed to have bought goods without the license, he or she was arrested for "having contacts with the bandits".

The point was how to get the camera, which was standing in the yard of the strictly guarded police branch station. Ji Thae Hwan and Lee Hun discussed the matter for a long time.

The next day Lee Hun appeared in the office of branch station chief, wearing a long face, and grumbled, "I'm so angry. I can no longer work as the village head. I told the peasants time and again they can have their pictures taken if they go to the branch station, but they are too ignorant to believe me. They trembled even at the sight of me, as if I were a police officer. How can I work under these conditions?"

The chief of the branch station said nothing, only licked his chops.

Lee Hun continued, "Even the influential villagers are grumbling that it'll take until the end of autumn for the hundreds of households on the 25-mile stretch of Shijiudaogou to go to Ershidaogou to have their pictures taken. They say they have to give up harvesting and eat photographs. I don't know what to do."

Then he plumped down on a chair. The chief was annoyed: "How tactless you are! What do you expect from me to do? Think up your own method of dealing with the problem!"

This was what Lee Hun had hoped the chief would say. After pretending to be racking his brains for a few minutes, he said, "It is true that the people are afraid of this branch station; it's also true that it is far away from Shijiudaogou. What about doing it at Lee Jong Sul's house in Shijiudaogou? The yard of his house is large enough for taking pictures."

Lee Jong Sul was the enemy's running dog. As he used to treat the policemen and other officials to a drinking bout whenever they visited his house, they were willing to go there on any excuse. The branch station chief leaped at Lee's suggestion, calling it a bright idea. In this way the camera was moved from the strictly guarded police branch station in Ershidaogou to Lee Jong Sul's yard, and the villagers of Shijiudaogou gathered in the yard.

The police chief went to Lee Jong Sul's house in the company of his men. Needless to say, Lee Jong Sul prepared a drinking bout. The chief posted a policeman in the yard and sat down at the table. A few minutes later the policeman standing guard joined the others.

When they were roaring drunk, a member of the underground organization in the village abruptly opened the door and shouted that the "bandits" were taking away the camera. He made a great fuss, saying that they were all over the surrounding mountains. The station chief went pale, drew a pistol and assumed a posture of charging forward, obviously under the influence of alcohol.

Lee Hun restrained him, saying, "The 'bandits' are not just a few. How can you match them by yourself alone? Save your own skin. They say that a dead lord is no better than a living dog."

He led him to the backyard, pushed him into a pigsty and covered him with straw. Other policemen hid themselves as best as they could.

Meanwhile, the guerrillas came to the yard and made a stirring speech in front of the people who had come to pose for their photos, and then went quietly away with the camera. When we heard the story from the soldier who had been there in person, I laughed till I cried.

The Japanese imperialist secret documents entitled Case of the Situation of the "Bandits" across the River and Judgment of the Hyesan Incident read in part: "Around 1:30 p.m. when the photographer was taking photos of 100 people in Xiaopudaogou, men armed with pistols, believed to be Kim Il Sung's unit, appeared and said, 'What are you taking their photos for? You are living off photography, so we will let you go if you give us the camera.' Then they left with the camera and a dozen dry-plates."

The dry-plate is something like film for today's camera. The cameras of the old days used glass plates instead of film.

All in all, Ji Thae Hwan, along with Kim Hak Chol and Lee Hun, had made my wish come true. Ji took the photographer with him from the enemy-ruled area, a man by the name of Han Kye Sam. The guerrillas called him Lee In Hwan. He was nearly 40 years old. Tall and strong, he was fit for a guerrilla.

I resolved to learn photography from this man so as to take the pictures of my men when necessary. I was sincere in my wish to learn the art, but he could not understand why I took time out for this trivial thing.

He taught me how to capture a good image when taking a picture and how to expose the plate. He was very kind and meticulous.

After he had found out who I was, he unlocked his heart to me. What still remains most clearly in my mind of what he told me is strings of mushrooms". He said that as soon as he had arrived at my unit, he had looked for "strings of mushrooms". I asked him what he meant by this strange expression, and he answered that it meant strings of dried ears.

According to him, the enemy was spreading propaganda that the revolutionary army cut the ears off the people they captured and dried them in strings, as one would do with mushrooms. He said that the Japanese imperialists had strategic bodies they called "pacification squads," which had a variety of sections under them and advertised that the guerrillas were savages with red faces and horns on their heads. He said he had believed it to be true until a few days before.

"When the guerrillas appeared in the yard of Lee Jong s house, I Was scared stiff and shook like a leaf, even with the dark cloth over my head. This is the end, I thought and clasped my hands to my ears. But I

found your men to be kind-hearted people."

Learning that he had several children, I advised him to return home. But he would not listen to me and begged that he should be allowed to stay with us, for his wife could easily take care of the children. He was so sincere and adamant, I admitted him into the guerrilla army. He was overjoyed at his new military uniform, and that pleased me.

After the battles of Liukesong and Jiaxinzi we admitted a large number of workers into the army and organized several squads with the recruits. Lee In Hwan was leader of one of those squads.

He took many photos of our fighters. He carried some developing solution with him and developed the negatives soon after he had taken a photo. He fought bravely, so everyone respected him, valued him and liked him.

Once he fell ill from influenza. We put all we had into nursing him. As he slept, many of our men put their overcoats over him. I, too, covered his head with my blanket and stayed up all night beside him, reading a book.

When awake, he squeezed my hands and said in tears, "Why all this care when I am a nobody? How can I repay your kindness?"

He said that while staying with us, he had been treated as a man and now realized the true meaning of life for the first time in his life. He had decided that he preferred living like a man, even if it meant eating grass roots in the guerrilla army, to leading the life of a servant to the Japanese, even though that meant eating rice.

One day the photographer set up his camera in front of me and adjusted my pose, saying, "Please allow me to realize my wish today. I'm going to take your photo, General." He wanted to take this photo of me to the homeland in person to show it to the compatriots.

"Thank you for your sincerity, but, making one's photo open to the public is against the discipline of the army. When the revolution emerges victorious, we can take as many photos as we want. When the country is liberated, please take my photo first," I said.

He smiled amidst tears. It was the first time I had seen such a delicate smile. It is still vivid in my memory.

As we were switching over from our large-unit activities to activities by smaller units after the meeting at Xiaohaerbaling I again advised him to go back home, but he insisted on remaining. To the great regret of the entire unit, he was killed soon after. When I sit for a photo now, I often have a vision of Lee In Hwan approaching me with his camera of the old type and adjusting the focus....

Although he was killed, some of the photos he took remain as a miraculous history of the guerrillas. The photo taken in the secret camp in Wudaogou, Linjiang, and that of the women guerrillas, taken on the River Hongqi, were done by him.

The group picture was taken in the secret camp in commemoration of the return of Kim Ju Hyon's small unit after operations in the homeland. That day I had tried to take their photo, but the guardsmen insisted on posing with me and Lee In Hwan pushed me forward, telling me to sit with them, as he would press the shutter. I sat with them, wearing the black-rimmed spectacles I wore when disguising myself.

To my regret, most of the photos Lee In Hwan and I had taken were either burned or lost. Whenever they got hold of our photos, the enemy Used them for their scheme to track us down. The photos my guardsmen and I had kept were lost when Lim Su San raided the secret camp in LiWanggouling at the head of the enemy's "punitive" force.

Decades after, we learned that Kato Toyotaka, a former high-ranking Japanese policeman in puppet Manchukuo had some of the photos.

According to him, he had kept three of our photos, but now had only two of them, one having been lost. He made public the two photos.

In an article entitled Important Photos of the Police of Manchukuo, Collection of Documents, he wrote under the subtitle, Mysterious Anti-Japanese Hero Kim Il Sung. "...the photos of Kim Il Sung and the cadres of the Communist Party of China, used for tracking them down, are extremely important and rare."

On the back of one photo were the words, "All the members of the Headquarters of Kim Il Sung's unit", written by a member of the "punitive" force.

Thanks to the photo, a historical fact was made public in a picture. The photos show the true appearance of the revolutionary army, whose officers wore the same uniforms as the rank and file, not the nasty "bandits," "devils" or "savages" the enemy had made them out to be.

Many of our officers and men were killed in battle without leaving photos of themselves behind. Things nowadays are different. When a soldier is killed in action, we give him a commendation according to his military service, send the death notice to his hometown and arouse the concern of society over the death. But, in the days of the anti-Japanese war we could not send the notice of the death of a guerrilla to his family, nor could we set up a tombstone over his grave. As the enemy were always at our heels, we heaped up snow or stones on his grave, and when we had no time to do that we covered his body with pine boughs before leaving in haste.

When burying fallen comrades, we felt bitter at the thought of burying their hot youth in a desolate land, and felt a handful of earth to be as heavy as a large rock. How many martyrs passed away like that

without leaving a photo?

Bidding farewell to fallen comrades was heartrending, and taking leave of living comrades was also painful. How good it would have been if we had been able to sit for a photo together in exchange for those moments!

Seeing women guerrillas dying without leaving their pretty faces in photos was beyond endurance. When they fell, we felt as if our hearts were torn to shreds.

They left only their packs behind in this world. In the packs used to be small pieces of embroidery of the rose of Sharon on the map of Korea. Could a giant build mounds over their bodies covered with this embroidery, without his hands trembling?

Time wears too many things away and buries them in oblivion. They say that all memories, both happy and sad, fade away with the lapse of time.

However, this seems not to be the case with me. I can never forget any of my fallen comrades-in-arms, probably because the farewells between the dead and alive were such bitter events. Their images are vivid in my memory as if on hundreds and thousands of clear prints. It is natural that photographs should get discolored and memories grow dim with the passage of time, somehow, however, for nie their images grow fresher with each passing minute and wring my heart and soul.

When building the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on Mt. Taesong, some people suggested erecting a grand monument and engraving the martyrs' names on it. On my part, I wanted to show their images. I wanted to have the individual images of the anti-Japanese heroes reproduced so that they could meet the coming generations. But most of them were killed without leaving any photographs behind. I finally described their appearances in detail to the sculptors, so that they could reproduce their images.

Reading the document of the "Hyesan incident" the Japanese imperialists had dealt with, I saw the photos of many fighters in it.

Gorky said that the photo of a poor man is carried in a newspaper only when he breaks the law; our fighters left the first and yet last photos of themselves pictured in shackles. Thanks to Ji Thae Hwan who had obtained a camera, we have a small number of photos of us in the days of the anti-Japanese revolution. But Ji Thae Hwan did not sit for a photo even once. An indefatigable and skilled underground political worker, he was arrested at the time of the "Hyesan incident" and left his photo only in the enemy's document.

He was photographed, bound with a rope; he turned his indignant face aside and his sharp eyes were downcast. As he was a man of unusual self-respect, how furiously his blood must have boiled! Although he was sentenced to death, he remained calm. He guffawed, saying, "I made the Japanese imperialists pay by the blood I shed. I've nothing to regret even if I die now."

I have many sleepless nights, not only when I have many things to do, but also when the images of the martyrs, who left no keepsakes or photos behind, pass through my mind.

Probably for this reason I do not slight photography as I grow old. When I visit a factory or a rural village, I pose for a photo with working people and women. When I call on an army unit, I have a picture taken with the People's Army soldiers. One year, when I dropped in at Yonphung Senior Middle School, I took photos of the students for some time.

As the present system is excellent, there is no difference in men and jobs; when a man renders good service, he enjoys distinction and is praised by everybody. One can enjoy a varied and abundant cultural life everywhere. The songs and dances created in labor are staged on squares on holidays and during the festivities; at nights the happy people walk endlessly through the brightly-lit streets and parks.

Half a century ago, this was a Utopian dream. Most of the anti-Japanese fighters passed away before seeing the life of today. If it were not for the historical path they paved with blood by laying down their lives, could there be a today or a tomorrow for our generation?

## 17.5. The Battle of Jiansanfeng and Kim Suk Won

After the joint celebration of the army and the people, we decided to attack an internment village of Bapandao in cooperation with Choe Hyon's unit before going off on separate operations. In the internment village, near Jiansanfeng, were stationed approximately 300 "punitive" troops of the puppet Manchukuo army.

As a result of the success in the operations for advancing into the homeland and the grand joint celebration of the three large units and inhabitants, the morale of our officers and men was sky-high. Some of them even formally proposed that we make further advances into the homeland, or attack areas such as the Changbai county town, to demonstrate once more the stamina of the People's Revolutionary Army, taking advantage of the large forces we had assembled.



*Lee Wha Rang: Map of the Jiansanfeng (Chiensanfeng) region, north of Hyesan-jin.*

From the tactical point of view, however, it would be disadvantageous to repeat the advance into the homeland immediately after the attack of Pochonbo. An attack on the Changbai county town also required prudent consideration, since the atmosphere in the Hyesan area was alarming. High spirits and desires alone would not ensure victory in a battle. So I chose Bapandao for the next target of attack.

Comrades from the 2nd Division had provided us with information about Bapandao, giving us detailed account of the situation there when they visited our secret camp. Later we had formed an underground organization in Bapandao. Among the members of the underground was a former soldier of the puppet Manchukuo army who had the surname of Liu. He had a strong sense of self-respect and had been given the cold shoulder by his commanding officers. Because his superiors had applied undue pressure upon him, he had come over to our side and served as a squad leader. He had also told us of the conditions in

the battalion of the puppet Manchukuo army.

Generally speaking, after attacking a massed enemy force at its stronghold, the guerrilla army usually got away by applying the tactic of the swift march. But we did not do so after attacking Pochonbo, because the enemy by then knew guerrilla tactics well and could take measures to counter it. In fact, the Kwangtung army deployed a large, dense force on the approach to Fusong, anticipating that we would escape in the direction of Fusong. We foresaw this and applied the maneuver of remaining under the nose of the enemy instead of the long-distance march.

Another reason for remaining near the border was that we intended to get detailed information on the situation in the homeland, while helping the ARE organizations there. We also wanted to help promote the revolution in the homeland, which was on the upsurge. Slowly moving toward Bapandao, we met with political workers on the way in order to acquaint ourselves with the progress of underground work and give them new assignments. At the same time, we met with those in charge of local organizations to teach them how to carry out their work.

Around this time Lee Hun, who had been in Hyesan on a fact-finding mission, sent us information through old man Han Pyong Ul from Tao-quanli that the 74th Regiment in Hamhung had suddenly arrived in Hyesan aboard dozens of lorries, had then moved in the direction of Sinpha and had begun to cross the River Yalu. The commander of the "punitive" force was a rabid Korean officer, Kim Suk Won.

According to information from a different source, the commander of the Japanese 74th Regiment was Kim In Uk, also a Korean. But other information sources 'underground organizations at home and in Changba' reported unanimously that the commander of the enemy's "punitive" force was Kim Suk Won.



*Lee Wha Rang: Col. Kaneyama, ●● (●●●) 1893-1978, the top-ranking Korean traitor engaged in 'Communist' bandit eradication for Hirohito. Photo on the left: Kaneyama, 3rd from right, 1st row with his Japanese masters.*

*Kim Suk Won did his utmost to recruit Korean youth for Hirohito's war efforts. Kim Gu wanted to prosecute Suk Won while Rhee Syngman wanted Suk Won to head up his army. Rhee's American advisors vetoed Rhee.*

Later we learned that for the sake of publicity the Japanese imperialists had held a grand-style send-off gathering at Hamhung Station, where Kim Suk Won had pledged loyalty to the Japanese emperor. He was holding a blood-written banner, "Success in War", and vociferated that he would annihilate Kim Il Sung's army.



He reportedly babbled that he was leaving for "punitive" operation on assignment by his superiors because he knew the tactics of the communist army well, that the 74th Regiment would prove its worth before long and that the communist troops would meet a sad fate, like dead leaves falling in the autumn wind, before the mighty imperial army.

Send-off ceremonies were also held for Kim Suk Won's 74th Regiment on leaving Hyesan and Sinpha. Stooges of the Japanese imperialists forced people to attend them, making a house-to-house visit. Policemen, influential Japanese people, government officials and reservists made a great noise on the street, singing songs and waving the national flag of Japan. The strength of the "punitive" troops was so large that a wooden ferryboat with a seating capacity for 30-40 was said to have ferried them back and forth from Sinpha the entire day.

It was wonderful that Lee Hun, who was not even a trained secret agent, obtained the amount of detailed information. Lee Hun, who received the assignment to scout the enemy's movements in Hyesan for us, decided to penetrate its destination in the guise of a timber dealer. He assigned the branch chiefs of the ARF in Shijiudaogou to fell several hundred trees in a few days, and made a raft of them. He obtained an ID card as a timber dealer.

Lee Hun had worked as a raftsman in lumber yards for eight years. Together with an organization member he made a raft and left for Hyesan. By good luck, on the shore he met an old man, a relative of the police inspector Choe. Choe was a wicked policeman who had arrested many patriots during the "Hyesan incident". It was Choe who apprehended Park Tal. Seeing Lee Hun, who had brought several hundred pieces of lumber with him, the old man asked him to sell him a couple. Lee Hun gave him two for nothing, saying, "How can I sell them to the uncle of police inspector Choe for money?" Very pleased, the old man introduced him to a timber dealer in the town. The old man said that the son-in-law of the timber dealer, like his nephew, was serving at the Hyesan Police Station.

After making his acquaintance with the timber dealer, Lee Hun asked him to help him, saying, "it is dangerous to live in Changbai because there are many bandits there. After making money by selling timber, I intend to move to Hyesan." He sold timber to the timber dealer at half the price and got acquainted with his son-in-law, a policeman by the name of Kim, staying in his house for several days. Lee Hun even arranged a party for him. Lee Hun invited policeman Kim and the timber dealer to a restaurant. That day, the policeman, in his cups, let out the secret that Kim Suk Won's regiment was to arrive in Hyesan at a certain hour on a certain date.

Policeman Kim said, "The prestige of the empire has plummeted to the ground because of the Pochonbo incident. It seems that Kim Suk Won has come to enhance the prestige of the military authorities. He is said to be an able soldier. He is also said to have assured that he would defeat Kim Il Sung's army and conquer West Jiandao, but we must wait and see the result. Anyway, when the communist army engages with the Kim Suk Won's troops, it will be a tough fight."

On the day the 74th Regiment entered Hyesan, Lee Hun, clad in a high-quality Western suit and spring overcoat like a gentleman, came out to the street and stealthily wormed his way into the midst of senders-

off to observe what the strength of the "punitive" force was and how many guns and machine-guns it had. No sooner had the send-off ceremony ended than he crossed the Yalu and sent us a messenger. Simultaneously with the arrival of this messenger at Headquarters, another messenger, sent by Jang Hae U and Kim Jong Suk, arrived to give us more detailed information.

He said that the enemy troops, which had crossed the Yalu, had disappeared at Shisandaogou, and that organization members were looking for them. The information sent by Lee Hun coincided with that sent by the organizations in Taoquanli and Sinpha. Judging by messages sent by local organizations, the strength of the enemy called out on "punitive" operations was estimated at about 2,000 troops.

Judging from the fact that the 74th Regiment of Hamhung, the crack unit of the Japanese army stationed in Korea, had been called out on "punitive" operations, the Governor-General of Korea had to be in a furious and hysterical state. Hit at Pochonbo and in the border area, the enemy was thrown into utter confusion. As the aggressive war against China proper was impending, the Japanese imperialists became very nervous about the safety of their rear.

At a time such as this the Korea-Manchuria border area, vaunted to be an "iron wall", had been thrown into disorder, so it was quite natural that the Governor-General was angry. The prevailing situation showed that we had been wise to agree, while drawing up our operations plan in Xigang, that the troops advancing in three directions should get together after the advance into the homeland.

The 2,000-strong enemy was superior to us by far in size. In such situation it was usual practice to avoid an engagement. But we decided on a frontal confrontation with this large Japanese force, which had come from Korea. It was general tactics of guerrilla warfare to disperse rapidly and maneuver when a large enemy force came in for an attack, but contrary to the established practice, I decided to counter the enemy's large force with our own large force.

We halted our march toward Bapandao and decided to choose a battlefield. Climbing up a mountain west of Laomajia, we reconnoitered the terrain. This was Jiansanfeng with an open field of view all around. Jiansanfeng consisted of three peaks in the north of Xigang plateau, which stretched over 25 miles from Shisandaogou to Badaogou. In the north of Jiansanfeng there was a boundless primeval forest and beyond it soared the Sidengfang mountains. The area was called Sidengfang.

In the south of it a sea of forests extends over 25 miles in the east-west direction. This was Xigang plateau, which was dotted with villages like Bapandao and Laojusuo. The three peaks of Jiansanfeng rose over the vast primeval forest like three islands. From our point of view, Jiansanfeng was most suitable for a battlefield because the enemy had to turn the bend leading to Xigang from Shisandaogou and cross several awkward mountain ridges on their way there.

In the evening our commanding officers got together and discussed the combat plan. I stressed the need to apply guerrilla tactics instead of being caught in the enemy's regular tactics. For this purpose we had to occupy the mountain ridges by way of forestalling the enemy and compel him to descend into the valley. We should avoid the stereotypical troop disposition as well, seeing to it that a large force was placed in

the spots to which the enemy might expect to pay little attention and making sure that in the course of fighting the troops used flexible tactics suited to the circumstances-rapidly moving to the right and to the left, for example, and taking advantage of forest cover.

After working out the combat plan with the commanding officers of the 4th and 2nd Divisions, I discussed the work orientation and duties of the revolutionary organizations with Kwon Yong Byok, Kim Jae Su, Jong Tong Chol and other political workers of the homeland and Changbai area who had come to Jiansanfeng in answer to our call. By this time it was dawn.

That morning the enemy attacked Jiansanfeng. From dawn on it drizzled and a mist arose. The first signal shot rang out from the sentry post on the mountain ridge occupied by Choe Hyon's unit. I immediately went to the command post on the mountain ridge. Choe Hyon went to the forward edge with one company, fearing that the outpost might be surrounded by the enemy. The enemy soon encircled Choe Hyon's company.

The situation had to be straightened out immediately, because morale depended on how the battle started. I told Lee Tong Hak to take the Guard Company with him and rescue Choe Hyon's company as soon as possible. The Japanese attacked hard with the puppet Manchukuo troops placed in front of them as a shield, but Choe Hyon's and Lee Tong Hak's companies hit hard at the enemy in cooperation from within and without, and the siege crumbled. The company was rescued after bitter hand-to-hand fighting. After reversing the situation, we hit hard at the enemy all day long, driving them into the valley time and again.

However, the Japanese ran wild like beasts of prey, attacking tenaciously. They came at us in continuous waves, raising battle cries and treading on the dead bodies of their companions. During the defense of Xiaowangqing we had resisted the attack of the Jiandao detachment of the Japanese army, which had come over from Korea, and we thought them very tenacious. But the attack of the 74th Regiment from Hamliung was even fiercer than that. With 10 machine-guns we set up a barrage of fire in front, but the enemy continued to swarm up. They continued attack all day long, so we had to fight a really tough fight. In some places the enemy broke into our positions and we had to engage in close combat. To make matters worse, it kept raining. The battlefield presented an appalling sight.

We wondered how militarism could make people so tenaciously and senselessly barbaric. The "Yamato spirit", loudly touted everywhere by the Japanese militarists, produced a multitude of idiots who mistook injustice for justice and evil for good, blind followers who died a dog's death by throwing themselves before the muzzles of rifles like butterflies, yet boasted that this was the samurai spirit.

These were barbarians who drank a toast and had souvenir photos taken with a stack of dead bodies from some other nation in the background, lunatics who thought that when they died, the Amaterasu Omikami (celestial sun goddess) would take care of them, the emperor would pray for their souls and the Japanese nation would remember them for ever. The Japanese warlords and ministers praised this as the spirit of the Japanese army, likening the men and officers who died in such manner to cherry blossoms, which bloom for a short time and wither. The Japanese soldiers believed that their death was a rich fertilizer for the prosperity of the Japanese empire, but this was nothing but a preposterous daydream. The "Royal

spirit" led Japan to national ruin, not to prosperity.

Our men and officers, who saw the Japanese troops in this light, looked down on them with the pride of revolutionaries and victors who would repulse them no matter how tenaciously they attacked. Taking advantage of the situation, we struck the enemy hard till dusk fell. While fighting, the women guerrillas sang the song Arirang (*Lee Wha Rang: Click [arirang.mp3](#) to hear it*), which resounded across the fighting ranks. Only the strong can sing a song in the field of heavy battle. Arirang sung in the battlefield of Jiansanfeng showed the psychological strength of the revolutionary army and its optimism.

It is not difficult to imagine what feelings the singing of Arirang aroused in the enemy. Later prisoners of war confessed that on hearing the song they were nonplussed at first, seized with fear next, and at last felt the futility of life. Some of the wounded wept, bemoaning their fate, and there were even a number of deserters.

The enemy did not suspend attack in the heavy rain until the evening, although they suffered many casualties. We sent messengers to Park Song Chol's small unit, which was on its way back from reconnaissance in the Bapandao area, and to a food-procurement team, telling them to strike the enemy from behind. Kim Suk Won was threatened with attack from both front and rear; in addition, dusk was falling, so he fled from the battlefield, taking with him about 200 men, all that remained of his regiment.



*Photo: Choe Hyon, the hero of the Jiansanfeng Battle, with Kim Il Sung.*

The battle of Jiansanfeng produced many interesting anecdotes. Kim Ja Rin, Choe Hyon's bugler, was in such a hot hurry that he shot a grenade-launcher by setting it on his thigh, getting his thighbone dislocated by the recoil. Choe Hyon hurled abuse at Kim Ja Rin while annihilating the enemy that swarmed about their gun position by shooting off a grenade-launcher once or twice. He then put Kim's dislocated thighbone right, pulling Kim Ja Rin's leg with both hands. We heard that Kim Suk Won was wounded by one of our grenades that day but I do not know whether it was true or not. The "punitive" expedition of the 74th Regiment from Hamhung ended in a fiasco.

Some of the enemy soldiers who survived in Jiansanfeng fled to other cities instead of returning to Hamhung. According to data, an enemy soldier, Sakai, did not follow Kim Suk Won but fled to Chongjin, where he ran a public house till the defeat of Japan. Thinking it a blessing that he survived at Jiansanfeng, he told his story to the customers whenever he found time.

According to him, although he was Japanese he spoke Korean, and this saved his life. The Japanese officers had apparently driven their men into the attack, telling them to climb up the mountain ridge at the

risk of their lives. Sakai went half-way up the mountain, trembling. When the Japanese had nearly reached the ridge, the revolutionary army suddenly fired a volley. This caused dozens of casualties in the ranks of the Japanese.

Sakai ran back down to the foot of mountain despite himself. Then a shout "Koreans, lie prostrate!" was heard from the direction of the ridge. Hearing the shout, Sakai who knew Korean prostrated himself beside the dead bodies of his companions in bewilderment, throwing away his weapon. In the evening the guerrillas searched the battlefield to gather rifles and cartridge belts. They went away leaving Sakai alone, taking him for dead. Seized with terror and utter war-weariness, he crept down the mountain under cover of darkness and reached an internment village on all fours.

"Luckily I knew a bit of Korean. This saved my life. So I am now studying it hard." This is what Sakai used to say to people over a cup of wine.

Anecdotes about Jiansanfeng and rumors about us spread widely in Chongjin and its surroundings because of Sakai's story. The confession of a soldier in the aggressor army, who deserted the service and became a petit bourgeois, did much to raise the morale of our people. Our comrades who visited the villages near the battlefield some time after the battle of Jiansanfeng returned with a detailed account of the enemy's defeat.

The day after the battle the enemy carried away the dead bodies of their soldiers, requisitioning stretchers, carts and lorries from Hyesan, Sinpha and villages near Jiansanfeng. According to the peasants there, Jiansanfeng and villages near it were littered with corpses of Japanese troops. The enemy covered the dead bodies with white cotton cloth and did not allow inhabitants to come near. They feared that their defeat would be exposed to the world. When they published news about the battle at Jiansanfeng in the newspapers, they conveyed the false information that there were few casualties. I am told that it took Kim Suk Won all day to cross the Yalu from Sinpha to attack us, but only half an hour to return.

There were so many casualties that heads were cut off from the dead bodies, packed in sacks and wooden boxes and carried on carts to the place where lorries were waiting. They were loaded into the lorries, which crossed the Yalu. Peasants in the Jiansanfeng area were to have been nearly smothered for several days by the smoke and smell of burning corpses.

A peasant, feigning ignorance, asked a Japanese soldier disposing of corpses, "Sir, what do you carry on the cart?" The Japanese soldier replied cunningly, "It is kabocha." Kabocha means pumpkin.

The peasant ridiculed him with a grin, "You have a bumper crop of pumpkins. It will serve for good soup stock. You will have a plenty of it." From then on the expression "pumpkin head" spread among the people. Whenever they saw dead bodies of Japanese soldiers, they joked, calling them "pumpkin heads".

Kim Suk Won and his runaway troops returned cautiously to Hamhung, via Sinpha and Phungsan, instead of passing through the busy streets of Hyesan. Hamliung Station, which had been so alive with its noisy

send-off on their departure, was as desolate as a house of mourning on their arrival. Only the soldiers who had remained in their barracks came to the station to meet them. They passed down the street, hiding the wounded soldiers in the midst of their ranks. Perhaps they did such a seedy thing to hoodwink the citizens and cover up their defeat.

Mudokjong in Hamhung was known as a fencing ground for Japanese soldiers. After the Jiansanfeng battle they did not do fencing there for some time. After Jiansanfeng, in fact, even the sound of the night watch making his rounds was said to have disappeared from the streets of Sinpha. Defeat at the battle of Jiansanfeng brought irretrievable disgrace to the samurai of Japan, and the name of Kim Suk Won stood for disgrace.

The battles at Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng completely foiled the so-called "radical strategy" that Minami, Governor-General of Korea, and Ueda, commander of the Kwangtung army, had worked out while holding their "Tumen conference" with a view to annihilate the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. This successfully concluded the operation for advance into the homeland by large forces, which we had planned in early 1937.

Jiansanfeng marked a milestone in the history of our anti-Japanese armed struggle. This battle, together with the battle at Kouyushuishan, consolidated the success of the Battle of Pochonbo. Kouyushuishan and Jiansanfeng added lustre to the victory gained at Pochonbo. They can be said to be the echoes of Pochonbo.

Through these battles we shattered the myth of the "invincible imperial army" and demonstrated once again the might of the KPRA to the world. Jiansanfeng was an important battle that played a conspicuous part in bringing the anti-Japanese revolution to its zenith after the KPRA's advance into the area around Mt. Paektu.



*Lee Wha Rang: Photo on the right, Kaneyama (Kim Suk Won - now using a Korean name ) with an American 'adviser'. "General Kim Suk Won" commanded a South Korean division in the early days of the Korean War. He was soon removed from command for cowardice and incompetence.*

By the irony of fate, our sworn enemy Kim Suk Won again confronted Choe Hyon on the 38th parallel after liberation. Choe Hyon was in command of a Guard Brigade there. Syngman Rhee supposedly sent Kim Suk Won to the 38th parallel to give him an opportunity to recover his ignominious defeat at the battle of Jiansanfeng.

According to soldiers of the "ROK army" who defected to the north, Kim Suk Won basely slandered

communists while guarding the 38th parallel. Choe Hyon was on the lookout for an opportunity to give him a hard time in an encounter.

On May 3, 1949, Kim Suk Won made a large-scale surprise raid across the 38th parallel. Thus a battle took place on Mt. Songak. He seemed to have intended to give Choe Hyon a hard time, or dispose of him. Enraged, Choe Hyon annihilated the troops of the "ROK army" and pursued the runaway troops to Kaesong. He wanted to capture Kim Suk Won, chasing him to Seoul.

I gave Choe Hyon a rigid order to withdraw immediately. I said to him, "In the past he fought as the faithful dog of the Japanese imperialists, but now he is subject to the United States. If not enough care is taken, it may become a fratricidal, all-out war. Kim Suk Won, too, is a Korean. Some day he will repent of his misdeed."



*Lee Wha Rang: Gen. Kim Suk Won of Rhee's army. US Captain James Hausman shed some interesting tidbits on Kim Suk Won and his associate Chae Byong Duk - see [The American Captain Who Managed the Korean President \("Han-guk Dae-tong-ryon-ul um-ji-ghin miguk dae-wi"\)](#) - coauthored by James Hausman and Jung Il Wha, published in Korean by Korean Mun-Won Publishing, Seoul, Korea in 1995.*

Choe Hyon and Kim Suk Won are dead and gone. Now new generations in the north and the south, which did not experience the sorrow of a ruined nation, continue to keep guard along the Military Demarcation Line, leveling guns at each other. My hope is that the new generations in the north and the south will act as one and pull down the artificial barrier that cuts the nation in half as soon as possible.

I hope to see them lead a harmonious life in an independent, reunified country. I suppose that Kim Suk Won, too, had this same desire in his last years.

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## 17.6. The Boys Who Took Up Arms

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One noteworthy effect the advance of the People's Revolutionary Army to the Mt. Paektu area had on the younger people was their fiery enthusiasm for enlisting in the guerrilla army. Each time the forests and valleys along the River Yalu echoed to the sound of gunshots, young people flocked to our secret camp in an endless stream hoping to join us. As the volunteers increased, many interesting events took place.

Once we were visited by a dark-complexioned boy with bushy hair wearing wet trousers. He earnestly pleaded to be allowed to enlist in the guerrilla army, saying that he wanted revenge for his brother's death. The boy came from the village of Shangfengdok. He said that his eldest brother, who was teaching at a night school for youths and children in his village, had been killed by the police, since it had been disclosed that he supplied the guerrillas with food, and that his second brother had joined my unit just before the battle at Pochonbo was fought. That was why he wished to join the revolutionary army. The name of the boy with bushy hair was Jon Mun Sop.



*Photo: A boy soldier.*

Joking, I said to him that the young people who came in dry clothes were too numerous to enlist all at one time, so how could a playful fellow like him, who came in wet trousers, expect to be admitted. At this, he explained, saying his mother was to blame for it.

Jon Mun Sop had told his mother that he would leave with the guerrilla army unit, which had stopped over at Shangfengdok village. His mother cut him short, declaring he was too young to be a guerrilla. When her son went off to sleep, she put his trousers into the washtub, thinking that if he had nothing to wear because his only trousers were in the tub, it would be impossible for him to follow the guerrilla army.

He was annoyed by this. His joining the revolutionary army had already won the approval of the Children's Association.

He had been prepared to run naked to Mt. Paektu if it meant he could become a soldier of the revolutionary army. Early in the morning he took his trousers out of the tub, hastily squeezed out the water and put them on. Seeing his determination, his mother finally consented to his joining the guerrilla army.

This shows what a fever to volunteer had swept the northern border areas of Korea around the area on the River Yalu and the vast regions of West Jiandao. As the case of Jon Mun Sop shows, not only young people in the twenties or thirties were eager to join, but also teenagers.



At first the commanding officers in charge of recruitment would send these boys back home immediately, not even asking my opinion. Until then, none of the men and officers had ever thought that boys of fourteen or fifteen could fight, arms in hand.

Even Kim Phyong, who was fond of children, would shake his head whenever these boys came to us.

One summer's day in 1937, when our unit was bivouacking on the highland of Diyangxi, he came and asked me for advice, saying that about 20 kids, each shorter than a rifle, were plaguing him with requests to join and he did not know what to do with them. "I told them to come back when they were a little bigger, but they would not listen to me. In the end they started pressing me to let them see you, General.... They say they won't leave until they've seen you, General. They are as obstinate as mules."

I went to the boys and had a chat with them. I told them to sit down on a fallen log, then asked them, in turn, what their names were, how old they were, what their fathers did and where they came from. Each time I asked a question, the kid I was addressing would spring to his feet like a bouncing ball to answer the question. What was common in their behavior was that they all tried to look as grown-up as possible.

They had all lost parents, brothers or sisters, witnessing horrible scenes of their family members being killed in the enemy's "punitive" operations, and this was why they had resolved to take up arms: to avenge their deaths. Having this heart-to-heart talk with them, I felt that in their thinking they could match several wise men.

As the saying goes, children mature early in troubled times. All these boys saw was misfortune and their life was full of hardship. The children of Korea were all too familiar with the world, though young. Revolution moves and awakens people with great force and at great speed. There is profound truth to the words of the sage who likened revolution to a school that teaches the new.

The 20-odd boys who flocked to our bivouac hoping to become guerrillas were all miserable victims in one page of our nation's history, a page beset by vicissitudes. I was greatly moved by these little boys, who so passionately volunteered to shoulder the heavy duty of social transformation and take part in an armed struggle that was trying even for adults. If I remember correctly, Lee Ul Sol and Kim Ik Hyon, Kim Chol Man and Jo Myong Son were among the boys I met that day.

Though today they hold the positions of Vice-Marshal, General or Lieutenant General in the Korean People's Army, at that time they were little cubs who had to stand the test of whether or not they were capable of holding a rifle.

"What has to be done with these children?" I thought.

I was at a loss as to what I should say to send them back home, these young hawks so ready to go through fire and water. Life in the revolutionary army was one that even robust young men at times

found hard to take, becoming stragglers if they could not keep up the tireless training and constant self-discipline.

I tried to persuade the boys with the following words:

"I think it highly praiseworthy that you should be so determined to take up arms to avenge the enemy for the murder of your families. This is a manifestation of the love you have for your country. But it is very difficult for us to accept you as soldiers of the revolutionary army, because you are still so young. You have no idea what incredible hardships your brothers and sisters of the guerrilla army have to undergo. In the height of winter, the revolutionary army has to sleep on a carpet of snow in the mountains.

Sometimes they have to march in the rain for days on end. When provisions run out, they have to ease their hunger with grass roots or tree bark steeped in water, or with just plain water. This is the life of the revolutionary army. It seems to me you could not stand such a tough life. What do you say you return home now and wait to grow a bit older before you become a soldier?"

Nevertheless, I was talking to deaf ears. The boys carried on as before, asking to join the guerrilla army and insisting that they were prepared to go through whatever hardships were necessary, that they would sleep in the snow, fight as the adults did and so on.

Never before had I felt the need for a military school so keenly. How good it would be if we could afford to train all these eager boys and harden their bodies at a military school. Previously even the Independence Army had had cadet schools all over Manchuria. But this was before Manchuria was occupied by the Japanese imperialists. Manchuria in the late 1930s was trampled under the jackboots of the large Japanese imperialist armed force. Therefore, it was impossible for us to run military schools, as the Independence Army had done.

I wondered whether something like a training center could be opened in the secret camp, but that was not feasible. All "barometers" across the world were forecasting that the Japanese scoundrels would unleash another September 18 incident in the territory of China. To cope with this, we were preparing grand mobile operations. Enrolling the teenagers in our armed ranks at such a moment was as good as shouldering an extra pack just before an arduous march.

However, it was impossible to tell them to return home merely because of unfavorable conditions. Frankly speaking, I was attached to every one of these boys.

They had no less class consciousness than the adult folk. On that day they made a particularly deep impression on me when they said they would go hungry, just as their elders did.

In contrast to the so-called patriots - who harped continuously on their love for the country, but only in words - to the renegades of the revolution, and to the degenerates who lived to no purpose and talked idly of the ephemeral nature of human life, what noble and passionate patriots these boys were, refusing to go

back home and stubbornly demanding admittance into the guerrilla army. The fact that they wanted to become guerrillas at such a tender age was an act worthy of a bouquet before a decision was reached as to whether or not they should be admitted.

I wanted to train these highly combative boys into fighters. It seemed to me that although it was impossible to send them to stand on the first line right now, they might become the reliable reserves within one or two years if I found the right way to train them. What a wonderful harvest we would have if all of them grew to be combatants equal to our veteran soldiers in the next year or two.

If the veteran guerrillas made a stout-hearted effort to train them, Pien if it meant they had to sleep or eat less, I was convinced the boys would become agile soldiers in a short span of time. I planned to form a company with the boys on the principle that when circumstances permitted we would train them at the secret camp, and when the unit was out on maneuvers we would take them with us, teaching and training them in action. In other words, I intended to form a special company that performed the role of military school and military and political cadres' training course simultaneously, in combination with education through direct action.

Determined to enlist the boys in our unit, I told them to write a pledge. If you really want to join the guerrilla army, I said, you must put down your pledge on the paper tonight. Why do you want to take up arms in the revolutionary army? How will you live and fight after you have become a guerrilla? Jot all this down, and after reading your pledges, we will make a decision.

My words left Kim Phyong and most of the other commanding officers feeling uneasy. The many children we had brought with us from Maanshan were already a burden to us, they said; if these boys were added to them as well, the load would be just too heavy.

The following day I read the written pledges from the boys and found that their resolve was excellent. Some of the children who did not know how to write dictated their pledges to their friends, but I did not mind this. It was not their fault if they were incapable of scribbles because of a lack of schooling. I told them their written pledges were all excellent. At this, they all let out a cheer, dancing with joy.

I called together the officers above the level of company political instructor at Headquarters and officially announced that as of now we were forming a Children's Company with Children's Corps members from Maanshan and those who had come to us in West Jiandao. I appointed O Il Nam as commander, and a woman guerrilla, Jon Hui, as sergeant-major of the Children's Company.

Formerly O Il Nam had been the leader of the machine-gun platoon directly under Headquarters. He was a good marksman and well experienced in the management of the ranks, a man of remarkable endurance and fighting spirit. Here is an anecdote about the battle on Kouyushuishan that illustrates his strong endurance. He was shot in that battle, but nobody knew it since he showed no sign of being wounded. Later, when the unit reached Diyangxi, the others saw that his tunic was soaked with blood and made a fuss over his heavy wound.

We stripped him of his coat and found a bullet lodged in the flesh, its tip almost visible. He himself just kept on smiling.

We had no surgeon, so the strong-armed Kang Wi Ryong held his body tight and I tried to extract it with pincer. It did not go as I intended, and we were in an awful sweat indeed. The so-called operation was conducted without anesthetics, but O Il Nam did not make a sound. After picking out the bullet, I smeared the wound with Vaseline, which we used as a lubricant for rifles, and ordered him to be sent to the rear.

But he would not leave, saying: “Why make such a fuss about a trifling wound? The enemy will soon be coming in pursuit, so how can I as a machine-gun platoon leader leave my position?”

I was sure, now that I thought back on this incident, that fighting stamina such as O Il Nam’s would have a good influence on our “kid” soldiers.

Sergeant-major Jon Hui was also unusual in her fighting spirit. She was the same age as the members of the Children's Company, but mentally she was as mature and hard as an autumn bean. Kim Chol Ho, who knew her family background well, said that she was such an audacious girl, she had smashed her grandfather's case of acupuncture needles when she was 10 years old.

Her mother died when she was 10, and her grandfather had some knowledge of acupuncture, so he cured diseases of the villagers. But he was unable to cure his daughter-in-law, and little Jon Hui thought her mother had died because grandfather's box of acupuncture needles had failed to save her. She smashed the box to smithereens with a stone. When grandfather scolded her in fury, she retorted, “What’s the use of your acupuncture needles when they could not even cure Mother of her illness?” and cried bitterly. At this, her grandfather also burst into tears and hugged her in his arms.

The following year she lost her brother as well. Her brother was a guerrilla, who was arrested with two comrades while working in the enemy-held area. The enemy killed them on the hill behind Juzijie. The three fighters, covered with blood, their bones broken from cruel tortures, died a heroic death, shouting, “Long live the revolution!”

Young Jon Hui saw the terrible scene, together with the village people. Her brother's heroic death impressed her deeply. The enemy shouted at the people, “Look at them! Those who oppose Japan will die just like them. Will you still make a revolution after this?” The masses were silent. But then a resounding voice rang out, “Long live the revolution!” It was little Jon Hui. The surprised enemy pummeled her to a pulp. When she had recovered, she entered the guerrilla zone.

When asked, “Why did you shout ‘Long live the revolution!’ at such a time?” she replied, “I wanted to die like my brother. I wanted to shout, ‘Long live the revolution!’ when I died.”

Underlying her simple words was a daring that saw the revolution as dearer than her own life.

The fearless and bold character of Jon Hui, who was not afraid of death, would serve as an excellent example to the members of the Children's Company.

I believed that like O Il Nam, Jon Hui was a person well-qualified to look after the Children's Company members in a responsible manner.

Even after the official announcement of the formation of the Children's Company, quite a few commanding officers continued to feel anxious about this step taken by Headquarters. They were apprehensive that these children might become a stumbling block to our activities, that we would be at a disadvantage because of them, and that these little kids could not face the trials even the grown-ups found it difficult to endure.

I formed the Children's Company by virtue of my authority as the Commander partly because I wished to gratify the children's desire as quickly as possible.

First, I was touched by the children's ardent desire to take part in the revolution and the burning hatred that drove them to want to avenge the murder of their parents, brothers and sisters. My meeting with them awakened me to the need for training reserves for the guerrilla army. I came to think that the formation of a special military organization of children might be an answer to this need.

Looking back on the path traversed by successive orderlies, such as Jo Wal Nam, Lee Song Lim, Choe Kum San, Kim Thaek Man and Paek Hak Lim, who joined the guerrilla army at a similar age to the kids in the Children's Company, I was assured that the children of 14 to 17 were capable of pulling their own weight.

Soon after forming the Children's Company, I made sure that its members were dressed in military uniform and presented with weapons, mostly Model 38 carbines. I still get a feeling of satisfaction when I recall the boys in the company, who were beside themselves with joy at the new uniforms and weapons.

We gave O Il Nam and Jon Hui the assignment to train the boys in the highlands of Diyangxi for a period, then give them concentrated training at the Fuhoushui Secret Camp in Qidaogou. I handed O Il Nam the teaching programme for a short, intensive course, which I had worked out myself, with a view to cramming elementary knowledge and knowledge about the basic movements in the life of the guerrilla army into a one or two months' training period. After reading the programme, O Il Nam expressed some anxiety about whether the children would be able to digest the whole thing, since the plan was too demanding. He said, however, that he would try it out.

The company set about training the next day in the highlands of Diyangxi. I was having a strenuous time at that period, drawing up plans for coping with the Sino-Japanese War, but I managed to find time quite frequently to guide their training. I demonstrated various moves and actions and told them that they

should drill the full-step march over and over again so as to get accustomed to army maneuvers. I also instructed them to aim for the enemy's breast during target practice.

After the company had undergone training for about two weeks in Diyangxi, we left for the secret camp in Sobaeksu for a meeting. Before departure, I ordered O Il Nam to take the children to the secret camp in Fuhoushui so as to continue training there.

When I saw the youngsters lined up in columns, my heart misgave me. The march at that time was arduous indeed, and it was difficult to be optimistic about the hardships they would have to go through.

The Fuhoushui Secret Camp was a comparatively safe one in the rear, an ideal place for the training center. There were enough provisions at the camp for the members of the Children's Company to stay for two or three months. I had previously given Kim Phyong the task of building a secret camp in Fuhoushui and keeping grain in reserve there. The Children's Company greatly enjoyed the benefit of the camp.

While I was commanding the campaign of striking the enemy from the rear at the Liudaogou Secret Camp near Fuhoushui, the Children's Company was undergoing intensive training in Fuhoushui. After meetings at Caoshuitan and Sobaeksu, I paid a visit to the camp and watched them train; I soon realized that they had developed beyond recognition from the kids who had started out at Diyangxi. Their progress was a graphic demonstration that the formation of the Children's Company had been a correct move.

I felt invigorated by the speed of their development.

One day Jon Hui appeared at Headquarters and whispered in a worried voice, "General, there is a problem. What shall I do?" She said that the smallest kid in the Children's Company shed tears every night from homesickness.

The mention of tears worried me. The guerrillas, being family men, would understand that the Children's Company members got homesick. But if one was weeping, pining for home, the matter was serious.

According to Jon Hui, the boy had begun to look gloomy when the unit passed Badaogouhe. She asked him what the matter was, and he said that he felt sad because his home was falling farther and farther behind him. When joining the guerrilla army, he had thought the unit would operate in the neighborhood of his home. But the farther we marched, the sadder he felt.

I told her to be a little severe with him, reminding her of the old saying, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.' She called him and reproached him harshly. But her reproof had an adverse effect, for the boy became more recalcitrant and demanded that he be allowed to return home.

I summoned him to Headquarters and asked him if he really wanted to return home. Silently, he gazed up at my face.

I told him:

"If you want to go home so badly, you may. But it is a long way, dozens of miles from here to Shijiudaogou. Do you think you can make it?"

“Yes, I can if I follow the path we used to come here.”

His answer hinted that his demand was not just simple grumbling and that he had already counted on going back.

I told Jon Hui to fetch the pack containing several emergency rations for the Children's Company, and handing it to him, said:

"Go ahead and return home if you really want to. You will need food on the way. You had better take this with you.

The boy, who knew that this was the emergency ration for the company, said, saucer-eyed: "No, I can't. What will the company eat if I take it away? Being alone, I can manage without it. I'll be alright if I pick and eat one or two ears of maize from the fields." "That's stealing. I don't want you to behave like a thief and that is why I tell you to take this with you. You have eaten the bread of the guerrilla army for sometime, you must know that at least. So take this pack with you."

"I cannot eat all this alone, leaving my friends to starve."

The boy was stubborn and took off the pack I had put on his back.

"If you know that much, then you should know it is a disgrace for you to return home, leaving your comrades fighting and shedding their blood in the mountains. I believed you were all clever children, but in fact you are not."

At this, the boy burst into tears.

Actually they were all at the age to be still under the care of their parents. I felt I was witnessing a national tragedy forced upon us by the Japanese imperialists.

Yet what would happen if he returned home? It would lead to wavering among the other members of the Children's Company.

Reminding the boy of the pledge he had written when he joined the army, I exhorted him: "There is a saying, 'A word of honour is as good as a bond.' But you are just about to kick away your pledge like a

pebble on the roadside. What will become of you if you make light of your promise like this? Once you have taken up arms, you must return home only after you have fought to the end and won final victory. Only then will your parents be happier to see you back."

The boy swore that he would no longer think of going home.

Because of this initial involvement with him, I presume, I felt particular concern for him afterwards. What I saw as a virtue in him was his love for his comrade. Even if he were famished, he would not touch the emergency ration of the company - wasn't this the kind of comradeship that could be described as being as pure as snow and as beautiful as lily?

I consider comradeship to be the touchstone of whether one was a real revolutionary or not. This is the nucleus, the moral basis of communists, the personality trait that makes them the best people in the world and distinguishes them from other people. If one is devoid of comradeship, the structure of one's life crumbles like an edifice built with no foundation. The man who is strong in comradeship is capable of amending his mistakes. This was what I discovered from the boy from Shijindaogou.

The whole unit helped and looked after the Children's Company as they did their own brothers. Each veteran soldier took care of one boy so that every member of the Children's Company had a reliable guide and friend.

The most sincere and active helper was O Il Nam, who was in charge of the company. He was always careful not to let any of the children fall behind the others in any way. One day I was both amused and impressed at the sight of him wrapping the foot bindings of Kim Hong Su, the "little bridegroom", who came from Shangfengdok. I heard O Il Nam say to Kim Hong Su, "Hong Su, you're my senior in that you have a wife, but junior when it comes to wrapping your foot bindings. You need not to be ashamed of this but learn humbly.

But things will be different when I take a wife. Then you will have to become my teacher, you know." The "little bridegroom" was carelessly holding on to one of his feet while attentively following the hands of his company commander. O Il Nam looked after Kim Hong Su with great concern, I guess, because he did not want the others to poke fun at him for being a married man.

The women guerrillas, too, showed great affection for and made efforts on behalf of the kids in the Children's Company, taking charge of two or three of them each. The women taught them everything they needed to know about the everyday life of a guerrilla - how to cook rice, make a bonfire, sew and mend clothing and cure blisters on the soles of their feet - starting with the best method of arranging things in their packs.

The most active helper next to the company commander was Kim Un Sin. He had been given an assignment by the party organization to take charge of Lee Ul Sol. Whenever he was free, he would take Lee Ul Sol with him and give him target practice. In this he was a good example to the veteran guerrillas.



Thanks to his guidance, Lee UI Sol became a crack marksman. Later Kim Un Sin sponsored Lee's admission into the Communist Party.

While on the march, the veteran guerrillas always led the way. On night marches, one had to follow the person in front closely and be constantly aware of what was occurring around him, instantly reporting to the leader if he noticed anything abnormal. On resuming the march after a break, they had to make sure not a scrap of paper had been left in the place where they had stopped. This was the kind of common sense instilled into them by the veteran soldiers while marching.

I also did all I could for the Children's Company. On crossing a rapid stream for example, I carried the boys on my back. Once the "little bridegroom" also crossed the river on my back. His fellow soldiers made fun of him, saying what a shame it was for a married man to be hanging on another's back like a child, but the naive "little bridegroom" did not mind it at all. When marching together with the Children's Company, I began to point out every minor detail in the same manner: "There is a tree, be careful of it," "A puddle here, jump over it," "Be careful, crossing the river," and so forth.

The Children's Company members were always hungry. The meals in the guerrilla army could scarcely be better than those they had at home. When we were moving from Changbai to Linjiang with them, we often ate watery gruel because that was all there was to eat. On the days they ate gruel they were dying with hunger. The cook always brought my meal separately, but I used to go to the table of the children-soldiers, my gruel bowl in hand, to share my portion with them.

Our sharp-tempered sergeant-major, Jon Hui, visited me one day and implored me not to share my portion with them. If this continued, she complained, it would spoil the health of the Comrade Commander. I persuaded her as follows:

"Comrade Jon Hui, don't worry too much. A little hunger will never harm me. But things are different with the boys in the Children's Company. They are not yet hardened enough, so they find hunger very difficult to endure. At their age they can digest even sand. They are eating gruel all the time, so imagine how hungry they must be! Who else will look after them, in these circumstances if we don't?"

My greatest concern was given to developing the ideological education of the Children's Company. Whenever I had time to spare, I was their teacher. I began by teaching the illiterate among them to read and Write. The boys were greatly interested in the biographies of renowned men, so I talked a lot about the lives of famous men. I also lectured on the history of Korea's downfall.

Many of the Children's Company dreamed of carrying pistols and hand-grenades with them, as An Jung Gun, Yun Pong Gil and Lee Pong Chang had done, to kill the emperor of Japan or the governor-general of Korea. I explained to them that independence was best achieved through nationwide resistance centered on armed struggle, not by individual acts of terrorism. Tireless efforts were needed to infuse these children with our revolutionary line.

On the march from Changbai to Linjiang we had dozens of engagements with the enemy, but not once did I let the Children's Company take part in the action. I had them watch from afar to see how the veteran soldiers fought the enemy. Once one of them was wounded by a stray bullet. Every time the wound ached, he cried for his dad. Looking at him,

I thought that if his parents could see his bullet wound, how bitterly they would grieve. I told O Il Nam to take loving care of his "men", for they were the treasured successors of the revolution. We pampered them, but we did not dote on them all the time. When they made a mistake we criticized them sharply, or toughened them by mixing them with the veteran soldiers.

One night, while making my rounds of the encampment, I found the Children's Company sleeping with their shoes off. This was contrary to discipline. When drafting our rules for bivouacking, we had put down an article forbidding the soldiers to take off their shoes when sleeping. The guerrilla army had to be constantly on its guard against surprise attacks by the enemy, so for anyone to sleep without shoes or clothes on because he was unable to endure the momentary inconvenience was tantamount to suicide. Our officers and men therefore always slept with their uniforms and shoes on and their rifles in their arms in order to be ready to leap into action at a time of emergency. They slept with their packs under their head like pillows.

That night I severely criticized Jon Hui.

"With such tenderness you cannot train the children to be fighters. Suppose the enemy were to attack us at this moment, what would happen to the children? They might get their feet injured or frost-bitten. Their parents gave them into our care, so we must look after them with the same feeling as their parents, brothers and sisters. Our hearts may ache for them right now, but for the sake of the future we have to train them in a principled manner."

My criticism made such a strong impression on her that decades later she reminded Jo Myong Son, a deputy chief of the General Staff of the People's Army, of this experience: "Do you remember that I was criticized because of your feet?"

Jo Myong Son instantly understood his former sergeant-major's reference. He replied, overwhelmed with emotion:

"Of course, I do. Comrade Jon Hui, you were criticized because I slept with my shoes off in the encampment.... This was when I belonged to the Children's Company, when we were learning the ABCs of the revolution. Tough as they were, I still yearn for those years." One does remember all one's life the hardships and loving care one experienced in one's childhood. The memory of this experience still lights our life warmly, like light of an undying fire. More than half a century has passed since then, and the boys of 14 or 15 at the time are approaching seventy, yet they have not forgotten the comrades who cared for and loved them like their own blood brothers.

Under the kind assistance and concern of the veteran guerrillas, our Children's Company rapidly grew up. They began to clamour for participation in battle, side by side with the veteran guerrillas. It was the battle of Xinfangzi that baptized the Children's Company. From this battle on they went through innumerable engagements with the enemy, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the veterans. Many things happened in the course of these battles.

In spite of the hundreds of precautions we had given them, these little guerrillas did unexpected things - things that went beyond the imagination of the grown-ups once a battle had started, things that left us breathless or made us double over with laughter. The boys, cool and collected at ordinary times, were gripped by feverish excitement as soon as the battle started, sometimes doing crazy things in their flurry. One boy was yanked down by the collar by a veteran soldier and fell on his buttocks: he had started blasting away with his gun while keeping his upper body exposed because he thought it was just too much of a nuisance to take cover.

Another boy had gone without a cap for some time because his brand-new cap had burned up in the campfire. From then on he concentrated so intently on the thought of a cap, that in an encounter with an enemy soldier his first move was an attempt to grab the man's cap before shooting him down. Because of this he very nearly lost his life. Another boy, who saw a roe deer while on sentry duty, was seized with an irresistible impulse to shoot it, which resulted in an emergency call for the entire unit.

Throughout the years of arduous war, the Children's Company members distinguished themselves in many battles. The unusual circumstances of life in the guerrilla army prompted them to display the kind of sharp intelligence and courage that was rare in ordinary life.

One day Jon Mun Sop, Lee Tu Ik and Kim Ik Hyon, out on a liaison mission, came across a small unit of the Manchukuo army. Both sides discovered each other simultaneously. The situation was such that unless they made the first move, they would be surrounded or captured. At this crucial moment the boy guerrillas fell flat on the ground in the bush and one of them, feigning a man's voice, shouted, "First Company to the left, 2nd Company to the right!" They then went on the attack, firing well-aimed shots at them. The enemy took flight without offering a resistance. They returned to the unit after carrying out their liaison mission successfully.

It is worthy of note that they regarded this feat as nothing special when they got back, not even bothering to tell the rest of the unit about it at once. I learned of their commendable act only when I was told of it by their company commander. The Children's Company members matured beyond recognition in ideology and will and in morality as well. They tried to do everything by themselves, endeavoring in every way not to be a burden on the veteran guerrillas.

In the autumn of the year in which the Children's Company was formed, Kim Ik Hyon got a bad burn on his leg while sleeping beside a campfire. Worse still, he had a sore eye, so he was going through a lot of trouble just then. Because of his poor sight, the veterans walked side by side with him on the march. Kim Ik Hyon was feeling acute pain in his calf all this time, but did not betray the fact because he was

reluctant to cause a trouble to me and the veterans. Sensing his discomfort from the burn on his leg, I gave him some medicine.

Looking at the mark of the burn, I could not help but admire his strong will and endurance. During the entire period of the anti-Japanese war the young men from Children's Company fought as courageously as the veterans, despite their tender age and physical shortcomings, making heroic contributions to the armed struggle. The Japanese army and police had a standard warning for their men: Don't talk to guerrillas trained in the Children's Company. In other words, better avoid fighting with them.

Let me give Kim Song Guk as an example. He became a boy guerrilla with the help of Kim Il. Kim Il worked underground in a village near Jiansanfung for a long time. He did a great deal of work aided by Kim Sang Hyon, a member of the ARE, who hid him at his farm hut for three months and sincerely assisted him in his work. The peasant was a widower. After his wife died, he sent out his three sons as hired-hands to others because he was unable to support them himself. Kim Song Guk was the eldest of these sons.

Kim Il was at a loss as to how to help this miserable family, and finally made up his mind to recommend Kim Song Guk to the guerrilla army. One day he went to him as he was weeding a field, and giving him a note of introduction addressed to me, told him to go and see me. The boy, Kim Song Guk, threw away the hoe and came to me in hempen clothes to join the guerrilla army.

As he had faced many unusual hardships from childhood on, Kim Song Guk was quick to learn. In addition, because he was bold and aggressive, he mastered marksmanship and learned the guerrilla code of conduct quickly. In a few months, he was picked out as assistant to machine-gunner O Paek Ryong. Kim Il always looked upon him with profound affection.

During one very cold winter, while we were operating near the River Songhua, Kim Song Guk was out on a blocking mission for some time. One day he was warming his foot over the campfire and, as he felt the sole to be too hot, he pulled off his shoes.

Unfortunately, just at that moment the blocking party was attacked by the enemy. To make matters worse, the machine-gunner O Paek Ryong was not there. Ordered by the commanding officer, Kim Song Guk hastily set up the machine-gun on the ice of the Songhua and opened fire at the enemy. He was completely oblivious of the fact that he was fighting barefoot. While he was engrossed in shooting, he felt somebody pulling his foot back.

He looked behind him angrily, to see Kim Il wrapping his foot in a torn piece of underwear. Only then did he realize that he had rushed into the battlefield with no shoes on. After the enemy was beaten back, Kim Il reproached him, saying: "Don't make such a spectacle of yourself! Do you want to have your foot amputated?"

After finishing the battle, Kim Il came and told me that he had seen Kim Song Guk running over the ice

of the River Songhua, the machinegun on his shoulder. Each time he lifted his bare foot from the ice there came the sound of tearing skin. Of course, Kim Song Guk was no ordinary fellow, machine-gunning barefoot on the ice in the biting cold as he did. Nevertheless, Kim Il, too, was an uncommon person in that he followed the little machine-gunner through the hail of bullets and swathed his foot with pieces of cloth torn from his underwear. If Kim Il had not done that, Kim Song Guk would have ended up with seriously frost-bitten feet and become a wingless bird.

Later, Kim Il and I stood surety for him when he was admitted to the Communist Party. How loyal he was to the revolution is well illustrated by many anecdotes from the years of small-unit activity.

The first half of the 1940s was a period of trial that tested the revolutionary spirit of every guerrilla soldier. In these grim days Kim Song Guk fought well without the slightest vacillation. He frequently went back to the homeland to do underground work. One day in Rajin city he was stopped by the police because of a trivial slip on his part: he was suddenly caught in the rain, so he bought a parasol, not an umbrella. Having spent his childhood in the remote mountain area of Jiazaishui, he had no idea of the difference between an umbrella and a parasol.

As soon as he walked out of the shop under the woman's parasol he attracted people's attention. This incurred the suspicion of a passing policeman, who stopped him and asked him where he had stolen it, pointing to the parasol. Kim Song Guk replied honestly that he had bought it in a shop. The policeman asked why he had purchased a woman's parasol. He replied that he had been asked to do so by the woman next-door, who needed one.

"But the policeman marched him to the police station and questioned him doggedly. He thought of running away after hitting the policeman over the head with a chair, but abandoned the idea. If he did so he would be unable to continue his underground activity in the city, and another operative would have to come here in his place at the risk of his life.

When the policeman who had brought him to the station went out on patrol, another policeman took up the interrogation. At one point the policeman opened the drawer of the table and saw the hundreds of won his colleague had seized from Kim Song Guk. Greedy for the money, he released Kim.

He had an even closer call on his way back from a small-unit operation in the homeland in the summer of the following year. As he was returning to the base after the fulfillment of his mission behind enemy lines, he got into a gun fight with the enemy and ended up with multiple wounds. He climbed down into the valley and hid himself in the bush, so the enemy failed to discover him. I dispatched a detail, led by Im Chol, to search for him. The detail found him lying unconscious in the valley. It was a miracle he was still alive, with the number of wounds he had received. He said he had eaten grass until the moment he lost consciousness.

After Kim Song Guk had returned to the training base in Zhanggufeng, we got in contact with the organ concerned and sent him to a field hospital in the Soviet Union. He recovered his health after one year of

treatments in the hospital. The medical workers and the other patients took great care of him, particularly the young nurse in charge of him, who gave a blood transfusion to him and attended on him with great devotion day and night, calling him "an immortal bird of the Korean guerrilla army".

The nurse was a young German woman whose father, an anti-fascist fighter, had been shot to death by the Hitlerites. She and her mother had come to live in the Soviet Union as exiles. The girl respected Kim Song Guk as a fighter for the weaker nations of the East and did everything she could to help him recover. She spared no pains, setting him on the toilet, washing his face and feeding him at mealtime. When he was recuperating she served him fine chicken dishes she herself had prepared at home to whet his appetite.

On the day he was leaving the hospital, the girl's mother visited him and invited him to her house. It was customary, she said, for a patient to go to sanatorium after hospital treatment. She asked him to stay at her home for several days to recuperate before his departure. Kim Song Guk willingly accepted her invitation.

The girl's mother was a teacher at the town art school. Even in the inclement climate of Siberia, she raised scores of chickens and grew perennial pepper plants. Every day they prepared new chicken dishes for Kim Song Guk. In their leisure time they loved to listen to his tales about the struggle of the Korean guerrillas. What impressed the girl and her mother most were tales of teenagers who had plunged into the tempest of revolution. It seemed incredible to them that young children were taking part in the guerrilla struggle.

The girl's mother often drew Kim's portrait, saying that she would introduce the fighter-hero of Korea to Europe.

As Kim Song Guk recuperated, the girl learned about Korea, its history, revolutionaries and people from him. As a result of her acquaintance with him, she began to feel an attachment to Korea.

"Your stories of the Children's Company have convinced me of one thing: your country will emerge victorious in the fight against Japan. I am sure you will defeat Japan and emerge victorious."

She repeated this often. When Kim Song Guk was about to return to our unit the girl and her mother, together with his Soviet doctors, accompanied him to bid farewell to him. The girl and her mother wished to give him their savings passbook, in which was entered a large sum of money, as a memento of their parting. But he declined their kind offer.

Saying good-bye to him, her mother said:

"You still need to rest, but we will not keep you here any longer. No matter how much I might try to persuade you to stay longer, you will not. Revolution will surely triumph in Korea with fighters like you!"

Hearing Kim Song Guk's account of this experience when he was back, I was greatly moved by the internationalist sympathy shown by the German girl and her mother. We sent him back with money and pork to express our thanks to them on behalf of the KPRA.

Kim Chol Man was another fine example of what an excellent furnace of ideological training and useful military and political academy the Children's Company was.

Kim Chol Man followed old man Tobacco Pipe, who had been to the area around Diyangxi on a small-unit mission, to come to us. He finally joined the Children's Company, but the first time he presented himself in front of me, I reproached Tobacco Pipe, saying, "What are we going to do with him? You have brought a shortie to us. Look at him, he's smaller than a rifle!"

While I was venting my frustration, Lee Tong Baek sprang up and said in his defense, "Shortie? He is all of 17. He may be young physically, but his mind is fully mature." At first I thought that Kim Chol Man had lied about his age to Tobacco Pipe. I took him to be 12 or 13. I tried to persuade him to return home, saying that he should not be gazing up a tree he was incapable of climbing.

But, Kim Chol Man said, grinning, "Don't belittle me because I am short, General. I'm an old hand at all sorts of farm work despite my youth."

Then he showed me his forearm, which looked stronger and more muscular than other boys'. After joining the Children's Company he was in the vanguard of every undertaking. When the company was disbanded, he became the orderly of Oh Jung Hup, commander of the 7th Regiment and performed his duty in a responsible way. When Oh Jung Hup was killed in action, he shed tears more than the others.

He took special care for the personal safety of O Paek Ryong who succeeded Oh Jung Hup as regimental commander.

On small-unit operations he was always a part of the detail led by O Paek Ryong. He frequently crossed the Soviet-Manchurian border and the River Tuman on political missions to rally the anti-Japanese resistance forces and to scout the enemy's military strategic points. The bravery and talent of Kim Chol Man as a military commander, seasoned in the flames of the anti-Japanese war, came into their own in the great anti-US war. He fought efficiently during the first advance to the south; and he fought all the more bravely behind the enemy lines. The regiment he was commanding attacked the enemy from the rear continually, operating over a 250-mile-wide region in Yanggu, Chunchon, Kaphywig, Thongchon, Phohang; Chongsong and Jowi in Kangwon Province, and in the areas of North Kyongsang Province.

The tug-of-war between the enemy and the regiment was so fierce that the people in Yanggu were in a state of anxiety because they had not been able to harvest their grain. As Yanggu was liberated, Kim Chol Man called together the officials of the county and with great composure organized the grain harvest. The county people got together with his regiment and brought in the field crops in just a few

days.

I am told that Kim Chol Man never misses an opportunity to say that it has been thanks to the Leader that he grew up to be a military and Political official trusted and loved by Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il, and that had the Leader not admitted him to the Children's Company, brought him up and taken care of him, he would have spent the rest of his life as an unknown woodcutter or peasant.

I think these are his innermost thoughts.

His three elder brothers - Kim Chol Su, Kim Chol Ho and Kim Chol Nam - also joined the KPRA and were all killed in action.

The young guerrillas who took up arms at a tender age without belonging to the Children's Company, also made an important contribution to our victory in the anti-Japanese war. Kim Pyong Sik was working at a tunnel construction site as a boy of 15. He was so bold, he came to join the guerrilla army all by himself. In the army he served as orderly to Mun Pung Sang and Choe Chun Guk for a while. The commanding officers praised him and approved of him as an agile soldier.

He was dispatched frequently for activities behind enemy lines and distinguished himself. Whistling casually, he came and went as he pleased across the tightly cordoned River Tuman, frequenting northern border towns of Korea, such as Unggi (Sonbong), Rajin and Hoeryong, as if visiting a neighboring village. The information he collected at the risk of his life about enemy movements in the homeland was greatly helpful to us when we were preparing our offensive for the liberation of Korea.

Unfortunately he was arrested by the enemy on the very eve of national liberation. The Japanese executioners sentenced him to death, since collectively his activities added up to the equivalent of a time bomb beneath the foundations of the Japanese empire. Later the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. The enemy seemed to have taken into account the fact that he was a minor.

Kim Pyong Sik was the youngest "convict" in the Sodaemun Prison. Each time he drew fatigue duty, he skillfully performed the part of messenger for Kwon Yong Byok, Lee Je Sun, Lee Tong Gol, Ji Thae Hwan, Park Tal and So Ung Jin, who were serving their terms in different cells of the prison. To make him turn traitor, the enemy by turns tortured, threatened and coaxed him, but in vain. He was a very honorable fighter.

Among the anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans, Lee Jong San and Lee o Song were the youngest to join. Lee Jong San joined the 3rd Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army at the age of 11 and became a guerrilla.

When Lee Jong San came to join up in the revolutionary army, Feng Zhong-yun, political commissar of the 3rd Corps, examined him for admission. At first, Feng advised him to go home, for he could not admit the boy as it was against common sense to allow a child of 11 to become a soldier. Worse still, he



was short in stature. Although he could lie about his age, he could not do anything with his stature. But he clung to Feng like a leech and won approval at long last.

Once in the army, he led a proper soldier's life, true to others' expectations. The men and officers in his unit unanimously treasured and loved him as if he were their own brother, for he was quick-eyed, prompt in action and willing to work more than others. He was mostly an orderly in the 3rd Corps. Once he served for Kim Chaek and Park Ku Song as their orderly. As far as I remember it was in 1943 when Kim Chaek introduced him to me, saying that he was an excellent aide-de-camp. From that time on, he worked close to me.

I still remember what Kim Chaek told me in a moment of digression about his birth. Lee's family had lived in Pbaltongyo, Pyongyang, but around the time when I was attending Changdok School, they emigrated to Manchuria. His mother gave birth to him on the train bound for Shenyang. She had neither quilt nor diapers. Her fellow travelers on the train collected money, penny by Penny, and gave it to her to buy clothes for the baby.

After liberation he worked as my aide-de-camp for several years, along with Lee Ul Sol, Son Jong Jun and Ju To Il. On his appointment as my aide-de-camp, he stopped smoking in consideration of my health. It is not an easy thing to get rid of one's 10-year habit.

The military and political cadres we had dispatched to the 3rd Corps in Qinggouzi included Oh Jung Son (O Se Yong), Oh Jung Hup's brother, who had been my orderly. A battalion political commissar in the 3rd Corps, he had lost his right index finger to an enemy bullet in battle. When he wanted to smoke, Lee Jong San would roll a cigarette for him, rush to some other guerrilla and light it from the other's cigarette. He had to puff at it once or twice while doing this, and thus became a habitual smoker before he realized it.

Even though I offered him a cigarette now and then, he did not take it. I had to admire his dutiful self-restraint.

One of the young guerrillas who trekked many steep mountains shoulder to shoulder with us in the anti-Japanese revolution, was Thae Pyong Ryol, who came to the Mihunzhen Secret Camp in the spring of 1936 at the head of a women's platoon. He told me that he had joined the KPRA and taken up arms at the age of 15 or 16.

He was nicknamed "Chili". It meant that though short and of small size, he was mature in his heart. He fought audaciously and lived a well-regulated life. After joining the anti-Japanese guerrillas he took part in the battles at Miaoling, Jinchang, Jiansanfeng, Mujihe, Dapuzaihe, Dashah-e-Dajianggang, Emu county town and in other battles, and performed as well as any veteran. He became a perfect marksman in the course of performing these military services.

The tale of Thae Pyong Ryol, along with regimental commander, Lee Ryong Un, going to an internment

village in Dunhua County and mowing down 30 puppet Manchukuo army soldiers in an instant is still told with relish among anti-Japanese war veterans. As he was an efficient combatant, even proud veterans dared not to slight him because of his youth.

Throughout most of the anti-Japanese war, he was an orderly to An Kil, Jon Tong Gyu, Lee Ryong Un and other military and political cadres, many of whom wanted to take him with them, for he was quick eyed, a workaholic and equipped with a strong sense of responsibility.

As an orderly, he showed special concern for the personal safety of his officers.

When they attempted to plunge themselves into critical situations, he would check them from doing it, sometimes bodily. He would retort sharply that it was the General's demand that they not run a risk and they should not go against this demand. Regimental commander, Jon Tong Gyu, was killed during the Dashahe-Dajianggang battle because he did not give heed to Thae's words, but exposed himself in a rain of bullets.

An Kil said that he would have been killed if he had not been obedient to Thae, who had begged him not to run a risk while clinging tenaciously to the collar of his tunic.

While participating in the activities of small units after the meeting at Xiaohaerbaling, Thae ran into a large unit of the enemy in a deep forest in Wangqing County, and fought a fierce battle. He was seriously wounded in the thigh by a bullet that got stuck between the bones and could not be dislodged. He bled so badly that he kept passing out, and the wound was ghastly as it turned maggoty. If it was not treated in time, the infection would spread into the intestines or bladder. But the young soldier Wang, who was left in the forest to nurse him, had no medical knowledge, nor the skill to perform an operation.

Thae sharpened his pocket knife on a stone and performed his own operation on the wound. As he plunged the knife into the wound and twisted it with great force, the bullet between bones came loose, falling out with deep-yellow pus and putrefied flesh. This prompt action saved his life. The following year, when his comrades met me at one of our places of operation in Wangqing, they said, "That chap is a man of fierce character." They meant that he was a man of strong willpower, an estimation I thought quite apt. It is not everyone that can operate on himself. This is an adventure that requires someone with extraordinary guts and courage.

Over a long span of time, living with him, I formed the opinion that he is really a strong-hearted and plucky man, a man of loyalty, determination and principle, who fights like an angry tiger for the revolution. Whatever he did anywhere, he stuck fast to principle and never compromised with what he saw to be unjust. His greatest hatred was for the factionalists and warlordists. Being a man of principle and of strong Party spirit, even such a warlordist as Kim Chang Bong did not dare dictate on him.

Thae Pyong Ryol not only fought bravely during the anti-Japanese war but also performed great exploits during the Fatherland Liberation War. After the war, he faithfully assisted me as my aide. As the saying

goes, a youth full of care means a plentiful old age; Thae Pyong Ryol had been able to become the kind of revolutionary who surmounted all the twists and turns of fate because he had taken up arms in his youth. A man becomes a distinguished revolutionary and an iron-willed man afraid of nothing only if he has engaged in armed struggle in his early years.

In half a year all the boys in the Children's Company grew into soldiers indistinguishable from the veterans. They made truly marvelous progress.

Toward the close of 1937, when they had all become full-fledged soldiers, we disbanded the Children's Company and spread its members out to other companies. This way they were transferred from the reserves to active army units.

Not a single renegade or laggard appeared among the guerrillas who had been trained in the Children's Company. This proves how loyal they were to the Party and the revolution, the country and the people.

Even in the trying days before national liberation, when fascism was going through its struggle to the death in the East and the West, they all faithfully carried out the small-unit activities under my command. In the years of building a new Korea it was they who, as division commanders or regimental commanders, built the armed forces of the country hand in hand with the revolutionary elders and crushed the US generals and tanks in the "punch-bowl".



*Photo: Kang Gun - the front army commander during Korean War - was killed in an mine explosion in 1950.*

Kang Kon, the first Chief of General Staff of the Korean People's Army, joined the revolutionary army at the age of 16. He was 30 when he was appointed Chief of General Staff. At the end of 1948 he paid a visit to the Soviet Union. The high-ranking military cadres of the host country, mostly generals and marshals, who were present at the airport to meet him were really surprised to see that the Chief of General Staff of the Korean People's Army was such a young man.

When Kang Kon told me of this after his return home, I remarked with a smile: "If I had been there I would have told them that you were already a renowned soldier in your childhood."

Since the days of the Children's Company I have come to think that a man's physical age does not coincide with his mental age. Of the two age categories I place more emphasis on the latter. One's mental age in youth or in childhood may leap forward by two, three or even five years in one year.

The education of young people is one truly essential factor in the shaping of a country's future. As shown by the experiences of the children's Company, the earlier, the more carefully the successors of a revolution, the reserves, are prepared, the better it is for the future of the country.

## 17.7. My Thought about Revolutionary Obligation

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Every precious fruit of the anti-Japanese revolution reaped in West Jiandao and in the area of Mt. Paektu was won through a bloody struggle. As the revolution developed in depth, the offensive of the enemy to destroy it became violent as never before.

Although the Japanese imperialists were writhing under the heavy burden of the Sino-Japanese War they themselves had unleashed, they were scheming to crush our revolution by mobilizing all the latest products of modern military science and by using the fascist repressive means practiced through decades of the "collective culpability system" policy and territorial expansion. However, no stratagem or machination could stop our advance.

Whenever the enemy tried to crush the revolution by force, we subdued them with our superb tactics and ingenious plans, our comradely unity and revolutionary obligation. Moreover, the more they ran amok to repress us, the more we strengthened our ties with the people; the more they tried to disintegrate us ideologically, the more we consolidated the unity of our ranks in ideology and will and our solidarity in morality and obligation.

Obligation is a moral concept inherent in man. In old society, too, honest people attached great importance to obligation and regarded it as the basic criterion of man.

The former moral standards of the old society preached inequality under which one side was to put restraint upon the other and the latter was to unconditionally obey the former. They restricted man's independence and creativity. The moral standards of the old society were unable to put forward progressive demands such as loving the people and working in the interests of the people.

In the course of our revolutionary struggle we did away with various kinds of feudal human relationships and moral standards left over from the old society, and created new, communist ones, which we passed on to our posterity as a treasure.

It was communist obligation based on love and trust that governed the relations between the superiors and inferiors and between comrades in the anti-Japanese guerrilla army as well as the relations between the army and the people.

There are tens of thousands of laws in this world. However, one is mistaken if one thinks that laws alone can control and manipulate the multifarious activities of man. A law is not an almighty weapon which moves this world. Laws cannot govern all the thoughts and actions of man. How can laws govern love or friendship? If a judicial organ proclaims a law that tries to force people to love such and such people from now on, or make friends with such and such people, or take such and such women as wives, how will society accept it? Laws alone cannot govern everything in the world. Obligation and morality do

what cannot be done by laws.

We started the revolution by winning comrades, and we constantly developed it in depth by strengthening comradely obligation and unity, becoming closely associated with the people and forming unbreakable ties with them. As it is at present, so in the past, too, comradeship was an important lifeline decisive to the issue of our revolution. The decades of the Korean communists' glorious struggle can be said to be the history of the development of comradeship and comradely obligation.

We were not a rabble who had gathered for the acquisition of wealth or for speculation, but a collective of revolutionaries who were united work with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units in the area of Jiandao around Antu and Helong. In this course he trained many revolutionaries.

Kim Il achieved great success in his work with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units under the command of such bosses as Du Yishun, Shun Chang-xian and Quan Yong-lin in the Paektu days. He was so skilful in his work with them that Quan Yong-lin from Antu was even resolved to take his unit and fight with us by being enrolled into the People's Revolutionary Army.

Kim Il took Quan Yong-lin's unit to Fusong, having heard that our unit had advanced there, but unfortunately we had left Manjiang and were in Changbai when he and the unit appeared in the Fusong area. The men in the unit began to waver, claiming that Kim Il had deceived them. On top of that, they were suffering from a shortage of food, and so Kim Il was put into an extremely miserable situation.

As the unit, including the commander, continued their march, having had no proper food for three days, some of the soldiers found an ginseng field in a mountain. The men, who were on the brink of starvation, rushed into the field in a chaotic way, ignoring their commander, and began to dig and eat ginseng. This was really unimaginable to Kim Il, a commander of the People's Revolutionary Army. He told them that digging ginseng without the owner's permission was unjust, an infringement on the people's interests, and tried to stop them.

The men of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist unit, who had lost their reason, went to see their boss Quan Yong-lin and said: Park Tok San (Kim Il's real name) is a mysterious character. He said that Kim Il Sung's unit was in Fusong, but it wasn't. Is there any need for us to keep following him, since he told such a lie? Now he says that the unit of General Kim Il Sung has gone to Changbai. We cannot believe this. Park Tok San is even stopping us from digging ginseng. What else can this be but an attempt to starve us to death? If we continue following Park, we may end up in real trouble, so, let's finish him off and go back to Antu.

Although Kim Il knew that the soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist unit might actually try to kill him, he had no fear. On the contrary, he talked to them with composure: "Well, kill me if you want. But I have one request. Wait for me until I come back. I'll go to the owner of the ginseng field and apologize to him for having eaten some of his ginseng. Don't touch any more of it because we have no money to pay for it."

Moved by Kim Il's speech and behavior, commander Quan Yonglin vouched for him without hesitation. He warned his men that he would shoot to death anyone who dared touch any more ginseng and sent Kim Il to see the owner of the field.

Some time later Kim Il returned to the unit bringing the owner with him. He undid his knapsack and took out dumplings prepared by the Owner and passed them on to the men of the unit. Then he produced a piece of opium and told the field owner that the opium was the only thing he had and asked him to accept it as payment for the dumplings and ginseng that had been consumed by the men. Wang De-tai had given the opium to Kim Il for emergency use. Despite the repeated refusal of the owner of the ginseng field to accept the opium, Kim Il never accepted the refusal.

Moved by this, the owner of the field offered all his winter provisions in the mountain, and guided Quan Yong-lin's unit to Manjiang. When they reached Manjiang, the men of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist unit came to see Kim Il and apologized to him for their error.

I finally met Kim Il in the secret camp of Hongtoushan in the area of Mt. Paektu and enrolled the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist unit into our main force.

Kim Il was a man of annoyingly few words. When I asked him on the first day at the secret camp when he had joined the revolution and what he had done in the struggle, he answered shortly that he had been a part of the revolution since the early 1930s and had done nothing in particular. He made the same answer when I repeated my question. Though it was our first interview, he seemed to be too reticent and unsociable. This was his merit as well as his shortcoming.

The excellent points of his character were that he was unpretentious without guile and worked faithfully in the same unchanging manner no matter how adverse the situation. He never once blamed conditions, worked with consistency and rarely uttered a word.

Kim Il was an out-and-out revolutionary who saw the act of following my orders and instructions as the obligation of a soldier to his leader, not as the duty of an inferior to his superior. He experienced no particular setbacks in performing his tasks, for he performed all of them with obligation.

Still vivid in my memory is the time when I appointed him political instructor of the 1st Company, 8th Regiment, at the secret camp in Matanggou. The duties of the political instructor of the company were not easy. The regimental commander, Quan Yong-lin, had been killed during the battle of Humnan county town and the post of political commissar of the regiment was left vacant for lack of a suitable man; in his situation the political instructor of the 1st Company had to discharge the duty of the regimental political commissar for the time being. The company commander was a faithful man, but he fell short of qualifications.

After frankly talking to him about the situation. I asked him if he knew the importance of his post. He thought deeply before answering in short, "I understand." Then he shut his mouth. The attitude with

which he viewed a task was always the same: he accepted it with the one short phrase. I understand."

When I went to the 1st Company the next day to help him in his work, he was not there. The company commander was there alone; he told me that as soon as he had come to the new post, Kim Il had left for Beigangtun, Fusong County, where the 1st Platoon was stationed. When appointing him political instructor of the company the previous day, I had said in passing that there was no news from the 1st Platoon in Fusong. He had listened attentively and apparently made up his mind to go to Beigangtun and acquaint himself with the platoon's situation.

He returned to the company with a large amount of grain and many weapons at dawn the next day. When I heard of his return, I could not believe it. Beigangtun is more than 25 miles away from Matanggou. If it was true that he had returned, then he might have gone on a forced march of more than 50 miles to get there and back in a day.

Without taking off his knapsack. Kim Il called on me and made a brief report - the 1st Platoon was safe and working as it should, the contact with the platoon was severed because the soldier who had left to bring the message had got lost on his way. The grain and weapons he had taken with him from Beigangtun had been captured by the platoon after attacking the enemy and been donated by the people, and he had bought along some young people in that region without the consent of Headquarters because they had so earnestly wanted to join the army.

After sending him to his barracks. I talked to the volunteers he had brought with him. In the course of the talk, I got to know that Kim Il had led the 1st Platoon in a raid on the enemy's police station and a wicked landowner's house in Jinlongtun, and captured great amounts of main and many weapons.

Kim Il had had two aims in raiding the den of the enemy: one was to take revenge on behalf of the people by liquidating the landlord and policemen, and the other was to obtain the grain over which I had been worried. In those days we were experiencing many difficulties for supply department was not sufficient. It was a time when it was impossible to obtain a sack of grain without fighting a battle. And Kim Il had secured a large amount of rice unexpectedly for the benefit of the whole unit. I was very grateful to him.

Later the people in Jinlongtun brought support goods on four or five occasions to the secret camp in Matanggou to show their gratitude to the revolutionary army.

When the unit ran short of grain, Kim Il would volunteer before anybody else and leave with his men to obtain it. Each time he returned from the enemy-held areas, he brought with him sacks of rice. Even though he himself went hungry or ate uncrushed maize, he tried his best to ensure that I always had cooked rice. His knapsack was twice as big and heavy as others' because he always carried reserve grain around in it.

Kim Il did not think of himself first but of his comrades, his neighbors, and the interests of the Party and the revolution. He worked in a high post of the Party and the state for a long time, but he did not expect

any privileges, special favors or better treatment for himself. If his subordinates tried to treat him in a special way, he forbade them to do it.

After liberation he helped me and supported me faithfully as in the days of the anti-Japanese revolution. He did not discriminate against any tasks, if they were what I wanted him to do. He was not particular about his post or sector, be it Party work, building the army, or economic guidance, and involved himself in complicated state affairs without complaint.

One year he made a request at a session of the Political Committee of the Party Central Committee to dispatch him to the construction site of the Chongchongang Thermal-Power Plant as a delegate vested with full authority. At that time the construction of the plant was a capital project, in which state investment and attention were concentrated. Therefore, I was choosing in my mind a man who would be fit to command the project.

Nevertheless, I had to give deep thought to his request, for he was in extremely poor health. There was no knowing what might happen if he worked without caring about his health, as he had always done. Kim Il repeated his request so persistently that I had to comply with it, but on condition that at the construction site he work only to the extent of giving instructions in his capacity as an adviser and never overtax himself.

On arriving at the construction site, he set up his office in a makeshift building and promoted the project in a daring way, going up and down stairs as high as a seven or eight-story building dozens of times a day. He worked day and night at the construction site till New Year's Eve and returned to Pyongyang after seeing to the lighting of the boiler No. 1; only then did he make a report to me about his work.

Kim Il was a man of this caliber. It is a well-known story that he continued to work in his office and review his Party life in his own party cell till three days before his death, and that he called on a senior official in the Party Central Committee and requested that he attend well upon Comrade Kim Jong Il.

Just as he followed me and supported me with loyalty all his life, I valued him and took care of him as if he were my own kin.

In spite of his bulky body, he often suffered from diseases, apparently the legacy of the many hardships he had undergone during the guerrilla warfare in the mountains. Once doctors made the dreadful diagnosis that he had a cancer of the stomach. The day I received the report, I was so heartsick that I went on an unscheduled field guidance to Onhchon South Pyongan Province. I did not feel like working or eating I felt quite depressed as several doctors, not just one or two, concluded that he had the fatal disease. Only one man insisted that it was not cancer. Accustomed as I was to a decision by majority, I did not know why, but I wanted that day to believe that doctor's diagnosis.

On my way I stopped my car and phoned to the Foreign Minister. and gave instructions to invite skilled cancer specialists from the Soviet Union. Receiving the telegraph from our Foreign Minister, the Soviet



authorities immediately sent the doctors we had invited.

After examining Kim Il, the Soviet doctors' diagnosis was that it did not look like cancer. Taking him with them to the Soviet Union, they had him examined by another famous doctor, who also diagnosed that it was not cancer. If we had removed his stomach by believing the original diagnosis at that time, he might not have lived long.

Whenever I heard that he was suffering from a disease. I called on him and said, "You are indispensable to me. Now only a few anti-Japanese war veterans who fought with me remain alive; if you are not by my side, I will not be able to stand the gap in my life. You must take care of yourself. Don't overdo things."

However, even when he had to walk with the help of a cane because of a serious disease, he did not leave his office or production sites; he exerted all his energy to do one more bit for the Party and the revolution. Finally he got an incurable disease.

One day he told me for some reason that when he got out of his sickbed he would ride a roller coaster in Mangyongdae on April 15, my birthday. His words somehow startled me. I had an inkling that he sensed that his days were numbered. Since for a man of few words to tell such an innermost thought was highly unusual.

Not surprisingly, he was not there to enjoy the children's performance on New Year's Eve that year. I visited his house that night.

"I have enjoyed the children's New Year performance with you every year; but as you were not present this evening. I felt tears well up and blur my vision. So I came to see you.

I said this to Kim Il, who was bedridden, as I rose to my feet. Following me out of the door to the entrance hall, he said repeatedly. "I beg you, don't work too hard."

That night I did not toast a Happy New Year with him for fear of his health. This still weighs on my mind. I was told that Kim Il, too, regretted after my departure that he had failed to drink a toast with me. Exchanging toasts would not cure his illness, nor make me feel better. But this failure touches a sore point in my heart whenever I think of Kim Il.

Kim Il treated Comrade Kim Jong Il as he would treat me, being faithful to him as he would be to me. I was struck with admiration on more than one occasion by his great reverence for Comrade Kim Jong Il. The day that Comrade Kim Jong Il returned home after a visit to China. Kim Il went to the railway station with the help of a cane to meet him. At that time I marveled at his sincere attitude to his leader.

Comrade Kim Jong Il showed special respect and concern for Kim Il as his revolutionary senior. He said that Comrade Vice-President Kim Il was a typical communist revolutionary who had fought most

staunchly for the development of our Party and the victory of the revolution from the days of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. Comrade Kim Jong Il always gave prominence to him and took warm care of him.

Just as I called him my right-hand man, Comrade Kim Jong Il also warded him as my right-hand man. This was probably why Comrade Kim Jong Il grieved most when he passed away. The anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters reached the highest stage not only in remaining faithful to their leader but also in staying loyal to their revolutionary comrades.

Repaying love with love, trust with trust, and affection with affection - this was the obligation between the anti-Japanese guerrillas.

The friendship between Hwang Sun Hui and Kim Chol Ho can be called the archetype of comradeship and communist obligation expressed among the anti-Japanese guerrillas. Whenever I meet Hwang Sun Hui, I wonder at how such a small, fragile woman could have fought for a decade in the snowstorms of Mt. Paektu.

When I told people in the homeland on our return to Pyongyang after liberation that she had been a part of the guerrilla struggle for a decade, some people refused to believe it. There were few women guerrillas as small as her in the KPRA units, but she was sturdy and audacious in the revolution.

It is not only men of bulky build that fight efficiently for the revolution or remain faithful. Lim Su San was a man of bulky build twice as big as Hwang Sun Hui, but unable to endure hardship, he turned traitor and forsook his obligation to his comrades. In contrast, Hwang Sun Hui continued in the revolution until the day of national liberation. Once they developed obligation and a strong will, even housewives fought for the revolution and little girls like Kim Kum Sun mounted the scaffold in defense of their principles. Hwang Sun Hui was able to fight for the revolution to the end with such a small body because she had strong faith and obligation.

I first saw her in military uniform in the secret camp in Mihunzhen. The women guerrillas' quarters had formerly been used by the mountain rebels. The kang (large, heated bed in Chinese houses) of the quarters of the Chinese rebels was very high. I looked down from the kang and saw a small, strange girl standing there, looking up at me and hesitating to say something. It was Hwang Sun Hui, who had obtained permission to join the guerrillas after badgering us for a week and had followed the unit as far as Mihunzhen. I took her to be a Children's Corps member that day.

What surprised me was that she herself insisted on being a guerrilla. I asked: "How come you joined the guerrillas when you are so small?"

She replied that she had joined to avenge her father, who had been murdered by the Japanese imperialists, and her elder sister, who had fallen in a battle. Her elder brother, Hwang Thae Un, had been a company commander in Choe Hyon's unit before being killed in battle in Hancongou.

In her early days she was a burden to the others, but she soon became a flower of the revolutionary army, favored by all. Persistent in all undertakings, she was a girl of fair judgment and principle, as well as a warm-hearted person with a sense of obligation.

In her lifetime Kim Chol Ho often recalled an event that took place in the spring of 1940, when she had been snatched from the jaw of death by Hwang Sun Hui's self-sacrificing action.

One day Hwang Sun Hui was assigned by regimental commander Choe Hyon to go to a secret camp in the rear with the wounded and infirm guerrillas to take care of them for a time. She left with the party, the majority of whom were the wounded, in the direction of Fuerhe. The greatest headache was that Kim Chol Ho, who was pregnant, had her baby on the way. Kim was not prepared for this new life; she had no blanket with which to cover it, let alone diapers. Hwang took off her padded coat and covered the baby with it.

After the delivery of the baby, the enemy "punitive" troops suddenly pounced upon them in a barrage of gunfire. Kim Chol Ho looked up at unclenching Kim's teeth with a spoon and forcing the boiled water into her mouth. That boiled water saved her life.

Only then was Hwang reminded of the baby, and she asked Kim Chol Ho what she had done with it. Kim Chol Ho said that she had put it under a bush. Hwang walked back to the mountain on which they had exchanged gunfire with the "punitive" force. Unfortunately, the baby had already died.

When Kim saw that Hwang had walked all the way back in an unlined coat to see whether the baby was alive, Kim Chol Ho apologized to her, saying, "Although I knew that the baby could not live longer than one or two hours, I could not take the padded coat off it." Though shivering from hunger and cold, Hwang Sun Hui consoled her.

"We adults can do without padded coats, can't we, sister? The baby, who died without knowing its own name, shouldn't be cold."

Kim Chol Ho remembered all her life the friendship Hwang Sun Hui had displayed at that time.

A few days before her death, when Hwang Sun Hui called on her on her sickbed, Kim Chol Ho said to her abruptly:

"My life is coming to an end, Sun Hui. I've lived under the personal care of the leader all of my life since I was saved by you in Fuerhe. I want to sleep with you under one quilt as we did in the guerrilla days."

As in their days in Mihunzhen, the two comrades-in-arms lay under one quilt and recalled their days in the guerrilla army throughout the night.

During the Arduous March a recruit from Changbai got his tunic burned while sleeping near a campfire at night. It was burned so badly there was not enough left to cover even half of his upper body. He followed the marching column, shivering. All showed sympathy with and concern about him, but there was no way to help him, as they were all wearing the only clothes they had, their uniforms.

In an excess of concern about him, Lee Ul Sol, who had a strong sense of comradeship. went to the man one day with his only tunic.

Dumbfounded, the recruit looked at him.

"Then what will you wear?"

"I'm accustomed to the guerrilla life. I can bear some awful cold."

"No, thank you. The uniform burned through my own mistake, so how can I put on your tunic?" The recruit would not accept his colleague's kindness.

Judging that he could not easily get past his stubbornness with words, Lee Ul Sol took off the burnt tunic from his body by force and put his own tunic on him. He showed this kindness to him because he saw it as the obligation of a veteran to help a recruit.

His comrades-in-arms thought that Lee Ul Sol would not get through the winter, as he was young and rather weak.

People who have lived one or two years in Manchuria know well how biting cold it is there. In cold days frost forms constantly on the hair. The ice-covered hair breaks easily at a touch. It is almost impossible to march several days in this cold in a summer tunic full of holes and loosely patched.

However, Lee Ul Sol did not utter a word about feeling cold. On the march he opened up a path for the others through the snow. When camping, he always collected firewood and pitched tents before anyone else. He would dry his shoes only after he had finished his work in the machine-gun team, while his comrades sat around the campfires.

His toughness and comradely obligation was not an inborn trait. Through experiencing the hardships and agony of the nation in his own life, he had sympathy for those who were exploited and oppressed and learned how to love his comrades and neighbors.

After the Nanpaizi meeting he was assigned to the machine-gun team of the Guard Company as an assistant machine-gunner. Since that time he has dedicated his all to defend Headquarters. He has protected me, gun in hand, all his life with great obligation, no matter how adverse the situation.

When reviewing the Arduous March at the meeting in Beidadingzi, I stressed that Lee Ul Sol was an

example in comradeship, and praised his nobility and comradely obligation. The editorial board of Chohyol carried in its inaugural number an article praising him.

Why was the Korean People's Revolutionary Army so strong? When I am asked this question, I answer that it was because the army was a great mass, kept together through obligation. Had our unity not been based on morality and obligation, and on the pure community of ideology and will, we could not have been so strong. In the protracted revolutionary war against formidable Japanese imperialism, with no assistance from the regular army or state support, we could still emerge victorious.

This was not because we had a large number of troops or superior weapons; our armed force was quite small in its number, compared to the enemy with its millions of regular troops. Our weapons did not bear comparison with the enemy's. We could defeat the powerful enemy only because we were united ideologically by the ties of loyalty and obligation.

I think that our cadres and Party members should learn from Lim Chun Chu's loyalty and obligation to the revolution. He was a fighter faithful to the Party and his leader.

In a previous volume I wrote that in the autumn of 1930 I first met Lim Chun Chu in Chaoyangcun; at that time he was a liaison for the secretariats of the Jiandao party and YCL committees while working under the disguise of physician at the Pongchun Dispensary. Since then he had devoted himself to the revolution for nearly 60 years. The famous phrase, "eternal companions, faithful assistants, good advisers," is a title Comrade Kim Jong Il conferred on intellectuals; it is highly appropriate to such a man as Lim Chun Chu.

Lim Chun Chu rendered a great contribution to the Korean revolution with his great fund of knowledge. He participated in Party building, as an army surgeon and wrote books using his knowledge. He occupied himself with this kind of work through his entire life. The greatest of his talents was the medical skill he had taught himself—Probably some people will not believe it when I say that he was aged in "business" from the age of 18 as a licensed doctor, but it is a fact. Under the signboard of doctor, he enlightened the masses, transcribed messages and trained revolutionaries. When staying in the village of Longshuiping near Badaogou, he sent many people to the guerrilla army; I think anybody can guess the nature of his medical skill.

When Lim Chun Chu came to the guerrilla zone, the revolutionary organization appointed him army surgeon. He treated many wounded guerrillas and other sick people. He had acquired medical skill through self-teaching from about the age of 14 or 15, while doing farm work, and his clinical results were excellent. Everyone who has been indebted to this medical skill has called him an excellent doctor.

It is Choe Chun Guk who gave much publicity to him as a doctor. When Choe was heavily wounded, Lim Chun Chu performed an operation on him. In an unexpected encounter with a puppet Manchukuo army unit, Choe's thighbone had been broken by an enemy bullet; the men who saw the wound were unanimous in their opinion that the leg should be amputated if the wounded man was to be saved.

But Lim Chun Chu saw it differently. He knew too well that if the leg was amputated it meant an end to Choe's role as an officer of the guerrilla army. He would also become disabled for the rest of his life. He gave primary attention to the fact that Choe was an efficient military commander who could not be exchanged for 10,000 enemy soldiers and a brave officer of the revolutionary army whom I valued highly.

Lim made a cut in his thigh and picked out with forceps the broken pieces of thighbone. Choe Chun Guk began to walk on his own feet after a year. The wounded leg became shorter and he limped a little, but in that condition he marched and commanded battles. Lim's daring operation had proved effective.

When I went to the secretariat of the east Manchurian party committee in Nengzhiying, Sandaowan, after our first expedition to northern Manchuria, I was given great care by him. He looked after me with all sincerity, visiting me every day and bringing effective herbal medicines and nutritious food. Choe Hyon, O Jin U, Cao Ya-fan and Jo To On were also treated by him when they were wounded.

For a full year, from the autumn of 1937 to the autumn of 1938, Lim Chun Chu made a round of the secret camps scattered across the vast forest region of Jinchuan and Linjiang Counties and Longquanzhen, Mengjiang County, treating wounded soldiers. He had to cover several miles to visit every patient. Nowadays doctors visit patients' houses or go for disseminating hygienic knowledge by means of ambulances, cars or other modern means of transportation, but the army surgeons in the days of the anti-Japanese war could not enjoy such luxury. It was a mercy if they were not killed by the enemy "punitive" troops on making their rounds.

Lim Chun Chu once narrowly escaped death by enemy troops. He was climbing a hill with a padded coat and trousers wrapped on the back of his knapsack; the coat and trousers had been captured at the battle of Huanggouling and Choe Hyon had given them to him. He got a volley from a machine-gun. After the "punitive" troops withdrew, he was astonished to open his knapsack and find seven bullets in it. But for the padded coat and trousers, he would undoubtedly have been killed.

In the days of the anti-Japanese war he worked with the people as a party worker and engaged in organizational affairs and in writing books, thus contributing greatly to the education of the people and soldiers.

Through several meetings with him, I realized that he had the qualifications of a political official. In fact, he had been experienced in educating and guiding the masses as an official in a mass organization in Yanji before joining the guerrillas. So we assigned him to party work at the same time as appointing him army surgeon. He held the posts of member of the KPRA Party Committee and party secretary of the Guard Regiment and performed the work of the East Manchurian Party Working Committee. This committee had not lived up to our expectations after its establishment, which was why after the Nanpaizi meeting we appointed Lim Chun Chu to one of its responsible posts.

The task of the committee was to consolidate the foundation for armed struggle by rallying the masses

into organizations through expanding the party and mass organizations in the Jiandao region. At the same time, the committee was to lay a firm foundation for party building. It performed tasks similar to those of the Changbai County Party Committee and the Homeland Party Working Committee.

The main areas for committee activity were Jiandao and North Hamgyong Province. After the guerrilla bases had been dissolved, the party organizations in Jiandao became affiliated with this committee.

While keeping in touch with me, he dispatched many political workers to the Musan and Yonsa areas and to areas in eastern Manchuria. The workers were to expand party and mass organizations.

When operating in small units in Wangqing, Yanji, Dunhua, Hunchun, Antu and Helong after the Xiaohaerbaling meeting, we got much help from the revolutionary organizations built by the East Manchurian Party Working Committee. These organizations were a major source of help to us.

By drawing on his experience in party work in the days of the anti-Japanese revolution, he performed a great exploit in Party building after liberation. In the early days after liberation he worked as second secretary of the South Phyongan Provincial Party Committee and later as chairman of the Kangwon Provincial Party Committee. When he was chairman of the Kangwon Provincial Party Committee, the work in the areas along the demarcation line was proceeding quite smoothly.

We did not appoint the anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans to high posts immediately after liberation. Most of the high posts were assigned to the people who had been engaged in the revolutionary movement in the homeland and abroad. It was not because qualified and capable people were lacking among those who had taken part in the arduous armed struggle at my side.

This measure was needed in order to carry out unit-gd-front politics involving people from all strata. But at the time, when only five provincial Party committees existed in the northern half of Korea, we appointed Lim Chun Chu to be chairman of the Kangwon Proincial Party Committee, as we attached great importance to his experience in Party work.

What I recall with particular emotion is his authorship: he wrote many books for the younger generation. Many of his books, including Reminiscences of the Days of the Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle, are national treasures.

He started full-scale literary activities after he became an honorary journalist for Samil Wolgan. Many articles he had written were carried in the mouthpiece of the KPRA. His article entitled "The Japanese Economy in Distress" carried in Samil Wolgan, was an excellent one.

Though busy with battles, marching and treating patients, he saved every minute and recorded our activities daily in his spare moments.

if he ran out of paper, he would record the struggle of the KPRA on birch bark. Lim Chun Chu recalled

on several occasions that this record was the basic data for Reminiscences of the Days of the Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle.

I heard that Wei Zheng-min had advised him several times to write the history of the KPRA. He said, "It is of course excellent to work as a party official, army surgeon and honorary journalist. But it is even more important that you, Lim, write the history of the Korean guerrilla army. You must bear this in mind. Even though others may be killed in a do or-die battle, you must remain alive and perform this mission to hand down the exploits of your Commander and the history of your army to posterity."

While working as party secretary of the Guard Regiment, he stayed with Wei Zheng-min for a long time; he helped him in his work and treated his illness. Wei Zheng-min liked to have him there and asked him to stay close at all times. He played a very important role in ensuring good relations between Wei Zheng-min and myself, in consolidating the friendship between the Korean and Chinese people, and in strengthening the allied front of the armed forces of the two countries.

It was in the late 1950s that I read Lim Chun Chu's Reminiscences of the Days of the Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle for the first time. In those days there were still vestiges of flunkeyism in the minds of our people. Worse still, education in revolutionary traditions was not being conducted properly, with the result that the history of our armed struggle was being poorly disseminated among the people, youth and children. Some cadres glibly recited from memory the Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and what Iskra and Bukharin had been.

But when they were asked what had been discussed at the Nanhutou meeting, they could not answer properly. Reminiscences of the Days of the Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle was published just at that moment, bringing for the first time the outline of the anti-Japanese revolution to the people. Since then, the book has become source material indispensable for studying the history of the anti-Japanese revolution.

By writing this book he showed his obligation and performed his duty to all communists and patriots who had taken part in the anti-Japanese revolution. He wrote it, not to introduce himself or to give publicity to his exploits, but with the noble aim that the rising generation would carry forward more reliably the revolutionary traditions, the eternal assets of our people, and consummate them.

He wrote many books and educational materials on our Party's revolutionary traditions, including reminiscences on the activities of Kim Jong Suk and Kim Chol Ju. He verified many materials and organized them systematically, performing a brilliant service to the history of our Party. He even wrote the multi-volume Young Van guards, a novel portraying young communists.

Our Party recognizes him as the authoritative witness and attester to the brilliant history of the anti-Japanese revolution, which we started and led to victory. I think it is correct and fair recognition.

Frankly speaking, he could have earned his bread without much difficulty by means of his medical skill



even if he had not engaged himself in the arduous anti-Japanese revolution. However, faced with manifold crises, he never flinched on the road of revolution, nor did he abandon his obligation to his leader and comrades.

When he was imprisoned in Longjing, he believed that even if he were to die the revolution would emerge victorious; he withstood brutal torture with the thought that he should protect the revolutionary organization and his comrades, even though this protection could cost him his life. Those who betrayed the revolution felt that the revolution was of no significance if they were killed and they yielded to torture, convinced that they should remain alive, even at the cost of their organizations and comrades.

This is the difference between genuine and sham revolutionaries.

Various events after liberation made me realize more keenly what a true sense of obligation he had. When he was dispatched to northeast China as our chief delegate for the preparations of setting up the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Region, I requested him to look for the children of the anti-Japanese revolutionary martyrs in eastern Manchuria and send them back to their native land.

With the Chinese people fighting a civil war, he had to organize assistance to the front, set up power organs, lay foundations for education and work with people from all walks of life; busy as he was, he still managed to find many children of the anti-Japanese revolutionary martyrs and send them to the homeland. He even advertised in newspapers to find the brother and sister of Kim Jong Suk, his friend and revolutionary comrade-in-arms in his days in Fuyandong.

At each consultative meeting of cadres he informed them that a school for the bereaved children of revolutionaries would be built in Korea, and made rounds of the scattered villages in Jiandao in search of orphans until his shoes wore out.

Whenever children in threadbare clothes came to him on reading the advertisements in newspapers, he would take them to his bosom and press his cheek against theirs, saying, "You are so-and-so's son and so-and-so's daughter? Do you know how hard General Kim Il Sung is looking for you?"

When he had found a total of scores of children this way, he was so elated, he sent me a telegram saying, "Returning home immediately with the children found so far." Reading the short message, I felt the excitement and emotion he must be feeling at having fulfilled his obligation to his revolutionary comrades-in-arms.

He found out many children and families of revolutionary martyrs and sent them back to the homeland. The children who went to the school at that time have now become members of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, chief secretaries of provincial Party committees and generals in the Korean People's Army.

During the Fatherland Liberation War he worked in a province for some time. Each time he made a

business trip to Pyongyang to attend a meeting convened by the Ministry of Public Health, he would climb Moran Hill and spread a white sheet on the lawn near the graves of the anti-Japanese war veterans, so as to sleep on it. He never thought of staying at inns in the town. In those days the graves of Kim Chaek, An Kil, Choe Chun Guk, Kim Jong Suk and others were on Moran Hill. As he tried to rest in the open on a hill, surrounded by his comrades' graves, sleep failed to come to him.

Nevertheless, whenever he came to Pyongyang, he went up the hill and made his bed in the same place. He later told me that he talked endlessly to his comrades in the graves, saying, "My dear comrades, why are you sleeping here when you are so essential to our homeland? Do you know how hard the General has to work without your help in shouldering the destiny of Korea?"

As it was the time when the destiny of the country and people was at stake, there were not many people among the citizens who remembered the fact that the souls of anti-Japanese fighters were resting in peace in the dense forests on Moran Hill, and no one knew that now and then a tall man came down the hill quietly at daybreak after sleeping with those souls. On hearing about that, I thought that he was a true man and fighter with obligation.

This is the obligation of the anti-Japanese guerrilla type I intend to write about. There are many beautiful stories about the obligation and affection of man in the world. However, I do not know an obligation more ennobling, sincere and beautiful than that displayed by our anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters.

Calling himself an old disciple of Comrade Kim Jong Il he always tried to follow his guidance. Comrade Kim Jong Il also cared for him and respected him with sincerity, saying that even if Comrade Lim Chun Chu did nothing but remain alive, he was an invaluable treasure to our Party and our state. His unique concern and solicitude for Lim Chun Chu reflects the leader's ennobling obligation to the veteran revolutionaries.

It is an obligation of the anti-Japanese guerrilla type created on Mt. Paektu. However, we do not mean that all of the people remained true to the revolutionary obligation and honor. Though partially, there were turncoats and renegades among our ranks.

When they heard that those shouting for the revolution whenever they had an opportunity had turned and betrayed their principles, our men were sick at heart. How can I describe in full the agony and frustration of the officers and rank and file, when those who yesterday sang the Internationale and shouted for the victory of the revolution changed their minds and became enemy stooges?

Nevertheless, one or two turncoats cannot nullify the accomplishments of a decade. We countered the enemy's white terrorism by consolidating the unity of our ranks, a unity based on ideology and will as well as on morality and obligation. This was the only way for us to emerge victorious.

# 18.1. To Meet a New Situation

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Around mid-July 1937, shortly after our victorious Jiansanfung battle, we heard the shocking news of the incident at Lugou Bridge. We had long foreseen that the September 18 incident would lead to another "September 18", and that the Japanese occupation of Manchuria would eventually escalate to a full-scale invasion of all of China, a land of millions of square kilometers.

Nevertheless, we were stirred by the news of the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, triggered by the Lugou Bridge incident. The officers and men of the People's Revolutionary Army held hot debates on future developments.

Needless to say, the point of the arguments was the question of what influence this war would have on both the international situation and the development of the Korean revolution, and how we should use the new situation to further our revolution. Up until the Sino-Japanese War broke out, few of us even knew of the existence of Lugou Bridge.

Nobody could ever have imagined that the gunshot at midnight on this bridge was to become a prelude to a disaster which would drown China in a sea of blood for 3,000 days and plunge the world into the vortex of a world war. It is the common view that fascist Germany's attack on Poland in September 1939 was the start of World War II, but some people regard the Lugou Bridge incident, provoked by the Japanese imperialists two years before, as the ignition point of the great war.

Manchuria, world opinion had already predicted that she would soon attack the rest of China. The Japanese imperialists had, in fact, concentrated all their efforts on preparing their invasion of China proper after the occupation of the three provinces in Northeast China.

The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War presented the Korean communists with many new tasks. We had to formulate an active strategy and appropriate tactics to meet the sudden change in our own situation.

On hearing the news that war had broken out between China and Japan, I meditated for several days on how this conflict would develop, how it would influence our revolution and what attitude and methods we should adopt to cope with it.

It was not a local war that would end with the occupation of North China by the Japanese imperialists, nor would it be a quick decision to be made in a few months, as the Manchurian incident had been. This war had every reason to drag out and could possibly develop, first into a regional war, then into a global war.

Most certainly conflicts between Japan and the Soviet Union would be inevitable. Historically, Korea and Manchuria had been a major area of contention between Russia and Japan. It was mainly for this reason at the Russo-Japanese War had broken out early in this century. Even after the birth of the Soviet Union,

relations between the Soviet Union and Japan remained tense owing to Japan's ambitions on the continent. On the eve of the Sino-Japanese War, the Soviet Union and Japan had been in a hair-trigger confrontation over the possession of two islands on the River Amur. Although the dispute had been settled through direct diplomatic negotiations in Moscow, in subsequent years Japan continued to confront the Soviet Union with a hard-line policy on the pretext of a Japan-Manchuria joint defense.

It was not surprising that most world opinion predicted a big war as a result of this dispute between the Soviet Union and Japan. It was no secret that the Japanese imperialists were determined to invade China proper, Mongolia and the far eastern regions of the Soviet Union after was not ripe for an all-out war against the Soviet Union. Japan was secretly afraid of the ever-strengthening national power and defense capabilities of the Soviet Union. Nothing would be more dangerous and foolish for Japan than to start a war against the Soviet Union while fighting with China, since she was incapable of fighting two major powers simultaneously.

Many of my men and officers were of the opinion that the escalation of the war would affect our revolution badly.

I felt it imperative to lay down a strategic policy to cope with the Sino-Japanese War, and to fight with a distinct objective. A meeting of the commanding officers of the main force of the KPRA, held in the Paektusan Secret Camp in mid-July 1937, and another meeting of military and political cadres, held at Caoshuitan, Changbai County, in early August that year laid down such a policy. At these meetings we set forth the strategic policies on strengthening the anti-Japanese armed struggle to deal with our own rapidly changing situation and on effecting a fresh upsurge in the Korean revolution as a whole. Also present at the meeting, held in the Paektusan Secret Camp, were Ma Tong Hui, Lee Je Sun and other political operatives and heads of underground organizations who had been active in the Mt. Paektu area and the homeland.

At the meeting we discussed, in essence, the task of consolidating our own revolutionary forces, harassing the enemy more intensively from behind and speeding up the preparations for an all-people resistance to cope with the Sino-Japanese War. As one of the major ways to carry out this task, we proposed and discussed in earnest forming more underground organizations in the southwestern area of Mt. Paektu and in the homeland and sending political workers' groups of the KPRA to Rangnim mountains to build revolutionary bases and organize paramilitary corps and workers' shock troops in various parts of the homeland.

We also took stock of the work of building up party and ARE subordinate organizations, conducting political campaigns among the people and enlisting support for the guerrilla army in Sinpha and Xiangangqu, Changbai County, and discussed measures to popularize the experience in this work.

In those days, Japan considered herself one of the five world powers and one of the three naval powers. Major powers, too, saw Japan in the same light. However, we thought that Japan would most likely fall into dangerous trap.

We firmly believed that the Japanese imperialists would be destroyed ultimately, despite the fact that they were gaining temporary superiority by taking advantage of the lack of concerted action on the part of resistance forces in China. An unjust war always involves internal strife. The contradictions between forces for and against war on their home front, as well as the contradictions between imperialist powers were tangible factors which put a brake on their war efforts.

The Japanese imperialists were isolated in the international arena. They had such allies as Germany and Italy in Europe, but they were not in a position to receive substantial help from them. If they escalated the Sino-Japanese War and "advanced southwards", it would inevitably intensify the contradictions and confrontation between the imperialist powers.

The Japanese imperialists in their mad pursuit of wealth and expansion swallowed up Manchuria, and before giving themselves time to digest it, attacked the rest of China, blind in their greed. But they were like a cat trying to chew and swallow an entire ox-head: there was no guarantee they would not end up with serious indigestion.

As soon as they had provoked the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese imperialists tightened their colonial rule in Korea to its tautest. All sorts of fascist laws were enacted to shackle the people both spiritually and physically. The "Military Secrets Act", which had been enforced in 1913, was amended for the worse to meet wartime needs. The enemy made everything subservient to war, fussing about "the special mission of Korea as a base for war supplies" and "the task of Korea in carrying out the continental policy".

The Japanese imperialists' plunder of Korea was not limited to the economic sphere; they plundered Korea of her manpower, too. They conscripted young men and threw them into the battlefields and mobilized a huge work force, compelling it to build munitions factories and military facilities. Their fascist repression and economic plunder, which with the start of the Sino-Japanese War grew more oppressive and ferocious than ever before, stifled the Korean people beyond endurance.

Nonetheless, even in such unfavorable conditions we believed that we could transform misfortune into a blessing by turning the complicated situation to good account.

At the meeting of military and political cadres held in Caoshuitan I viewed the situation from this angle and emphasized the need to deal with it from this point of view. The meeting on Mt. Paektu dealt with the task of strengthening the driving force of the Korean revolution from the point of view of building organization, whereas the Caoshuitan meeting approached the task of harassing the enemy from the rear from the military angle, centering on cooperation with other units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army.

At this meeting, I also emphasized the need to strike the enemy harder from behind in the vast area along the Rivers Tuman and Yalu, and the need to dispatch more small units and political operatives to the homeland to continuously expand and strengthen the anti-Japanese national united front movement.

We decided to harass the enemy from the rear in two main ways. One was to build secret camps in the

Rangnim mountains, lay the military foundation for the all-people resistance by organizing paramilitary corps and workers' shock troops in all parts of Korea, and strike the &Japanese imperialists from behind through various forms of mass struggle in the homeland. The other was to check the movement of the Japanese aggressors into China proper and frustrate their operations by guerrilla warfare.

According to this new strategic policy, the Caoshuitan meeting partially reorganized the KPRA units and allotted the fields of action to the units in a realistic way. We also discussed the small armed and political groups we would be sending to the homeland.

After provoking the Sino-Japanese War, the enemy kept a watchful eye on our every move. The top brass of the Japanese army and police somehow got wind of our decision and said that we had set forth a new policy of action, regrouped our forces, and allotted our areas of action. 'They also said that we had decided to attack major cities in Manchuria on August 29, the day of the national humiliation, and make an all-out push into the homeland. They made a great noise of working out countermeasures. Later, we found that all this was recorded in detail in secret documents of the enemy.

Before going again to Changbai and Linjiang Counties after the Caoshuitan meeting, I met Wei Zheng-min to discuss joint operations with the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army in harassing the enemy from the rear. At that time he was recuperating in the Dongmanjiang Secret Camp on the River Huapi along upper reaches of the River Man.

That day, Ju Jae Il, the political instructor of a company, guided my party to the Dongmanjiang Secret Camp. He was familiar with the geography of the east Manjiang area. He was born in Kangwon Province, but had lived in Helong since his childhood and joined the guerrilla army in Yulangcun. When the guerrilla zones were evacuated, six families moved to Caoshuitan from Helong, one of them being Ju's. He him the political instructor of a company in which there were many Chinese soldiers from the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist forces, because he spoke Chinese fluently and knew Chinese customs well.

Afterwards he worked as the political instructor of the Guard Company and was promoted to the rank of the regimental political commissar. He took us safely to our destination.

In Wei Zheng-min's opinion, it was most important, while the SinoJapanese War was spreading, that cooperation between the communists and people of Korea and China be improved as much as possible.

"We expect a great deal from our cooperation with our Korean comrades and people," he said earnestly. "You have helped the Chinese revolution sincerely and selflessly. Whenever I hear the words proletarian internationalism, I think of Korean comrades first. Our days together in the same trenches will be remembered for ever not only in the history of our two countries but also in the history of the international communist movement. Commander Kim, the Chinese nation is now facing the same trials as the Korean nation has experienced. I firmly believe that in this difficult time the Korean people will stand firmly on our side."

Wei Zheng-min, political commissar of the 2nd Corps and secretary of the South Manchuria Party Committee, was an openhearted man.

As the struggle to correct the ultra-Leftist errors of the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign showed, Wei had made sincere efforts to sympathize more than anyone else with the Korean communists in their afflictions and agony. I had respected him for his sympathy with the Korean people and his help in the struggle of the Korean communists. He, too, approached me with unusual affection and friendship.

Wei Zheng-min always held in high esteem the role of the Korean communists and the KPRA in the anti-Japanese armed struggle in Northeast China.

That day Wei Zheng-min informed me in detail of the internal and external situation of China after the start of the Sino-Japanese War and the policy of the Chinese Communist Party on the war against Japan. Most interesting in his information was the move by the Chinese communists and progressive patriots to form a new Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation, as well as an anti-Japanese national united front.

The day after the Lugou Bridge incident, which was also called the July 7 incident, the Chinese Communist Party appealed to the entire nation to "resist the Japanese aggression by building a strong wall in the form of the national united front". They pointed out that an anti-Japanese war involving the entire Chinese nation was the only way to save the country. On July 15, they sent the "Declaration of the Chinese Communist Party on the Promulgation of Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation" to the Kuomintang leadership.

That was not the first time the CCP had appealed to the Kuomintang to stop the civil war and form a Kuomintang-Communist cooperation front. Although the Japanese imperialists were directing the spearhead of their aggression on China proper following the occupation of Manchuria, Chiang Kaisek's Kuomintang was too busy making frantic efforts to destroy the communist party and "suppress" the Worker-Peasant Red Army, instead of taking positive action for resistance against Japan.

Chiang Kaisek mobilized a large armed force to destroy the Central Soviet Union and conducted five large-scale "punitive" operations. The Kuomintang was more hostile to the communist party than to the foreign enemy.

Until then, the CCP was unable to concentrate its efforts on the anti-Japanese struggle; its main effort was directed toward the land revolution and the fight against the Kuomintang. When a foreign enemy attacks a country, which is in a civil war, the country must stop internal conflicts and pool its national efforts and offer resistance. Until the mid-1930s, however, China did not end its internal problems of the war, which was known as the Second Revolutionary Civil War.

Afterwards the CCP adopted a new strategy of fighting the Japanese first, in keeping with the general trend. The Chinese communists carried out the Long March covering 10,000 kilometers under the slogan "advance north to resist Japan" and established new bases in Shanxi, Gansu and Ningxia. This was

followed by their direct confrontation with the Japanese imperialists, based on the policy of “expedition to the east against Japan”.

Following this, the CCP changed its slogan from "resisting Japan while opposing Chiang" to “resisting Japan in alliance with Chiang”, and made patient efforts to put into effect Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation. Such efforts by the Chinese communists were redoubled after the Xian incident and at last produced good results in the talks between Chiang Kaisek and Zhou En-lai held in Lushan after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.

When Wei Zheng-min told me that in the Lushan talks, Zhou En-lai negotiated with Chiang Kaisek on the need to activate the anti-Japanese struggle of the communists in Manchuria, North China and Korea, I was greatly pleased. It meant that the CCP leadership rightly evaluated the position held by the Korean communists in carrying out the anti-Japanese war, and eagerly desired positive support from, and cooperation with, the armed struggle led by the Korean communists.

Mao Ze-dong, in a letter he wrote early in 1937 to members of the National-Salvation Association of China, carried in *The Pacific*, an international political and theoretical magazine of the Soviet Union, took the anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare in Northeast China as a living example of the possibility of active resistance to Japanese imperialism. He wrote that the anti-Japanese guerrilla army in Northeast China destroyed over 100,000 enemy troops and inflicted a loss of hundreds of millions of yuan, thereby checking and delaying the Japanese invasion of China. This evaluation of the guerrilla army in Northeast China included the appreciation of the struggle made by the Korean communists.

Wei Zheng-min and I were of the same opinion that the anti-Japanese guerrilla units in eastern and southern Manchuria should take a heavier burden than those in northern Manchuria in harassing the enemy from behind, because the Japanese imperialists were trying to conquer all of China before attacking Siberia.

During the talks Wei Zheng-min said that a man from Kong Xianyong had come via the Soviet Union to see the leaders of the 2nd Army in the capacity of a secret messenger from the Nanjing government. He asked me whether I wanted to see him. The arrival of the messenger in Manchuria showed that the Kuomintang government was trying in every way to realize cooperation with the anti-Japanese forces in Northeast China.

Kong Xian-yong had been on intimate terms with us when he was a deputy commander of Wang De-lin's national salvation army. Later he had also helped us raise the People's Revolutionary Army. At an invitation from the Headquarters of the Far East Army of the Soviet Union he had visited the Soviet Union with some of his men and then entered China. His activity there was noteworthy. Together with Li Du and Wang De-lin, he was deeply concerned about the anti-Japanese struggle in Manchuria while keeping contacts with the Nanjing government and Thang Xue-liang's former northeast army.

After his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Northeast Volunteers Army he kept in touch with



the Nanjing government and occasionally organized outside support for the anti-Japanese movement in Northeast China. The fact that he sent his messenger to us on behalf of the Nanjing government showed that he was still keen on the anti-Japanese armed struggle in Manchuria.

The messenger, like Kong Xian-yong, had also once taken part in the anti-Japanese struggle in eastern Manchuria. After emphasizing the need to link the struggle in the northeast region with the struggle in China proper, the messenger explained the desirability of including the armed forces of the northeast region in the general operations plan of the Nanjing government, since as a result of the Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation the Worker-Peasant Red Army, led by the CCP, would be reorganized as a part of the National Revolutionary Army under Chiang Kaisek's unified control.

I expressed doubt about his proposal, giving details of the differences in the situation in China proper and in Northeast China and explaining the relatively independent character of the anti-Japanese armed struggle in the northeast region.

The messenger admitted that our view was correct and withdrew his proposal. Nevertheless, he laid stress on our need to support and cooperate closely with each other, not forgetting inseparable ties between the northeast region and the rest of China.

We promised to strike the Japanese imperialists hard in the three provinces of Northeast China and Korea to help the struggle in China proper. The messenger said that when he was passing through the Soviet Union, he had consulted concerned people there on the treatment of those wounded in the Sino-Japanese War and that they had promised to help. He added that we, too, could send the wounded through the designated route, if necessary. I accepted his favor and promised to use their route in future, though we had our own route and had already sent some old and infirm persons to the Soviet Union.

My talk with Wei Zheng-min confirmed that we and the CCP had basically the same view on the strategy in relation to the Sino-Japanese War. I was convinced that we would be greatly successful in harassment operations behind enemy lines against the Japanese imperialists. After taking leave of Wei Zheng-min, we convened the meeting of the commanders and men of the KPRA on a hill located on the boundary between Changbai and Linjiang Counties.

I still remember that there was a deep vertical pit resembling a well not far from the meeting place. When a mischief-maker dropped a stone into the pit, there was a plop after a good while. It was mysterious that such a pit should have formed between the rocks on a high mountain edge.

At this meeting we discussed the strategic task of the KPRA to cope with the Sino-Japanese War. The men and officers declared their determination to carry out the task. It might have been called a "meeting to express resolves", as we call it nowadays. You may say that this was a meeting to express our determination to implement the decision made at the meetings in the Paektusan Secret Camp and Caoshuitan.

I shall not dwell on the meeting, because specialists in revolutionary history and writers have already published many articles on it and the revolutionary veterans themselves have given their recollections of it on many occasions.

The Paektusan meeting, the Caoshuitan meeting and the meeting of men and officers were significant in that they laid down our political and military plans to cope with the Sino-Japanese War.

From the start of this war, we conducted daring operations to harass the enemy from behind, while consolidating the victory of our advance to the homeland.

Immediately after the Lugou Bridge incident, the main force of the KPRA fought many battles. These included the battle near Mashungou in Shijiudaogou, Changbai; the raid on Xigang town in Shisandaogou, Changbai County; and the battle in the vicinity of Liujiadong, Longquanhi.

At that time it was written in Jondo, the mouthpiece of the National Revolutionary Party, that our operations behind enemy lines were certainly the initiative of the great allied front of the Korean and Chinese nations.

Having left Changbai to harass the enemy in the rear, Choe Hyon's unit achieved successive battle results, moving through Linjiang, Tonghua, Liuhe, and Mengjiang. An Kil and Park Jang Chun destroyed the enemy mercilessly in cooperation with Kang Kon's unit. The expedition to Hailun, led by Kim Chaek and Ho Hyong Sik and south Manchurian guerrilla units, which advanced as far as the Shenyang railway, dealt a heavy blow to the enemy rear.

Our small armed units and political operatives 'groups infiltrated deep into the homeland and tied the enemy's hands wherever they went. The political and military operations launched by the Korean and Chinese communists in Korea and Manchuria, and their harassment behind enemy lines gave great encouragement to the anti-Japanese camp in China.

The Japanese imperialists' wild ambition to swallow up China at a gulp was totally frustrated by the Chinese people's struggle in North China and the Shanghai area, as well as by the active operations of the KPRA and the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army to harass the enemy from behind.

While Japan was switching over to a protracted war from her initial attempt to gain "victory at a blow" and to "finish the war in a short time" - their blatant claims - our operations behind their lines entered a new stage.

With the prolongation of the Sino-Japanese War, we held a review at the Xintaizi Secret Camp, Linjiang County, of the operations we had carried out in the enemy rear. We discussed how to harass the enemy in Korea and frustrate their war transport system, the transport of weapons and ammunition in particular. Our attack on Humnan county town was a typical battle in those days.

The attack on Humnan was very unfavorable for us, as Human was a well-developed traffic junction and a walled town on a flat plain. The Jirin-Hailun railway line was not far.

There were also many enemy "punitive" troops based near Human, and we were in danger of being chased by reinforced units of the enemy if we failed to withdraw quickly, even though we might have successfully attacked the county town. We were aware of all these disadvantages to launching an attack on Humnan. We nevertheless committed to this battle the 7th Regiment of the main force of the KPRA, the newly-organized Guard Regiment, led by Lee Tong Hak and Choe Chun Guk, and part of the 4th Division. Despite the risks involved, the county town was a suitable target for our harassment actions behind enemy lines: Humnan was an important base of "punitive" troops, as well as a supply base for the Manchukuo army units stationed in many adjoining counties. There were two large supply depots.

The Anti-Japanese Allied Army units and the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units took part in this attack. Our forces made a surprise attack on the town and captured a good supply of fabrics, raw cotton and food, before withdrawing on our own initiative. Following the attack on the town, our forces dealt another blow to the reinforcements of the Japanese troops and the puppet Manchukuo army coming from Hailong, Panshi, Mengjiang and other areas. The ambush laid by our main force at a place between Fusong and Xigang was of great significance to the harassment operations.

During the harassment campaign we unfortunately lost several valuable comrades-in-arms such as Lee Tal Gyong, Kim Yong Hwan and Jon Chol San.

Kim Yong Hwan had joined the guerrilla army after working in the Young Communist League in Wangqing. In the days of the guerrilla zone, we had appointed him as a company political instructor for the Yanji guerrilla army. In December 1937, he fell heroically in battle in Yanji.

Jon Chol San came from the Hunchun guerrilla army. I had met him first when we fought the battle at Laoheishan. Later he was promoted to the position of political instructor for the 4th Company of the Wangqing guerrilla army. O Jin U knew him well. He fell in action in Emu in September 1937.

In those days we also lost Lee Tong Gwang, an able political worker and a courageous commander of the guerrilla army, who had been working as the representative of the ARF in southern Manchuria.

Yang Jing-yu told me the following anecdote about Lee: On receiving the report that the Tonghwa Central County Party Committee had been broken by the enemy's "punitive" operation in southern Manchuria, Lee Tong Gwang went to Liuhe via Gushanzi, where the headquarters of the enemy's "punitive" force was situated. Disguised as a medicine-peddler he and his two bodyguards entered Gushanzi Street, which was swarming with enemy soldiers, in broad daylight. There was a public notice in every lane demanding the arrest of Lee Tong Gwang.

"Lee Tong Gwang, the boss of the communist bandits from the South Manchuria Special Party Committee, 30 years old. A tall man with wavy hair and uncommonly big eyes. Those who inform

against him or arrest him will be liberally rewarded. Whoever hides him will be put to death."

Lee Tong Gwang stood in front of the public notice about his arrest with calm composure and read it through, then left the street without haste.

The lives of Lee Tong Gwang, Lee Tal Gyong, Kim ThaeK Hwan, Kim Yong Hwan and Jon Chol San were a brilliant example of boundless love and devotion for their fatherland and people and in this glorious path they enriched the history of the armed struggle with their blood. They typify the will and soul of those Korean communists who took initiative in striking at the enemy from behind.

I can say that the general direction I have followed through life has been not defense, but attack. Since I set out on the road of revolution I have continued to use the strategy and tactic of offence, always counter-attacking the enemy. When faced with difficulties in my advance, I have never flinched back or vacillated, nor have I gone round them or tried to escape them. The harder the times, the stronger has been my faith. I have overcome obstacles by displaying an indomitable will and making a strenuous effort.

The offensive strategies we used at many stages of our revolution were not attributable to my personal taste or character; they were necessities of our complex and arduous revolution.

Had we been on the defensive, or had we retreated or used detours in the vortex of complicated, world-shaking events after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, we would never have been able to break through the many grave situations we faced.

I still believe that the revolutionary strategy we established at that time - the strategy of meeting adversity face to face and turning a bad situation into one that was favorable to us - was absolutely the correct one.

The seizure of Shanhaiguan in January 1933, the inroads upon the northern part of China, the occupation of the provincial capital Chengde by Operation Rehe, the landing on Qinhuang Island, the advance towards the eastern part of Hebei Province - all these military operations took place in the years following Japan's military occupation of Manchuria as a part of the preparations for the invasion of China itself in the near future.

The Kuomintang government of Chiang Kaisek concluded the treacherous "Tanggu Treaty" despite the desperate people's opposition, instead of organizing resistance against the Japanese inroads upon North China. The treaty actually left the vast area north of the Great Wall under Japanese occupation and placed North China under the surveillance and control of Japan. In the long run, Chiang's appeasement policy encouraged the aggressive ambition and war mania on the part of the Japanese imperialists.

Through the manipulation of the Japanese imperialists, the pro-Japanese forces in North China launched a "movement for the autonomy of five provinces in North China". As a result of this treacherous movement demanding "independence", the pro-Japanese "Jidong anti-communist autonomous government" was fabricated.

The Japanese imperialists, who had placed Manchuria and North China under their control step by step, formulated in early 1936 the "diplomatic policy towards China". The main points of this policy were strict controls over the anti-Japanese movement, and economic cooperation and joint anti-communist action on the part of China, Manchuria and Japan. On this basis they openly prepared the invasion of China proper. The signing of the Japan-Germany "anti-communist pact" was an external factor that encouraged the preparation for another war.

The subservience of Chiang Kaisek's Kuomintang government to Japan and its treacherous policy allowed the Japanese imperialists to attack China without restraint. While the destiny of the country hung in a balance because of the accelerated Japanese invasion of China proper, Chiang Kaisek encircled and attacked the Red Army. At the same time, he suppressed the people's anti-Japanese national-salvation movement internally and externally maintained the line of compromise with Japan, pursuing the submissive policy of "security at home and concession to foreign forces". Chiang Kaisek's policy of submissive cooperation with Japan was, in fact, a form of passive consent to her invasion of China, leading her to provoke the reckless incident of Lugou Bridge.

The Japanese imperialists' full-scale invasion of China was also an inevitable consequence of the conflicts between imperialist powers struggling for the control of China.

After the economic crisis that had started in the United States in 1929 had begun to spread across the world, the imperialist powers went mad in a battle to obtain new markets, a scramble that sharpened the contradictions between them. The most typical of these contradictions was the discord and antagonism between the American and British imperialists and the Japanese imperialists in their struggle for concessions in China.

The Japanese considered an all-out war against China to be the best way to gain advantage over the powers that opposed them in Europe and America. Japan calculated that it was only through this war that she could gain a monopoly in China, drive out the US and British forces from the region and become the number one power in Asia.

The American and British policy towards Japan was one of double-dealing. They tried to restrain the reckless, aggressive moves of the Japanese imperialists on the one hand, while on the other hand they egged Japan on to aggressive acts of sacrificing the interests of China. In addition, they manipulated Japan against the Soviet Union. In this way the United States and Britain tried to maintain their interests in China.

After the invasion of North China, the Japanese imperialists confirmed it as their basic national policy to advance towards the South Seas while continuing to pursue their policy of military build-up and war preparation and expanding their influence in East Asia. This was their strategy aimed at advancing to Southeast Asia in due course, while continuing with their policy of war against China and the Soviet Union.

Taking advantage of the “noninterference policy” of the United States, Britain, France and other imperialist countries, as well as of the lack of a firm anti-Japanese national united front in China, the Konoe Cabinet at last provoked an all-out war against China.

On July 7, 1937 the Japanese army demanded a search of Wangping county town on the excuse of looking for one of their soldiers who had gone missing during war exercises. This resulted in an armed clash. When the 29th Corps, led by Song Zhe-yuan, resisted their attack, the Japanese troops occupied Lugou Bridge and surrounded Beijing.

As it was a small accidental clash, the Lugou Bridge incident could have been settled through negotiations in the field. However, under the pressure of the military, which was bent on finding an excuse to provoke war, the Konoe Cabinet met in council on July 11 and adopted a decision to dispatch divisions from Japan to China. It claimed to be checking the expansion of armed conflict, but in fact it used the trifling incident as an excuse for expanding the Sino-Japanese War.

On August 13, the Japanese army attacked Shanghai. The gunshot on Lugou Bridge had finally accomplished its purpose in provoking the great Sino-Japanese War.

## 18.2. Kim Ju Hyon

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Kim Ju Hyon was widely known to our people as the most typical of supply officers. This did not mean, however, that he was efficient only in supply work, for he was also an excellent military commander and skilful political worker. Before joining the guerrilla army, he had engaged mainly in underground work.

I had known him since the days before we organized the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. In 1931, when we were making preparations for the armed struggle in Xinglongcun, Kim Ju Hyon was working underground in charge of the peasants' association and the Anti-Japanese Union organizations in the village of Guodengchang, Dashahe. Kim Jong Ryong, the head of the Xiaoshahe district party organization, had introduced him to me. In my talks with him I had found that he was a straightforward, candid man.

One day I called on him after hearing from Kim Jong Ryong that he had been planning to expel all those who had belonged to the Independence Army from the Anti-Japanese Union. Having heard only bad things about the Independence Army from prejudiced people, Kim Ju Hyon had taken the men from this army to be the target of the struggle. I took time to explain to him the importance of the united front in the revolution and the need to correct his prejudice against the men from the Independence Army, who loved the country and hated the Japanese imperialists.

Next day, Kim Ju Hyon called on upper echelons of the Independence Army, whom he had attempted to drive out, and apologized to them. They pronounced him a reliable man. Since then, he came to consult me whenever he had a difficult problem in his work. I, too, visited him occasionally. Although he was eight years older than I, we became good friends. In 1931 when I made his acquaintance I was not the commander of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, but he still humbly accepted my advice.

I was charmed by his modesty. He was also very fond of me and gave unqualified support to everything I did and said.

Yet his family members insisted that he was an extremely obstinate man whom nobody could control. When I heard about the way in which he got married and made a home, I understood why they criticized him.

Kim Ju Hyon's family had originally lived in Myongchon, North Hamgyong Province, and compelled by poverty, moved to Helong. He always longed for his native place, having left it in his childhood. After finishing the village school he had gone to Odaejin and worked as a fisherman toughening his small frame in the process. His elder brother had brought him to Dashahe against his will, forcing him to stay at home because he was old enough for marriage. His family had forced him to get engaged to a girl in the neighboring village, whom they had singled out. Since the marriage had been arranged by the parents of both families without considering the will of the betrothed, Kim Ju Hyon had never seen his fiancée.

Frequently visiting a teacher of Kusan school who had been to the maritime provinces of the Soviet Union, he learned about the Russian revolution. He was totally indifferent to the engagement ceremony being arranged by the parents of both families. When he saw his family busy preparing the wedding ceremony, he declared to his father that he would not marry a sheer stranger. His father laughed it off, but the bridegroom suddenly disappeared a few days before the wedding ceremony.

His parents were extremely worried. The girl's family, too, made a fuss. His elder brother searched the whole of Jiandao, putting aside household affairs all winter, until he learned from the teacher of the Kusan school that Kim Ju Hyon was in Russia. After a lot of trouble his brother went to Russia and brought him back home. This time Kim Ju Hyon could not escape the wedding. The moment he returned, the wedding ceremony was held.

However, he stayed away from home, even after the marriage, instead of working diligently on the family farm. After much thought, his father built a house for him, judging that his son would stay at home and at least work to support his wife and children once he had his own home. But the arrangement only boosted his revolutionary enthusiasm. In his own house, free from the control of his parents, he had everything his own way, expanding the organization and enlightening the people. He dug a tunnel from his house and enlisted even his newly-married wife in the revolution.

His father found himself helpless, and exclaimed deplorably: "His obstinacy really beats me!"

From this anecdote I knew that Kim was a man of guts. I liked the stubbornness with which he went his own way, acting according to his own will and determination, no matter what others were saying.

With this same tenacity and enterprise, Kim Ju Hyon had organized a guerrilla unit in Helong and was commanding it shortly after I founded the anti-Japanese guerrilla army in Antu.

It was when the new division was formed in Maanshan that we got together in the same unit after a few years' separation.

Kim Ju Hyon's small unit was the first to come to me in Maanshan at the news of a new main-force unit of the KPRA being formed. I was delighted at the reunion, because the lack of cadres had been a serious problem for me.

In those days we did not even have a man to take care of supply services for the unit, so the regimental political commissar Kim San Ho had to deal with them. I appointed Kim Ju Hyon as logistics officer of Headquarters, and he gave a strong impetus to this work. Without hurrying about or pressing supply workers, he managed to procure food and clothing without difficulty and improved material conditions for the army.

His ability as a competent logistics officer was displayed to the full when our unit was operating in the Mt. Paektu area. Whenever he was out on a procurement mission, people with aid goods on their backs



arrived in rapid succession at the secret camp. He obtained anything he was determined to get.

New Year's Day of 1937 was the most successful of all the festivals we had during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. We owed the success to Kim Ju Hyon, who had made a special effort, saying that the first New Year's Day after our advance to Mt. Paektu should not be celebrated as an ordinary festival.

In preparation for the Battle of Pochonbo, uniforms, caps, leggings, cartridge belts, packs and tents for six hundred soldiers, as well as the shoes of the same number, and a great quantity of grain were obtained, thanks to his laudable efforts and Oh Jung Hup's assistance. Although his father had been afraid that he would be unable to support even his wife, and though he was empty-handed on Mt. Paektu, he was entrusted to provide hundreds of soldiers with food, clothing and housing, and did an excellent job.

Whenever I praised him for his success in his work, he said that the success should be attributed to the good people of West Jiandao. Seeing him traveling around with blistered lips and bloodshot eyes to obtain supplies for the army, and moved by his unremitting efforts, the people gave him their active support in his work.

Kim Ju Hyon was a good mixer, understanding people's mental sufferings and helping them solve their problems, just as a member of their own family would do. Back at the camp, he was a thoughtful and tender-hearted brother to the soldiers. The people in West Jiandao called him "our logistics officer".

Kim Ju Hyon had extraordinary abilities and a personal magnetism with which he was able to open even the most tightly closed heart. Apparently the people were attracted by his personal charm, recognizing in him a genuine man who always spoke the truth, who approached them with sincerity, worked conscientiously and behaved in a simple and humble manner. No doubt this charm was the cause of every one of his successes, not only in the service of logistics but also in political work.

The special merit I found in his work was his political method of finding a solution to every problem. If I gave him the task of making uniforms, for example, he sincerely explained to his men the pressing need and the ways to carry it out, instead of mechanically relaying the instructions of Headquarters to them.

Because I valued his political ability, I would send for him whenever a difficult and complex political task arose. When I was sending an advance party to establish the Paektusan Base. I appointed him as its leader because the detachment was to carry out a political task in addition to its military mission. The advance party was to select the sites for the secret camps on Mt. Paektu, open the routes to be followed by our units and collect information on the enemy situation and the public sentiments in the border area. It was also to find out political mass foundations on which to build underground anti-Japanese revolutionary organizations and make them ready for the struggle.

Kim Ju Hyon carried out his political task with credit. The distinguished service he rendered in the Mt. Paektu area as the leader of the advance party was worthy of written commendation. The sites for the secret camps in the valleys of Sobaeksu, Mt. Kom, Saja Hill, Mt. Sono, Heixiazigou, Diyangxi,

Deshuigou and others were all selected by his advance party. Travelling about in the farm villages of West Jiandao, such as Diyangxi, Xiaodeshui, Xinchangdong, Guandaojuli, Jongriwon village, Pinggangde, Shangfengde, Taoquanli, Sanshuigou and others, he acquainted himself with people who could contribute to party building and the united front movement and built up a fairly large source of recruits for the revolutionary army.

His advance party also played a great role in disseminating our revolutionary line, reflected in the Ten Point Programme of the ARF, and its Inaugural Declaration both in Korea and the vast area of West Jiandao. The success his party gained became a springboard for raising the anti-Japanese armed struggle onto higher stage.

This was the position of Kim Ju Hyon in our unit, the man whom we called first whenever a difficult task arose. He was a treasure of the unit whom everyone valued and loved. His strong sense of duty to the revolution, high political qualifications, great organizing ability and seasoned work method, all these merits deserve to be a model for all commanding officers. In a nutshell, Kim Ju Hyon was a man of both great political and military accomplishments.

As I had always held his success and ability in high esteem, I appointed him the leader of a small unit to be dispatched to the homeland in mid-August 1937, shortly after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. As I mentioned in the previous section, following the outbreak of this war we planned to launch political and military activities on a larger scale in the homeland, conduct an intensive harassment campaign behind enemy lines and encourage a fresh upsurge in the anti-Japanese revolution in keeping with the prevailing situation. To this end, we had to build a small unit of able people, who were well prepared politically and militarily, and dispatch them as an advance party to the necessary areas of the homeland to pave the way to our plan. This was important.

The revolutionary organizations in the homeland informed us. through different channels that many people had gathered in the mountains in the southern part of North Hamgyong Province - for example, in Songjin, Kilju, Myongchon and Tanchon as well as the northern coastal areas of South Hamgyong Province - and were making painstaking efforts to establish links with the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

The basic task of the small unit was to find out these young patriots, organize guerrilla units and give them military training. It was also to give short courses to the people who were not physically fit for the armed struggle, so as to prepare them to become members of underground organizations. In addition, it was to launch political work among the masses and find able people to join and expand underground organizations and armed ranks. The small unit was also given an assignment to search out sites for secret camps, the future base of armed struggle, on the Paektu mountains, and on the Machon and Pujon mountains.

In view of the importance of this small unit and the work it was to perform, we selected its members from our elite?people such as prominent political workers Park Su Man, Jong Il Gwon (alias Shorty), Ma

Tong Hui and Kim Hyok Chol. As the unit was built of men of rich experience, led by a skilful commander, our trust in it was deep and we expected much from it. The unit members were spirited men with a firm resolve, and there was not a shadow of a doubt that they would carry out the task with credit.

"I will wait for good news," I said to Kim Ju Hyon as they left.

I did not explain things at length, for he always understood my intention thoroughly without lengthy explanations from me. If I said one word, he would catch 10 of my meanings. This was just his special merit. I held Kim Ju Hyon in unqualified trust.

All of us expected that the small unit would come back to us with good results after four or five months at the earliest and five or six months at the latest.

However, to my surprise, the small unit suddenly returned a little more than one month after its departure. This was a serious event none of us had expected. I saw at a glance that their work in the homeland had ended in failure. Kim Ju Hyon's report left me dumfounded: The unit had come back after moving around in the Kapsan area without even reaching the Songjin area where the young patriots were waiting.

After entering Korea by the route of Xinxingcun used by Lee Je Sun. The small unit advanced to Hyesan following the organizational line under Park Tal's leadership. On the way they heard from a local organization that the Japanese gold mine owners plundered and stocked gold nuggets in the Jungphyong Mine to ship them to Japan.

Kim Ju Hyon decided to raid the mine and capture the gold. The professional instinct of a logistics worker prompted him to do this in spite of himself. Even a few gold nuggets would be a windfall for his supply services. The small unit raided the mine and captured some gold. But they had to pay for it dearly. Alarmed at the sound of gunshots from the Jungphyong Mine, the enemy converged on the small unit in large groups.

The small unit withdrew from the mine and climbed up the mountain behind Toksan-dong village, but they were surrounded by the enemy on all sides. Kim Ju Hyon wrote a note and set it afloat in the wind to reach the enemy.

"You fools, haven't you learned about the elusive revolutionary army yet? We are crossing the River Yalu."

Reading the notice, the enemy hurried off to the river. Kim Ju Hyon took this opportunity to escape and led his men from the enemy's encirclement. The small unit broke through the encirclement, but could not penetrate further into the homeland. The enemy covered all the mountain areas of North and South Hamgyong Provinces and watched every lane where they thought the guerrilla operatives might pass. Kim Ju Hyon returned to Headquarters, putting off the performance of his mission in the homeland to a

later date. Because of the absurd adventure and terrible indiscipline of his unit, we had to postpone our plan to raise the resistance force in the homeland.

We had planned to expand the armed struggle to the east coast, taking advantage of our people's desire for independence and our young men's eagerness to join army, which had risen to fever pitch after the Battle of Pochonbo. The patriotic youth in the homeland who had waited for our small unit after arranging the rendezvous in Machon mountains scattered, disappointed at the failure to meet the mission from the revolutionary army.

The news that the small unit had come back without even reaching its destination clouded the guerrillas' minds. They were depressed, saying that the homeland must be in unusually bad shape, judging from the fact that such an experienced political worker as Kim Ju Hyon had failed to reach his destination and turned back at the very border. They suspected that the expansion of the armed struggle to Korea might be impossible for the time being. The consequence of Kim Ju Hyon's mistake was irretrievable.

I could hardly believe his mistake. His thwarting of the small unit operations, diverted by a few pieces of gold, turned our plan into a fiasco. His indiscipline action left a big hole in the KPRA's harassment operations behind enemy lines, not to mention the thrust into the homeland. I still recall the incident now and then with a feeling of regret: if Kim Ju Hyon had advanced to the east coast area and met our patriotic young people, as we planned, our armed struggle might have had a more fruitful history.

My disappointment and my sense of frustration were great at that time and I was very angry but, strangely enough, I could not say a word of reproach or call him to account as he stood before me, head bowed, waiting for his punishment. It seemed that when my anger or disappointment was at its height, I could not utter a word. I looked at him in silence.

The Party Committee of Headquarters held a meeting and deliberated his case. All the comrades severely criticized him for his grave mistake. Some of them banged the floor with their fists in fury. Apparently he was facing such criticism for the first time in his life. He sat dejected as if he gave up everything.

Many people correctly analyzed his mistake at the meeting of the headquarters Party Committee. His extremely undisciplined action had been due mainly to his short-sighted judgment resulting from self-conceit and unjustified confidence in his small brains. He had not interpreted the task of the small unit from the strategic point of view. He lost his reason when he heard about gold, and in raiding the mine he never thought about its consequences. As he confessed, he intended to kill two birds with one stone. In other words, he was going to obtain gold by attacking the mine; and he was also going to meet the young people organize armed units.

Of course, I thought that his confession was sincere. All he said was true. We knew well how frank and upright he was. However, it was natural that everyone should become indignant at his conduct, because no matter what their intentions had been, the small unit had returned in failure, without even reaching the place where they were to work.

I wanted to forgive him, but I could not speak a word on his behalf. A commander should not be swayed by friendship or deal with the case contrary to principle. Conniving at his error because of personal feeling would be harmful in all respects. The only thing I could do to help Kim Ju Hyon was to provide an opportunity for him to correct his mistake.

The Headquarters Party Committee decided to dismiss him from the post of logistics officer. I, too, voted for the decision. Seeing him leave the Headquarters in low spirits after being punished, I blamed myself for not having helped him in advance to avoid making the mistake.

If I had warned him that he should go directly to the comrades in the homeland, no matter what happened on his way, things would not have come to this pass. To be honest, I had never imagined an extraordinary situation in which something like a few lumps of gold would tempt the logistics officer to change his course of action.

After his dismissal, Kim Ju Hyon put all his heart into his own ideological training. Nowadays, this kind of training is called revolutionary transformation. From the first day of his reappointment to the cooking unit, he always carried a cauldron on his back whenever the unit moved. Though it must have cost him a great deal, he carried the cauldron on his back even in the presence of his former subordinates. Someone in such a situation usually asks to be transferred elsewhere; Kim Ju Hyon neither complained, nor was he ashamed of his job as a cook. Instead, he worked so conscientiously that his fellow soldiers were sorry for him. He always looked bright and cheerful.

One day I visited the mess hall of the 8th Regiment to see how Kim Ju Hyon was doing. He was sweating profusely, serving the men at table.

At that moment, one of the men ate up his soup in an instant and called out to Kim Ju Hyon, rapping an enamelware bowl with his spoon.

"Hey, cook, one more bowl of soup!" He sounded impolite, obviously looking down upon Kim. "Yes, with pleasure," Kim Ju Hyon replied politely. He filled a bowl with soup and walked quickly over to the man.

That night I sent for the man and admonished him. I said that he should not order a man about or look down on him simply because he was dismissed for a mistake, and that he should treat him with more warmth and give him sincere help instead of treating him with contempt by giving a wide berth to him. He accepted my advice and apologized for his mistake.

One's social position is not immutable - one may gain or lose it. Therefore, people must respect man's personality, not his social position, if they are to maintain a true comradely relationship.

If their neighbors experience mishap, people must help them warmly and sincerely. When comrades were

dismissed from their posts for mistakes, the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters never treated them coldly or shunned them, but helped them in every way to correct their mistakes.

One day, about one week after Kim Ju Hyon had started working in the cooking unit, I approached him on the march and asked him to take off his pack. I felt sorry for him, as he was walking laboriously carrying a rifle, a knapsack and a cooking pot.

He declined, saying that it was not heavy. When I held the strap of his pack to take it off, he pushed my hand aside obstinately and walked on. That saddened me. I wondered whether he wasn't mortified at the decision of the party meeting to dismiss him. When I glanced quickly at his face, I saw him shedding tears. The tears weighed on my mind: What made a man of strong heart shed tears?

Kim Ju Hyon had experienced indescribable sorrow and misfortune as a man. His wife was killed in one of the enemy's "punitive" operations when she was doing political work in a local area, and his daughter died of a disease. When he joined the guerrilla army he gave his only son to another family. Afterwards, he lived only for the revolution. That day, after all the men fell asleep, I made for the camp of the 8th Regiment to see Kim Ju Hyon. At the cooking place I witnessed an unexpected sight. I thought that he would be eating his heart out in bed, but he was polishing a cauldron with a scrubber on the brook.

I told him to work in the arsenal, starting the next day. I said that he would be easy in mind if he could work there, because its surroundings were quiet and nobody would hurt his pride there. With tears in his eyes he replied that he would be easy in mind only if he could remain at my side even while he was being punished.

"I saw you shedding tears in secret and interpreted it in my own way. I thought you were crying because of your job as a cook, so I thought I should transfer you to the arsenal." When I said this, he grasped my hands with a smile.

"No. I cried because I was grateful to you for feeling sympathy even while you were punishing me and because I had a guilty conscience about forgetting your great concern. Do you know what I feared most when the Headquarters Party Committee was deliberating my case? I was afraid of being dismissed from the ranks and driven out. When I die, I want to die here. Away from the revolutionary ranks, life is not worth living. I thank you for allowing me to work even in the cooking unit."

Listening to him, I now understood what was going through his mind as he was scrubbing the cauldron in the brook. Nothing mattered to him as long as he could only stay with us, regardless of his own interest. He did not care whether he was a commander or a cook, whether he was criticized or punished, as long as he was not removed from the revolutionary ranks. This was a true personality of Kim Ju Hyon.

A man of such character accepts criticism or punishment by his comrades, seeing these as a part of their trust and love. The moment he was being criticized by his comrades, he was thinking only of the great the revolution had suffered because of his mistake.

"I thought I was a perfect revolutionary, but I was naive. If it weren't for the Comrade Commander's trust, I would be merely a green revolutionary. My comrades criticized me correctly. I will take this opportunity to train myself ideologically so as to become a top guerrilla fighter".

With such determination he went on to make strenuous efforts to transform himself.

He studied very hard while working in the cooking unit. In November of the year he was punished, the Secretariat of Headquarters published my thesis The Tasks of Korean Communists in pamphlet form. Kim Ju Hyon was the first to obtain and read it. The cooking unit soldiers were afraid that the logistics officer, whom they respected and followed, would break down from exhaustion, because he studied so hard without caring for his health. They slipped the pamphlet out of his pack and hid it between some rocks behind the tent.

Kim in Hyon searched for it for several days. He got all the worse and even lost his appetite. This rather upset the soldiers, so when he was absent, they took the pamphlet out from its hiding place and put it back into the pack. One of them said, "Comrade Ju Hyon, please root around more carefully through your pack. A thing cannot disappear by itself." When he found the lost pamphlet in the pack, he was as delighted as a child and said, "That's strange - I feel as if I were haunted."

He transformed himself. He was truly worthy of a veteran revolutionary from the working class. His efforts to train himself were so strenuous that one could not look upon him without emotion. This is why I still insist that if cadres are to revolutionize themselves, they should follow the example of Kim Ju Hyon.

Six months after he was dismissed from the post of logistics officer, we appointed him commander of the 7th Regiment. We did this rather than reinstating him in his former post because he always longed to be on the battlefield in the midst of roaring gunfire.

He fought well after he became a regimental commander, displaying his ability to the full as an adroit and daring military commander in the spring offensive launched by the KPRA main force in 1938. This offensive included battles in Jiazaishui and Shierdaogou, Changbai County, Liudaogou in Linjiang County, Shuangshanzi, Wujiaying, Jiajiaying and Xintaizi, and Kim did an exceptional job of leading his regiment in all these battles, as well as in many other big and small battles subsequent to the offensive.

In summer that year he led his unit from Xintaizi to Mengjiang, Liuhe and Jinchuan, striking the enemy from behind and demonstrating his excellent commandership. His 7th Regiment also distinguished itself in political work among the people. Whenever the regiment went to a village, the commander involved himself actively in the work with the villagers.

Kim Ju Hyon fell in action, surprised by the enemy's "punitive" troops in October 1938. He was gathering honey with Kim Thack Hwan and Kim Yong Guk at the time in the forest of Nanpaizi,

Mengjiang County, for the patients in the field hospital. After becoming a regimental commander, he did not forget to continue providing his comrades-in-arms with food, clothing and housing as he had done when he was a logistics officer.

After he was killed in battle, his comrades opened his pack to find almost nothing in it, not even the spare shoes carried by every soldier. His orderly said that he had given his spare shoes to a man whose shoes had worn out.

I burst into tears as I held his empty pack. If all the grain, fabrics for military uniforms and shoes that he had obtained for our revolutionary army since he became our logistics officer had been piled up, it would have been as high as a mountain. Just the shoes he had obtained numbered thousands of pairs. Yet he had given his only spare shoes to his comrade.

His empty pack made me meditate on the property of a revolutionary and his outlook on life. It is man's nature to want a happy life, and many people in the world value only gold. From the viewpoint of such people, Kim Ju Hyon belonged to the have-nots. But to my mind he was really a man of great wealth, because all his life he had cherished a noble ideal and because he had a soul that could not have been bartered, even for a colossal sum of gold.



## 18.3. Getting the Peasantry Prepared

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The new situation prevailing after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War made it imperative to prepare for an all-people resistance. We evolved a plan of achieving national liberation by strengthening our forces in advance and, when the time came, combining the military operations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army with a nationwide resistance.

Resistance involving all the people would be inconceivable without the participation of the peasantry, which made up the overwhelming majority of the population in our country. Some people contended that the peasantry could not constitute the main force of the revolution because, unlike the industrial working class, they lacked the sense of organization and consciousness. But we had a different opinion.

If provided with correct leadership and knitted together through organization, the peasant masses could be a great revolutionary force. I had already experienced it during the harvest struggle in 1931. Through our practical experience we were convinced that they could become a mighty resistance force if they were trained along a revolutionary line.

Our ancestors left us with a legacy of backward and poor agriculture. When others were ploughing fields, sowing seeds and harvesting by machine, the peasants in our country tilled the land and grew crops by primitive manual labor. Shackled by feudal fetters, they were harshly exploited by the Landlord class and feudal rulers for generations and subjected to maltreatment and contempt.

"Their living conditions grew even worse with the occupation of our country by the Japanese imperialists. Owing to the "Land Survey Act", the "Plan for Increased Rice Production", the "policy of exiling Korean peasants to Manchuria", and other thieving, predatory policies on the part of the Japanese imperialists, the rural communities and agriculture of Korea were devastated and the impoverishment of the peasants was further accelerated.

In the early days of their occupation of Korea the Japanese imperialists plundered our peasants of hundreds of thousands of hectares of land under the "Land Survey Act" and distributed it among the Government-General, Oriental Development Company, Fuji Industrial Stock Co. and other colonial development companies, as well as among Japanese people immigrating from Japan itself.

Later Japan announced the "Plan for Increased Rice Production", and followed it tenaciously. This was done to tide over the food crisis threatening Japan and to make huge profits by exporting a large amount of capital to Korean rural communities.

The "Korean Civil Law", made public by the Japanese imperialists, reads in part, "...even though he has suffered a loss in his farming due to force majeure, a sharecropper cannot claim exemption or reduction in his farm rent." This was none other than a proclamation to prevent by law the struggle of the Korean peasants to improve their conditions. It meant that even on the brink of starvation the tenants were to

remain quiet and uncomplaining.

In this way, the Government-General in Korea from the outset institutionalized the exploitation of peasants by the Japanese farm owners and landlord class. Considering the actual situation of the Korean rural communities, where tenants accounted for a majority of the farming population, it is not difficult to imagine the living conditions of our peasants, who were shackled by this "Civil Law The cruel practice of exploitation by the insatiable Japanese imperialists and the landlords, who were bent on squeezing a maximum amount of rice from their tenants, was so outrageous that it might have put even a beast to shame.

The Oriental Development Company stationed its resident official or caretaker in every province and farm and under him a farm superintendent, so as to strictly guard and control its tenants. If a tenant failed to pay his rent in time, or showed any sign of being remiss" in farming, or opposed the owner of the farm, they cancelled the contract for sharecropping right away and took back the tenanted land.

The Japanese farm owners had their own private prisons where they detained any tenant who complained to the farm authorities or even demanded the simple right to existence. When in my Changdok School days I read a newspaper article that at the Nakahara Farm Japanese armed with rifles tailed after the Korean peasants as they worked in the fields, threatening to shoot and kill anyone they considered sluggish, I felt so furious I could not sleep.

Every year the Japanese imperialists shipped to Japan 7-10 million sok of rice (one sok is equivalent to 20 pecks), rice produced by the sweat and blood of the Korean peasants. Instead they brought in millet and defatted-bean-cakes from Manchuria as food for the Korean people. How indignant the Korean people were, having to eat rotten millet because they had been plundered of their rich rice by the Japanese!

Even the Korean landlords, under the aegis of the Government-General, harshly exploited the peasants as if in a competition. Their agents and usurers also joined them.

The reactionary agricultural policy pursued by the Japanese imperialists accelerated class differentiation in the rural communities in Korea. A massive exodus from rural communities and the formation of a new social stratum, called slash-and-burn peasants, were the pitiable result of colonial class differentiation. The peasants who could no longer live in their native villages went deep into the mountains or to so-man's-land to eke out a living through farming on land felled of ues.

But even this way of farming was not secure, as the Government-General launched a "campaign to expel slash-and-burn peasants" on excuse of "forest conservancy" and "prevention of forest fires". While operating in West Jiandao, I met many peasants who had been expelled from slash-and-burn farming. A massive emigration of Korean peasants was inevitable.

In their places the Japanese imperialists shipped in a great number of immigrants from Japan, which was experiencing difficulties from a sudden population increase and lack of grain. They schemed to bring 4

million Japanese peasants to Korea in the first 15-year period of the “Plan for Increased Rice Production”.

Tanaka Kiichi had originally had the Constitutional Institute of Japan publish in September 1925 the "plan for the emigration of 10 million Japanese to Korea". After becoming Prime Minister, he established the Department of Overseas Affairs and buckled down to the execution of the emigration plan. 'What would happen to Korea if the surplus 10 million people were shipped into Korea? Our nation would stifle under the avalanche of the Japanese.

The reactionary agricultural policy of the Japanese imperialists ruined the livelihood of the peasants in the rural areas of Korea and sharpened national, social and class contradictions. As a result the peasant masses rose up for their right to existence.

Peasant organizations such as the Tenants' Cooperative, the Mutual Aid Society of Tenants, the Association of Fellow Peasants, and the Tenants' Union emerged in our country after the March First Popular Uprising. A typical early organization that represented the rights and interests of the peasants was the Tenants' Cooperative.

Tenant disputes were the main trend of the peasant movement in our country under Japanese imperialist rule. The disputes in the 1920s raised in general such economic slogans as "obtaining tenant rights and reducing farm rents" under the leadership of the tenants' cooperatives. The peasant union was the leading form of organization in the peasant movement in our country before liberation. This type of organization put forward slogans reflecting political demands as well as economic slogans for survival, in keeping with the developing situation.

The first mass organization that involved the whole country was the Workers' Mutual-Aid Society of Korea. The society had a peasant department, or a tenant department, embracing a large number of tenants, and rendered a considerable contribution to the development of the peasant movement.

The early peasant movement experienced many twists and turns.

As the tenant disputes grew intensive, the Japanese imperialists mobilized police to suppress them with the force of arms and arrested at random the standard-bearers of the peasant movement. At the same time, they resorted to nefarious schemes to appease the peasants and divide the peasant force by using kept unions under the control of the "Peasant Association of Korea".

The tortuous experience of the early peasant movement was also due largely to the harmful influence of the non-revolutionary national reformists and the early communists. The majority of the leaders who organized and guided the peasant movement in those days were not true peasants. They included a considerable number of petit-bourgeois intellectuals and national reformists, and this was unavoidable in view of the then social and historical conditions.

The national reformists, who had wormed their way into the leadership of the peasant movement,

inculcated the "theory of non-violence" in the unsophisticated peasants. They preached that tenants should not argue to no avail with the landowners, but instead understand them and live in harmony with them, and that this would settle the disputes between the tenants and landowners as naturally as snow melting in the spring breeze.

Quite a few early communists numbered in the leadership of the peasant movement. As the tide of the peasant movement began to rise, they heated up the factional strife in order to bring the peasant organizations under the influence of their own factions. But their factional strife for the expansion of their own cliques in disregard of the interests of the peasants did serious harm to the peasant movement. Bitter feuds and hostilities broke out between the peasant organizations and within the organizations themselves, crippling many of them. Nevertheless, the peasants continued their struggle despite such difficulties.

They answered the enemy's counterrevolutionary violence with revolutionary violence. The revolt of the peasant masses in the Fuji Farm in Ryongchon and the large-scale uprising of the peasants in the Tanchon and Yonghung (Kumya) areas in the late 1920s are typical examples. The tenant dispute at the Fuji Farm was a violent mass struggle, waged together with the young communists of the new generation from the Down-with-imperialism Union, who were operating in the Ryongchon area.

The Red international of Labor Unions and its subordinate organization, the secretariat of the Pan-Pacific Labour Unions, proposed on several occasions between the end of the 1920s and the early 1930s to the Pacific countries to organize Red labor and peasant unions. In response to the proposal, concrete measures were taken in Korea to form such organizations.

As a result, new Red peasant unions began to spring up from the early 1930s in our country, and existing peasant unions were also reorganized into Red peasant unions. "Red" and "Left" were the terms used to distinguish revolutionary organizations from non-revolutionary reformism. In those days the term "Red" was used widely in the circle of the communist movement.

The overwhelming majority of the Red peasant unions were concentrated in northern Korea. In the 1920s most of the peasant organizations were in the southern part of the country, and tenant disputes arose more frequently in the south than in the north, because a greater number of peasant households existed in the southern region, with its heavily populated Honam Plain.

By the early 1930s things had begun to change. The main front of the peasant movement shifted from the south to the north. The number of revolutionary peasant organizations had grown and the fierce peasant struggle was greater in the north than in the south. The main reason for the south-north movement was that Mt. Paektu was the strategic center of the Korean revolution and the northern region was geographically close to Jiandao and the Soviet Union.

The Red peasant unions on the other hand were organized not only in the northern region of Korea but also in the southern provinces.

The anti-Japanese armed struggle of the Korean communists in Northeast China and in the northern border area of Korea provided favorable soil on which the Red peasant unions were to thrive. To be candid, all the peasant organizations that emerged in northern Korea after the start of the anti-Japanese armed struggle were organized by the people in the homeland in the course of the anti-Japanese struggle, waged in cooperation with us. They were not a spontaneous growth.

The decision in the case of a peasant union in Myongchon recorded in the court proceeding and kept by the Hamhung district court, contained the following paragraph:

"As a result of that struggle, the offices of the Yanji County administration and the branch office of the Japanese consulate were destroyed by fire and there was an engagement with the Japanese troops, who later made a retreat. The union embarked on the road of revolutionary struggle under the general command of Kim Il Sung."

This is a typical example of the activities the peasant unions in northern Korea conducted at the time as a result of the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

However, the peasant movement led by the Red peasant unions revealed shortcomings that could not be overlooked, owing to the harmful maneuvers of the Left opportunists and national reformists.

After putting a Red cap on the peasant unions, the Left opportunists fenced them in and pursued a closed-door policy. They defined all the people working on the land, except tenants, poor peasants and hired farmhands, as hostile class or wavering stratum, and kept them off the fence of peasant unions.

Patriotic middle peasants and landowners with a strong anti-Japanese spirit dared not join the Red peasant unions. I heard that in a certain village there were wells exclusively for the Red peasant union members and those for people other than union members; one can easily imagine the extent of the closed-door policy at the time.

The closed-door policy pursued by the Red unions damped the patriotic enthusiasm of the nonmembers and compelled them to approach all the undertakings of the unions with hostility. It also alienated the children of union members from those of nonmembers.

Another defect in the activities of the Red peasant unions was their "knockout" way of working. Their members regarded going to extremes as an expression of their revolutionary spirit. For instance, when the leadership of the union called on its members to do away with superstition, the members went near churches and threw stones at the Windows or pulled down the crosses from their roofs. They destroyed mountain shrines and trampled on the offerings there.

Worse still, they snatched bibles from religious believers in public and tore them up. When told to get rid of the practice of early marriage, they waylaid bridegrooms who had gone to bring brides on horseback and seized their horses or simply detained the bridegrooms in order to scuttle the marriage ceremony. In

such cases, the young bridegrooms often ran home, scared out of their senses, or wept in panic.

Although they performed many laudable undertakings for national and class liberation in conformity with the situation, the peasant union organizations sometimes behaved in an uncouth manner. In consequence, some people disagreed with everything they did.

We considered the weakest point in the activities of the Red peasant unions to be the fact that they had not adopted clear strategic and tactical measures for protecting themselves. As a consequence, they had no guard against either enemy suppression or the harmful schemes of the factionalists and national reformists.

Many of the unions exposed themselves unnecessarily. For example, they should have seen that different wells for their own members and for nonmembers would expose every member of their organization; however, their leaders ignored such common sense. The enemy's spies could instantly see through the windows of their own houses who was fetching water from the well for the union members.

Some of the union organizations kept lists of members and a register of the payment of their dues, just as the peripheral organizations of government parties do nowadays. This was another cause for the exposure of the organizations. Whenever police raided their secret workplaces, they would seize these lists and ferret out the members to the last man, arresting 200 or 300 of them at a time.

These few examples show that the peasant unions ignored the need to keep strict secrecy and security and confronted the enemy in a naked state, exposing themselves recklessly. This habit gave the enemy the opportunity to destroy the peasant union organizations totally. They had no system of ensuring solidarity and concerted action among themselves.

All these shortcomings were due to the weakness and immaturity of those who headed the peasant movement in our country, which lacked a correct communist leadership. Those who guided the movement had neither scientific methods nor correct strategy or tactics for developing the movement.

In spite of these weaknesses and limitations, however, the Red peasant unions rendered a significant contribution to the development of our peasant movement. The steadfast leaders of the peasant unions and the organized peasant masses waged an unremitting struggle against Japanese imperialism and landlords to realize their political and economic demands, not yielding to repeated roundups by the Japanese imperialists.

We attached great importance to the courage, mass character and indefatigability of the peasants, all of which had been demonstrated in the peasant union movement. It was absolutely correct that we regarded the peasantry, along with the working class, as a component in the main force of an all-people resistance.

The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War gave us a possibility to speed up the preparations for national resistance. A very important matter in these preparations was how to awaken the peasant masses, who

accounted for more than 80 per cent of the country's population, to a revolutionary consciousness and how to organize them. Training the peasantry in the homeland, along with the working class, to take a revolutionary course was a lifeline we had to adhere to in the anti-Japanese revolution.

I believed that one of the most effective methods of preparing the peasants into a force in the all-people resistance was to restructure the peasant organizations in the homeland to be subordinate to the ARF.

Nevertheless, many of our military and political cadres regarded the organizations in the homeland in a negative way, branding them as either Leftist or Rightist. They held the view that we had to form new peasant organizations, totally ignoring the organizations of the past.

To consider the former peasant organizations and movements as negligible or unworthy of revitalizing and restructuring was nihilism. Such a nihilistic view was contrary to the requirements of the communist movement itself and to the purport of the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF; worse still, as it was tantamount to abandoning the foundation and success achieved by the peasant movement in the previous years, it was utterly destructive in rallying the peasants.

My plan was to rally under the banner of the anti-Japanese national united front all the existing organizations in disregard of their names and the greatness of the success they had achieved as long as they were determined to fight against the Japanese aggressors, imperialism and feudalism. The point in question was how to restructure the tottering peasant unions in accordance with the meaning of the Ten-Point Programme and the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF.

At a meeting of commanding officers to discuss the preparation of an all-people resistance we adopted the policy of restructuring all the labor and peasant unions in the homeland as ARF subordinate organizations, or at least putting them under its influence. This policy meant extending our direct leadership over the revolutionary movement in the homeland. In line with this policy we selected political operatives to be dispatched to the homeland. In our revolutionary ranks in those days were many comrades who had been engaged in the peasant union movement back home, among them Kim Yong Guk and An Tok Hun. In West Jiandao, the nearest area of our operations, there were many people who had been involved in the Korean independence movement and the peasant union movement.

We guided the peasant movement in the homeland through various channels.

The pivotal role in this effort was played by the political operatives selected from among the comrades of our main force and by the members of the ARF organizations trained in West Jiandao. In order to understand the exploits they performed in transforming the peasant movement in Korea, it will be sufficient to examine the activities of the political operatives in the southern part of North Hamgyong Province.

After the foundation of the ARF we sent to this area Jo Jong Chol, Ryu Kyong Su, Choe Kyong Hwa, Jo Myong Sik, and other tested political operatives. In the homeland they were acquainted with the hardcore

members of peasant unions; they selected clever people from among them and sent them to us and to the peasant union organizations in other areas. Ho Song Jin, a leader of the peasant union in Songjin, got in touch with us through the good offices of Lee Pyong Son, a political operative and former member of a peasant union.

Ho came as far as West Jiandao at my call. Owing to the aftereffects of the raid on the Jungphyong Mine, he could not see me, but he succeeded in getting our line on the revolutionary movement in the homeland through Park Tal in Kapsan. On returning to his native village, he conveyed the policy to a meeting of exiles from three southern counties of North Hamgyong Province, held in September 1937. After the meeting our revolutionary line, including the strategy of a united front, was propagated widely in North Hamgyong Province.

Political operatives went among the revolutionaries and activists of peasant unions deep in the homeland and made untiring efforts to convert them to our ideas of an all-people resistance and an anti-Japanese national united front. They also tried to build up organizations by restructuring the peasant union organizations as ARF subordinate organizations, or by putting them under its influence.

Thanks to this joint effort of the political operatives from the KPRA and the steadfast peasant union leaders, significant changes took place in the peasant movement in the homeland.

Most noteworthy of the peasant unions in the homeland was their ardent yearning for the anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

The report on the internal and international situations delivered at the fellowship conference of women in Myongchon in autumn 1936 reads in part, "A worker-peasant soviet was established in Shijiudaogou. Kim Il Sung has organized propaganda squads and crossed over to Korea to engage in propaganda and agitation.... Comrades, it is certain that Kim Il Sung will march on to Korea hereafter."

Around that time a resolution drawn up by a peasant union in that area reads this way: "Changbai County! In order to set up a soviet, a battle was fought in Shijiudaogou. As a result, 3,000 tons of timber, a forestry office and Japanese consulate were burnt down, and eight enemy stooges were abducted. The Japanese troops withdrew after the engagement. This revolutionary fight was fought under the general command of Kim Il Sung."

In its special edition on the October Revolution the newspaper of the peasant union in Kilju, Pulgun Chumo, carried a slogan, "Let us strongly support Kim Il Sung's unit." All these show clearly the vehement political character and rapid development of the peasant movement in the days of the Red peasant unions, as compared to the peasant movement in the previous years, when it had stuck mainly to economic issues.

The revolutionary organizations in the homeland, including the Red peasant unions, followed the activities of the People's Revolutionary Army with wonder. This constituted a favorable condition for



effecting our leadership over the revolutionary movement. Under our leadership an epoch-making change took place in the line of the peasant movement in Korea.

First of all, the Red peasant unions in Korea dropped their bias for class struggle and directed the spearhead of their struggle towards Japanese imperialism. In one peasant union document there is the following paragraph: "The task facing the peasant union is to direct the masses' complaints and discontent with Japan towards revolutionary action." This is a reflection of the trend.

The steadfast leaders of the peasant movement in the homeland rallied greater numbers of people than ever to the peasant unions. A record of a meeting of forerunners in a certain area shows that the peasant movement leaders at the time adopted the idea of admitting to the grassroots organizations of the peasant unions not only poor peasants, but activists from all strata, including middle peasants and rich farmers.

The generally accepted qualifications for membership of a peasant union, irrespective of social class, namely the habit of observing discipline, the ability to keep secrets and a strong fighting spirit, accorded with the purport of the Inaugural Declaration and the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF. One Red peasant union established subcommittees of petit bourgeoisie and pupils and recruited shop keepers, shop assistants, restaurant managers, middlemen, commercial capitalists, day laborers and even pupils from primary schools.

Some of those organizations took positive measures to enlist conscientious landowners in the anti-Japanese struggle, admitting landowners to propaganda squads when guiding the struggle against the laying of roads. They planted their members in the Self-Defense Corps and other lower ruling organs of Japanese imperialism and organizations on its pay-roll and gradually "made them Red", thereby efficiently combining both a lawful struggle and illegal one. A pamphlet they had published pointed out that the theory of "denying legal possibilities" was Leftist opportunism. It further advised that all legal possibilities be utilized skillfully.

Several of them kept closely in touch with each other while kee in up independent activities, taking joint action with one another, from exchange of information on their actual situations to the choice of the method of struggle and the setting of their fighting goal.

These changes taking place in the Red peasant union movement under our influence provided a favorable condition for transforming the existing peasant organizations in a revolutionary fashion.

Hand in hand with the comrades in the homeland, our political operatives got down to a revolutionary restructuring of the peasant organizations. Thus, in many parts of North and South Hamgyong Provinces there sprang up a great number of ARF organizations based on the former peasant unions. Many ARF organizations, including the Sinuiju chapter, expanded their influence over the peasants living around the middle reaches of the Yalu. In addition, our men and women set up revolutionary organizations under various names and based on ARF organizations among the peasants in central and southern Korea, notably in Pyongyang, Nampho, Choiwon, Seoul, Inchon, Taegu, Pusan, Jonju and Kwangju.

While organizing the peasant masses back home, our operatives and the comrades in the homeland concentrated on awakening them to revolutionary consciousness in order to instil the idea of independence in them - that the country should be liberated by the effort of the Korean people themselves. For this purpose, the publications of the peasant organizations in those days frequently carried the explanation of the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF.

Such education heightened their sense of historical mission. The peasant organizations imbued the peasants with the idea of fighting against the colonial rule of the Japanese imperialists and gave wide publicity to the internal and international situations, the lawful development of society, the future of the Korean revolution and news of the titanic struggle of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, in order to convince the peasants to cherish the idea of victory.

The operatives we had dispatched to the Pyoksong and Mt. Kuwol areas reorganized, through Min Tok Won, who was working in the homeland, the peasant union in the Pyoksong area into a revolutionary one. Then Min went to the Inchon area by boat with the hardcore people in Pyoksong and worked hard to awaken the members of labor and peasant unions there to revolutionary consciousness.

Kim Jong Suk went via Phungsan to Tanchon and Riwon in mid-July 1937. She met Lee In Mo in Phabal-ri, Phungsan County, and discussed in depth with him the idea of expanding the ARF organizations, with members of the Red reading circle as the hard core. Lee In Mo is an eyewitness to the incident in which a Korean Revolutionary Army's operational group in the homeland raided the Naejung police substation in Phabal-ri and killed an evil police sergeant nicknamed Opasi (stinging bee).

Under the influence of this, the forerunners in Phungsan organized a Red reading circle and started the anti-Japanese struggle. Lee In Mo belonged to that circle. He had been imprisoned on two occasions, in 1932 and 1933, and served about one year of penal servitude.

When I met him recently and asked him about his activities in those days, Lee said that he had been on two occasions to Erdaogang, an important area of operations for the KPRA, to establish contact with us. He was so eager to join the army that he even went to Tonghungjin when a detail from the unit in southern Manchuria attacked the town. In spite of these efforts, he failed to see me and went back when he realized he could not make contact with our organization. This was truly regrettable. Had he succeeded in meeting us at that time, his career might have been completely different.

Although he had been imprisoned twice he did not stop fighting. A member of the revolutionary committee of the Phungsan area, he worked energetically in such organizations as the Phabal branch, the laborers' shock brigade in the Hwangsuwon dam project and the paramilitary corps at Huchi Pass in Ansan.

Around late September in 1938 Kim Jong Suk again met Lee in Phungsan, and his colleagues of the revolutionary committee of the Phungsan area, and discussed the measures for expanding and consolidating the organizations and working in the enemy-held area.

After seeing her, Lee In Mo strove to expand the organizations subordinate to the ARF. One of the objects of his work included the Communist Group in Seoul, an organization we had considered indispensable in giving leadership to the communist movement in the homeland. This was the most remarkable aspect of Lee's activities. With Ju Pyong Pho, he conveyed our line on the restoration of the fatherland to the Communist Group in Seoul and thus extended our influence on the circle in this city.

Ju Pyong Pho, Lee In Mo's senior in their days in the Red reading circle in Phungsan, who conveyed our line in person to Kim Sam Ryong, had taken part in the anti-Japanese struggle of students since his days in Tonghung School in Longjing. Enrolled in a school in Seoul in 1937, he often went to Phungsan and kept close ties with the communists who were under our influence.

In the course of this, he made contact with Kim Jong Suk, who was working in the Phungsan area, and learned in a precise way our line, strategy and tactics on the revolution in the homeland. Kim Jong Suk discussed with him the matter of rallying the communists in central Korea, with Seoul as the centre around our anti-Japanese national united front movement.

Lee In Mo recalled that Kim Sam Ryong had been delighted to be informed of our line on the united front.

In Seoul Ju Pyong Pho and Lee In Mo mixed with workers in the metallurgical, textile, fibre, printing, dyeing, garment and other industries, built up labour union organizations by recruiting progressive elements from among the working class, and laid the groundwork for making preparations for an all-people resistance. Meanwhile they made tireless efforts to ensure our leadership of the revolutionary organizations in the homeland.

Lee In Mo not only worked for the revolutionary movement in the homeland, but also performed considerable exploits in expanding the ARF organizations in Japan. On Ju Pyong Pho's instructions Lee went to Tokyo in the summer of 1940, carrying with him the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, and transformed the friendship society of the self-supporting students from Phungsan in Tokyo in a revolutionary fashion.

As mentioned above, Lee In Mo is not a man who fell out of the blue. He was trained to be an incarnation of faith and will by the ARF and the fighters from Mt. Paektu, who went through all sorts of hardships and difficulties to sow the seeds of the organization in every part of the country.

After completing her programme of work in Phungsan, Kim Jong Suk proceeded to the Tanchon area on the east coast. The man whom we had singled out from among the progressive people in Tanchon was Lee Ju Yon, a leader of the peasant union in Tanchon. He had been involved in the Singan Association and also had had a hand in the Tanchon peasant revolt in 1930. Thanks to the good offices of a member of the ARF in that area, Kim Jong Suk met Lee Ju Yon, who was under treatment in a temple in the mountain at the time after serving seven years' penal servitude in connection with the peasant revolt.

After expressing her heartfelt sympathy with him for his ill health, a consequence of his hardships in prison, she conveyed to him our line on the anti-Japanese national united front and our policy of an all-people resistance. She also told him to awaken the peasant masses to revolutionary consciousness and organize them so as to expedite the preparations of the forces for the all-people resistance. He told her that in the past he had run about day and night trying to organize a movement, but had felt futile, as if sailing with no destination on heavy seas in an old boat with a broken compass. Now feeling as if he were on a new boat, he made an oath to be loyal to the revolution.

Finishing her work with Lee Ju Yon, Kim Jong Suk met Lee Yong on the seashore in Chaho, Riwon. Lee Yong was the son of Lee Jun, a patriotic martyr and hero of the incident of the emissaries to The Hague. Lee Yong had been imprisoned for his connections with the Pukchong peasant union, and after being released, he organized and led an anti-Japanese association. After his father had disemboweled himself in The Hague, Lee Yong devoted himself to the Independence Army movement for some time at the behest of his father, who had told him, "You must devote your whole being to the country." However, he had lost interest in the movement, for he had realized that in spite of its ostentatious signboard, it could not attain its goal without correct leadership.

He had been involved in the communist movement for some time. But he shook his head on seeing the factions separating themselves from the masses, like oil on water, and idling away their time with feuds conducted for their own self-interests. The peasant union movement in which he had been deeply involved was caught up in serious wrangling. The stylish campaigners of the top hierarchy, wearing their hair in a bouffant style modeled after Karl Marx, were ordering the peasants about in a grand manner.

Unable to bear it any more, Lee one day denounced one of the long-haired men at the top. The man retorted, "Why are you so insolent? Because you are the son of Lee Jun? Did anyone make us a present of independence because your father appealed by disemboweling himself far away from his country?"

Lee Yong shouted and beat his chest in anger. He could bear an affront to himself, but he felt bitter and resentful to think of the patriotic soul of his late father being insulted in this way. The pain was not alleviated for many years.

The conclusion Lee Yong reached after being in the Independence Army and taking part in the communist and peasant union movements, was that the masses, no matter how powerful they might be, cannot demonstrate their might unless guided by a competent leader.

He organized like-minded people and tried hard to find a channel to Mt. Paektu.

Kim Jong Suk transmitted to Lee Yong our plan of preparing forces for an all-people resistance by rallying the peasant masses in the region south of the Huchi Pass.

Lee Yong made a firm commitment to devote himself to the sacred cause of national liberation by upholding our policy. Taking leave of Kim Jong Suk, he said that Korea was alive because of me; he

called me "the one and only leader" of Korea.

I once read Kumranjigyejon, an educational tract used by the revolutionary organizations in the northern region of Korea and edited by Pukchong people. There is a pine grove in Chonghung-ri, Pukchong County. As it was a scenic, quiet place, the influential people had from olden days regarded it as a pleasure ground and gathered there from time to time for competitions in composing poetry.

The advanced elements of the Pukchong people, being highly anti-Japanese, formed a Kumran Association, with the influential people at the fore to hoodwink the police. The name of the association, "Kum ran", means that a united mind is as sharp as an iron edge and as fragrant as an orchid. In other words, it indicates deep feelings between friends. It is construed as an association of close friends.

Most of the hardcore elements in Pukchong were the association members. They frequently met in the pine grove with the influential people in the area and cultivated themselves morally while pretending to be composing poems. In the course of this, the oldest member of the association, respected by many as a scholar for his wide knowledge, composed the Kumranjigyejon which contained the expression "the one and only leader".

In September of that year, Lee Yong formed the party circle of the Pukchong district and became its head. The early members of the circle were the hard core of the Chaho Anti-Japanese Association. He motivated the party circle to rally the Chaho Anti-Japanese Association and the labor and peasant unions around the ARF, building up the forces for an all-people resistance, with the east-coast region south of Huchi Pass as the center.

After he had made contact with Mt. Paektu, a great change took place in Lee Ju Yon's life. On getting his new fighting task from us, he left, not for his home, but for the road of struggle, on the very day he had promised his wife he would return home. As he left, bidding farewell to his loyal wife, who had supported him for seven years while he was behind bars, he felt seized with a great pity for her. However, when she came to the temple, he suppressed his personal feelings and took leave of her with determination.

For eight years, from the day he left the temple till the day of liberation, he was constantly on the move, forgoing a comfortable home life and with his comrades devoting his wisdom and passion to inculcate the spirit of the anti-Japanese struggle in the minds of the workers and peasants.

After liberation Lee Ju Yon and Lee Yong upheld their principles and worked hard, just as they had fought when looking up to Mt. Paektu.

Among the leaders of the peasant unions in the homeland, who made strenuous efforts on behalf of the united front movement and the preparations for an all-people resistance under the banner of the Ten-point Programme of the ARF, was a man named Lee Won Sop. He was head of an anti-Japanese secret organization in the Kilju area, having reformed a peasant union into an organization subordinate to the ARF. In 1932 he had participated with his comrades in Wangqing in a raid on the public security office in

Dakanzi to obtain weapons for the newborn anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

Later, he was sent by the organization to conduct underground activities in the homeland. The organization members he guided would have gone through fire and water for the revolutionary army. He obtained white paper from the Kilju Pulp Mill and regularly sent it to Mt. Paektu. In those days the peasant organizations on the east coast used to send a variety of essential goods in lorries to Sinpha and Hyesan in broad daylight, to be forwarded to the revolutionary army.

The peasant union activists conducted brisk propaganda and agitation campaigns, appealing to the peasant masses to turn out for an all-people resistance in response to the armed struggle we were waging.

Members of the peasant union in Jongphyong were imprisoned; even in prison they gave wide and frequent publicity to our struggle. Activists of the peasant union in Myongchon also gave wide publicity to us and appealed for the anti-Japanese struggle. The patriotic martyrs who risked their lives by fighting in the homeland in response to our line in the days when we were making preparations for the all-people resistance cannot be counted only in the tens of thousands. These known and unknown revolutionaries rallied, shoulder to shoulder with the operatives we had dispatched, millions of the peasants in every part of the country around the ARF.

After the peasant union organizations were restructured on a revolutionary line, the peasant movement in our country was linked closely to the anti-Japanese armed struggle. This provided favorable conditions for promoting the development of the peasant movement. In struggling to carry out the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF, the peasant organizations all over the country rendered a great contribution to the consolidation of the anti-Japanese national united front and to the preparations for an all-people resistance. In this struggle the revolution in the homeland lost a great number of peasant union activists and patriotic members of peasant unions.

The peasant movement occupies, along with the labor movement, an indisputable place in the history of the anti-Japanese national-liberation struggle of Korea, centered on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. We must not forget the revolutionaries, many of whom sacrificed their lives, who fought to win back national sovereignty and achieve the class emancipation of peasants from the saber-rattling fascist tyranny of Japanese imperialists.

## 18.4. Choe Chun Guk in His Days in the Independent Brigade

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In the summer of 1937, when the Sino-Japanese War broke out, the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was operating in the Changbai and Linjiang areas. It was waiting for the Independent Brigade, a unit which had shared life and death with us since the first days of the guerrilla army, and which had left northern Manchuria.

I have already mentioned that in accordance with the decision adopted at the Yaoyinggou meeting in the spring of 1935, units of the People's Revolutionary Army in eastern Manchuria had launched into the vast areas of northern and southern Manchuria to conduct brisk joint operations with the Chinese units there. We had also begun joint operations with the 5th Corps in northern Manchuria, in the course of which I dispatched some individuals from the Wangqing Regiment and Hunchun Regiment to the Sanjiang area, where Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon were active.

On the long way to meet the comrades-in-arms in northern Manchuria, their force had been reinforced and had grown into a large unit. In the spring of 1937 the Independent Brigade was to come to West Jiandao. Choe Chun Guk was secretary of the party committee for the brigade and political commissar of the 1st Regiment. The Koreans in the brigade sincerely helped the Chinese armed units and the people of northern Manchuria. While fighting in Wangqing, Choe Chun Guk received extraordinary love and respect from both the Chinese people and the Chinese nationalist armed units for his efficient work with them.

After the meeting in Xigang I called the soldiers of the unit I had left behind in northern Manchuria to West Jiandao. But the brigade I awaited so anxiously did not arrive in the Linjiang area until long after the Battle of Pochonbo and the July 7 incident. We were all surprised at their appearance. Their torn uniforms were fluttering rags, their feet wrapped in pieces of cloth tied with string or straw cords, for their shoes were completely worn out.

Touching the threadbare back of his tunic, I said to Choe Chun Guk in sympathy, "From the days in Wangqing till now you have always put yourself to great trouble to carry out difficult tasks."

Choe replied in tears, "I am very sorry to be late. Worse still, I've lost such stalwart comrades-in-arms as the company commander Chue In Jun and platoon leader Park Ryong San." They had left northern Manchuria in early May, so the march had taken several months. From Yulan, where they had started, to the shore of the Yalu it was a 2,500-mile journey. On the long, arduous journey they had experienced all kinds of hardships.

Lim Chun Chu regretted having lost a box of acupuncture needles he had kept and valued from the days when he was 17 years old. He said that the box had contained two expensive gold needles which had

become thin in the course of treating many people.

"It was indeed an arduous march. To see tents pitched here in an orderly manner, I feel as if I were in a different world." said he, adding that the day when he had slept in a tent was dim in his memory.

I soon sent for the logistics officer and ordered him to supply them with tents and new uniforms. Choe Chun Guk and other commanding officers visited me again soon after supper. I had told them to go to sleep to relieve their fatigue, but they said that they could not, as they had to see the Commander. They asked me about the news of the Sino-Japanese War. Unaware of the outbreak of the war on their severalmonth-long, bloody march, they got the news of it much later.

I explained the situation to them.

"The September 18 incident ended with Japan's occupation of Manchuria, but the July 7 incident will be different," I told them. "The Chinese people are now offering a nation-wide resistance to the Japanese aggressor army. Chiang Kaisek can no longer avoid an anti-Japanese struggle, and so the Chinese Communist Party has taken the initiative in forming the anti-Japanese national united front with the Kuomintang. Accordingly, the main force of the Chinese Red Army in the northwestern region has been renamed the 8th Route Army of the National Revolutionary Army, with Zhu De as its Commander-in-Chief. If the Red Army and the Kuomintang army cooperate to wage a protracted war, Japan, with limited national strength and troops, will find it difficult to hold out.

"The Japanese army is advancing, sweeping everything in its path, but its flag of the Rising Sun is already clouded by a bad omen. To cope with the war, we held several meetings and made some relevant decisions. According to the policy we put forward at the meetings, our task is to make preparations for an all-people resistance while harassing the enemy in the rear and expanding and strengthening the revolutionary forces in the homeland. Our main strategic area for harassing the enemy in their rear is along the Yalu and in southern Manchuria.

As the main front of the Sino-Japanese War is North China, the Japanese army's war supplies will have to pass through the area on the Yalu and southern Manchuria. That is why we are operating on the Yalu. You will operate in those areas as well."

They were very regretful not to have participated in the battles of Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng.

Choe Chun Guk told me that he had met many Koreans in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army units when he was in northern Manchuria and that they had so earnestly longed to be at Mt. Paektu. Saying that he had met Choe Yong Gon in the battle of Yilan county town, he described the meeting in detail. Choe Yong Gon had hugged him closely and said in tears, "I heard that you have come from Comrade Kim Il Sung's unit. I'm glad to see you, I feel as if I were seeing Commander Kim himself. I heard he had been all the way to northern Manchuria to see Kim Chaek and me and, failing, had returned to Mt. Paektu. I'm so sorry about that."



After liberation Choe Yong Gon recalled frequently his meeting with Choe Chun Guk at the battle of Yilan county town. The battle was a joint operation by Choe Yong Gon's and other units in northern Manchuria and the units from eastern Manchuria.

The units operating in northern Manchuria came on horseback 50 or 75 miles, attacked the enemy at night and withdrew like lightning before daybreak. Afraid of the night, the enemy were keeping brightly-lit lamps around their barracks and various places on the earthen wall. The combatants of Choe Chun Guk's unit shattered all the lamps, each with a single shot; the enemy were so scared at the shots and flashes of gunfire that they did not dare to fire back.

Later the newly-formed Independent Brigade received our order to come to West Jiandao.

Apparently they were full of excitement at the order. The soldiers of the brigade who were to go to West Jiandao were so happy they did not eat anything the whole day, while Kang Kon, Park Kil Song and others who were to remain in northern Manchuria were so disappointed, they did not eat either.

The southward march of the brigade was tortuous.

The day when he received my order. Choe Chun Guk sent messengers to various units dispersed in different areas. He then clothed his men in puppet Manchukuo police uniforms and led them daringly out on the plain to march along the highroad. He estimated that the area of the plain would be empty of enemy troops, since they were combing mountains to "mop up" the guerrillas after being defeated in many battles. Because Choe and his men marched along the highroad, they reached the vicinity of Dongjingcheng in a week without fighting a single battle.

The beginning of the march was smooth enough, but as several units were merged, the brigade commander Fang commanded the marching column. This caused a great deal of friction.

According to Lim Chun Chu, Ji Pyong Hak, Kim Hong Pha, Kim Ryong Gun and other participants of the march, the problem was the fundamental difference in tactics between Fang, the brigade commander, and Choe Chun Guk, who was secretary of brigade party committee.

Since the marching column encountered large units of the enemy frequently after passing Dongjingcheng, Choe Chun Guk insisted that the brigade should be regrouped into smaller units and march separately in order to avoid engagements and loss of life. This was a correct proposal that agreed with the requirements of guerrilla warfare. However, Fang held that once dispersed, it would be difficult to command his brigade, hence the combat power of the brigade would be reduced. He was of the opinion that a dispersed brigade was no longer a brigade. He ignored Choe's proposal and stuck to marching as a large unit.

As a consequence, they engaged with the enemy now and then, suffering many losses; this restricted the

speed of the brigade as well. In spite of such crushing difficulties, all the soldiers eagerly yearned for the day when they would launch the action into their native land. A young soldier who had been fatally wounded left his will, breathing his last with his head in Choe Chun Guk's lap. The will was a request that he bury him in the soil of Korea - a will that could never be carried out in view of the circumstances at that time. Choe cremated his body, wrapped a handful of ashes in a piece of paper and gave it to the sergeant major to keep. He intended to bury the handful of ashes in Korea.

In order to bring down the loss of life, Choe proposed to take by stealth the 100 horses grazing on the grassland and continue the march on horseback. He said, "We've already been exposed. We could have covered our traces if we had marched separately, but you didn't permit it, so we could not escape misfortune and lost many comrades-in-arms. If we march on as we do now, we may sustain a greater loss.

We must slip out rapidly before the enemy encircles us, so that they don't chase us but are dragged in our wake. If we move on horseback, we can take the initiative and drag them at our will and defeat them. If we continue to flounder, standing on the defensive, the whole unit will be annihilated."

Fang turned down this suggestion too. According to him, a mounted march was suicide. No persuasion could change his mind. At long last, Choe's proposal was submitted to the party committee of the brigade. All the members of the committee supported Choe's tactical scheme. With the wounded and weak soldiers on the 100 captured horses, the brigade continued the march southward. Those not on horseback put their loads on the horses and walked unburdened. This accelerated the speed of the march.

The enemy on their tail were far away, following them as Choe had anticipated. The brigade wiped out the enemy on the chase in the vicinity of Guandi. Then, they slew the horses for food. Thanks to the march on horseback, the brigade could have a breathing spell; but, in the area along the Dunhua-Haerbaling railway line they were faced with another obstacle, for the area was full of enemy troops.

The brigade commander suggested retreat, saying there was no other way.

Choe Chun Guk opposed it, saying, "We must advance, even if it's only one step forward towards the Yalu. How can we pull back? It will be more dangerous if we encounter the enemy on our retreat. They obviously have sent reinforcements to chase us."

This made the brigade commander angry. He retorted, "How can we advance in this situation?" While they were arguing, a unit of the puppet Manchukuo army happened to be marching along the road nearby. Choe said that the best way was to follow this marching column. His eyes wide with astonishment, the brigade commander asked what he meant by saying they should follow the enemy.

Choe Chun Guk explained, "The puppet Manchukuo soldiers have no time to look back since they are pulling heavy guns. Even if they happen to see us, they will take us for friends, never imagining that the guerrillas would follow them daringly in broad daylight. So let's follow them, and after passing through

the area along the railway, slip away into the mountains."

The brigade commander did not object to this proposal.

Thanks to Choe's proposal, the brigade passed the area along the railway without accident. Later, however, there were many encounters and engagements with the enemy's "punitive" forces, large and small. In the vicinity of Piaohe they encountered 500 enemy troops, fighting a bloody battle for two days. Many guerrillas lost their packs during the battle, and the sergeant major's pack, where Choe kept the ashes of the young guerrilla, was also lost.

Choe Chun Guk continued to insist vehemently that the only way to rescue the brigade from the enemy cordon, tightening with each passing minute, was a dispersed march in small units. But the brigade commander said, "Then one or two companies may survive, but the brigade will be routed. Are you proposing that we should escape separately to save our skins? We must live or die together."

The brigade party committee discussed the two men's ideas once again.

Furious with the brigade commander's indecisive attitude, Choe struck his chest with his fist and remarked fiercely: "Which of us here wants to save his own skin? None of us is afraid of death. But we cannot die for nothing before reaching our destination. If we lose all the men on the way, the men who so eagerly wish to go home, how can we, the commanding officers, atone for the crime? If we get our men and ourselves killed just because of the stupid conduct of a few commanders, who will wage the anti-Japanese war and the revolution?"

If we are to preserve the force of the brigade and reach West Jiandao, we must switch over to dispersed action."

Nearly all the officers at the meeting criticized the brigade commander, who had stuck to a march by a large unit, and accused him of being an adventurist. Some of them even labeled him a coward in the guise of comradeship. In view of the fact that Fang surrendered to the enemy in later days, it is not surprising that they labeled him a coward, I think. As a matter of fact, he did not surrender on his own accord; being arrested, he yielded to the enemy's intimidation and appeasement.

Whatever process it was that made a turncoat of him, the seed of his surrender and betrayal had germinated, I believe, long before from his lack of faith and willpower and from the cowardice revealed now and then in his everyday life. What Fang feared was obvious: if the units, with their strong combat power and efficient commanders, left to go off separately, his personal safety would be threatened.

After the brigade party committee meeting at Piaohe, the Independent Brigade switched over to the method of marching in dispersion and broke through the enemy blockade.

Nevertheless, Fang did not digest the criticism given by his comrades. He continued to be unpleasant

towards Choe Chun Guk.

After receiving a regular military education, Fang became an officer of the former Chinese northeast army, so he had the authority and rank to command the brigade. By contrast, Choe hailed from the lowest rung of society without having even received primary schooling. He had learned reading, writing and military art only after joining the guerrillas, and had then become a commanding officer. However, Fang seemed to be unaware that academic attainments did not determine who was talented or superior. It was only during the battle for crossing the River Songhua some days later that Fang repented. At that time the brigade, which had been marching in dispersion, regrouped itself into a large unit.

It arrived at the River Songhua near Naerhong at sunset. The river, rising with the seasonal rain, had become wide and rough. They had to cross quickly before the enemy appeared, but only a small boat big enough to carry only five or six people was available. As they crossed and recrossed the river by boat, many men had still not made it to the other side by dawn. Everyone, both those who had crossed and who had not, looked at the slowly moving boat and the brightening sky with apprehension.

At that moment the enemy arrived. Making for them with 10 agile men, Choe Chun Guk told the brigade to hurry across the river and hide in the forest near Liushuhezi, as he would lure away the enemy. Thanks to him, the men remaining at the ferry crossed the river safely. The brigade waited for Choe's death-defying corps for a few days in the vicinity of Liushuhezi. Choe appeared with his men on the fourth day, each carrying a load of grain they had obtained along the way.

Only then did Fang take Choe by the shoulders and apologize. Then I gave him a pocketbook and wrote on its first page, "You must study, even by writing on the earth." From that time on he showed extraordinary zeal in study and training. While learning Korean letters, he also studied Chinese characters by himself.

There is a good story of how he came to learn Chinese characters. One day he came to see me, asking for the meaning of the Chinese word "Yi Zheng Hua Ling". I pronounced it for him and interpreted it into Korean. He mumbled, "I see! The Chinese characters are very strange. It's a pity I wasn't able to attend a village school."

He then started to carry a dictionary of Chinese characters in his I have mentioned in a previous volume that the defensive battle of Xiaowangqing was fought for 90-odd days and that it was a hard-fought one. But all through those 90 days, Choe never stopped studying his Chinese characters.

Once I visited Sancidao, where Choe's company was stationed; I told him that a company political instructor should know how to dance and sing so as to imbue his company with a lively and optimistic spirit. After that he went outside every night and practised dancing, out of sight of the others. He was so absorbed in the practice that Ko Hyon Suk, the company cook, who happened to see him one night, ran to the company commander and told him in a shocked whisper that the company political instructor seemed to have gone out of his mind. The commander held his sides with laughter at her warning. This

became a famous anecdote of Sancidao in later days.

He was so faithful and diligent that in our battles in the guerilla zones of eastern Manchuria I could always entrust his company with the most challenging tasks. In the Macun operations, when we fought 5,000 enemy troops for 90 days, his 2nd Company was a pillar. When I left the guerrilla base to attack the enemy from behind, I would always entrust him with the task of defending the base, which he carried out with credit and without fail.

Because of this trust, I could leave him to take my place when I and my men had to move elsewhere, or send him to important places where I could not go myself. This became a regular practice, the reason Choe and I, despite our close relationship, always lived far apart.

Looking at the tough and seasoned appearance of Choe now, I pictured in my mind the images of many of my comrades-in-arms who Hak Man, Ho Hyong Sik and Kang Kon - among all these renowned generals of the anti-Japanese war, for whose death or capture the enemy was offering great sums of bounty money, no one except Choe Yong Gon, who had been a teacher at the Huangpu Military Academy, had received any kind of regular military education. They had not even thought of becoming a soldier until only a few years before. Yet what skilful military commanders and efficient political workers they had become!

Looking with trustful eyes at Choe Chun Guk, who reeked of gunpowder, I thought, "We already have enough reliable men to take charge of each strategic area. When the time comes, I can assign units to them and give them operational missions to liberate the country, telling them to advance to North Hamgyong Province, Rangnim Mountains and Thaebaek Mountains, and so on. If the paramilitary corps and the people rise up across the country in support of these units once we have advanced to the homeland, Japanese imperialism will be defeated and we will achieve ultimate victory."

The night of his arrival, Choe Chun Guk and I shared a tent, as we had done when I was with the 2nd Company in Sancidao in our days in Wangqing. It evoked vivid memories. We talked until daybreak.

Choe said. "We might have given up halfway if we had not kept it in mind that we were going to Mt. Paektu. The thought that we must remain alive by all means to tread the soil of our country forced us to find our way out of dead ends and keep going even in the midst of total exhaustion. Except for a few visits to my home town of Onsong in the days when we were fighting in Wangqing, I haven't been back home for years. I want to inhale the fragrance of the soil of our land."

His words went home to my heart. I gripped his hands tightly and told him with regret that I could not promise him the chance to step on the soil of home soon, even though he so missed it. Thus, I could not help but tell him that night what I had intended to tell him in a few days.

In those days the Anti-Japanese Allied Army units active in eastern and southern Manchuria were experiencing difficulties for lack of military and political cadres. The loss the southern Manchurian unit

had suffered from the enemy's "punitive" operations was destructive. The 1st Corps was undergoing such hardships in its guerrilla activities, the enemy was boasting that "the communist bandits in southern Manchuria were wiped out to the last man and public peace was ensured." In order to expand and intensify the guerrilla actions in southern Manchuria, an area that had become more important with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, we had to first reinforce it with skilful military and political personnel.

Moreover, taking special measures for guarding the commanding personnel had presented itself as a problem in the southern Manchurian unit after the death of division commander Cao Guo-an. It was a common view of the commanding officers that the guard units, which had to become the main defenders and elite units of a corps or a division, should include the most efficient military and political cadres and experienced combatants. Because of this situation, Wei Zheng-min had since the spring of that year requested me to hand the whole of Choe's brigade over to him as soon as they arrived.

Since I was well aware of the difficult situation in which the southern Manchurian unit found itself, as well as of the strategic importance of the guerrilla struggle in southern Manchuria and the painful position and feelings of Wei, I could not turn down his earnest request.

When I told Choe how sorry I was that I could not realize his wish, he consoled me, saying, "If it is the demand of the revolution, then I must leave you again. But, please don't feel sad. There will be days when I will be with you and step on the soil of our native land." "It is very kind of you to say so. Frankly speaking, I want to take with me at least the men who have been with me since the days in Wangqing, but Wei is in need of them."

Hearing the news of the Independent Brigade's arrival, Wei visited me the next day and said meaningfully: "I was greatly shocked by the story the brigade's soldiers told me. The fate of a unit is dependent after all on its commander. If the commander is not steadfast, his unit will be ruined. Fang isn't fit to be a brigade commander. I had planned to put the Guard Regiment under his command, but I have to cancel the plan. The Soviet Union is said to have benefited much from the former officers of Tsarist army during the Civil War, but we don't have this advantage. I feel so frustrated that I can't find suitable military and political cadres to lead the Guard Regiment."

His complaint reflected his innermost wish that I give him men fit for the positions of regiment commander and regiment political commissar from among the Koreans.

The meeting held that day to review the march of the Independent Brigade had high praise for Choe Chun Guk for his efficient command of the brigade on the march, and commended the men who had been model soldiers on the march. After this, Fang and the commanders who had servilely followed him were duly criticized. Concluding the meeting, I emphasized how crucial it was to put guerrilla tactics into practical use in our fight with the enemy, who were invariably superior in number:

"For us to engage in regular warfare instead of guerrilla warfare is as absurd as a swallow hopping

clumsily about on the ground to look for worms, instead of soaring freely in the sky to prey on insects. The ancient war manuals tell us that a man who knows when to fight and when not to fight will emerge victorious, and that a man who immobilizes the enemy's chances to win and who always looks for a chance to defeat the enemy is a good fighter. When we encounter the enemy, no matter where, we can be confident of victory only by applying the elusive guerrilla tactics."

As the meeting was attended by Wei Zheng-min and other Chinese commanders and rank and file, I made the speech both in Korean and Chinese.

After the meeting we organized a new Guard Regiment. Lee Tong Hak, the Guard Company commander of my unit, was appointed its commander, and Choe Chun Guk its political commissar. Lim Chun Chu was also to go to Wei to treat his illness. The other men in the independent Brigade were all sent to him. As he had wished, Wei now had a Guard Regiment consisting of the most skilful and stalwart among the Korean military and political cadres and combatants.

Wei did not hide his pleasure at this, but many of the men of the regiment were sorry that they could not remain with me. Even Lim Chun Chu requested to be dispatched to a political operation group in the homeland.

A few days later the regiment left with Wei for the Humnan area in southern Manchuria. On the eve of departure Choe Chun Guk called on me to say good-bye. It was a moonlit night a few days after Harvest Moon. Sitting on the grass just beside the tent of Headquarters, we bid each other a touching farewell.

"You have to leave for southern Manchuria before having had the chance to relieve the fatigue accumulated in northern Manchuria. I'm sorry I always send you off somewhere without giving you a respite."

"Well, that's all right. Since you obviously trust me, I feel encouraged."

"Huinan is said to be strictly guarded by the enemy; you must take care of yourself. Please refrain from any adventure or hasty action, as you did while raiding the police substation at the ferry in Onsong."

The raid was a battle which Choe Chun Guk and his company fought at Jangdok ferry after crossing the River Tuman in early 1935. It was to be a model battle for our thrust into the homeland, which we had been planning for a long while. The main duty of the police at the ferry was to control the people crossing the Tuman. The policemen there were so vile that the secret organization members carrying goods from Onsong for the guerrillas via the ferry frequently had their goods confiscated. The secret revolutionary organization in Onsong requested us to teach the policemen of the branch station a good lesson. So I told Choe Chun Guk's company to raid the station.

Having crossed the frozen river by stealth just before dawn with the combatants, Choe Chun Guk placed his men near the station and went in alone. As only one policeman was on duty, they could raid it without

firing a shot. But while Choe was in there, the policeman kicked a servant boy viciously for failing to build a fire in the stove in time Choe, in a fit of fury, shot him to death. Consequently he and his men had to withdraw in haste without delivering a political speech to the people who had been in the yard of the station to register for crossing the river.

It was a very small battle indeed, killing just one enemy policeman, but it made a strong impact on the public. Many believed that since such a small number of guerrillas had raided a border post in front of many people, greater events might take place in the future. The battle was a signal for the brisk operations we were to conduct subsequently to destroy the enemy on the Rivers Yalu and Tuman.

Choe Chun Guk was still remorseful that he had failed to perform political work at that time. He said to me now, "I was still immature in those days. If I had not lost my temper but acted more prudently, I would have made a speech to touch the heartstrings of the people. But I missed the main target because of my rash act.

"Daring is praiseworthy, but a commander should always be discreet in all his undertakings. As you are now in charge of the security of a corps headquarters as well as that of a regiment, you must be careful in everything. Bear in mind that unnecessary adventure is taboo. You must return to me alive for the great cause of national liberation. I'll send for you without fail once the operation for liberating the country is unfolded, to atone for my failure to take you to the Battle of Pochonbo."

Because of this promise, Choe took leave of me in a much happier mood than on the day he had left me for northern Manchuria. In southern Manchuria he carried out his revolutionary tasks with great credit and kept in close touch with us. When sending him to southern Manchuria, I gave him the task of winning over the Independence Army units operating on the River Yalu centered on Huanren, Jian and Tonghua. His efforts produced good results in performing this task as well. Wei Zheng-min's messages to me were full of pride at the activities of the Guard Regiment. What I still remember most clearly among &e messages is the one which said that by means of a letter Choe Chun Guk had kept hundreds of the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers under his thumb.

While passing by an enemy's strategic base, Choe, who was in command of the Guard Regiment, was informed through his scouts that hundreds of soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army and policemen were stationed there.

He wrote to the commander of the Manchukuo troops, to this effect: "We don't regard the Chinese people as our enemy, nor do we want to make them so. We have no desire to fight against you, so don't provoke us. We now need some time to relax. We are going to drop in at Fuerhe and take a rest in your walled town. I warn you not to stop us." He wrote the letter in full consideration of the mental state of the puppet Manchukuo army, who wanted to fight against the guerrillas as little as possible.

The Manchukuo army unit sent a messenger to him with a letter promising that they would comply with his request if the revolutionary army waited for 30 minutes. During the 30 minutes the Manchukuo army



unit evacuated the town and escaped to the mountain at the back of the town, for they would get in trouble with the Japanese at a later date if they allowed the guerrillas into town while they themselves were still there.

The regiment went into the walled town, relaxed and conducted political work among the people.

At dusk the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers on the mountain grew anxious and started a continuous whistling. This was a signal that they were uneasy because the Japanese troops might appear any time. Also, they were not brave enough to actually demand that the guerrillas leave.

Choe ordered his unit to resume the march and left a short letter of thanks to the commander of the puppet Manchukuo army unit.

"Thank you for allowing us to take a good rest. I wish you to regard us as your friends and help us in future too. Japanese imperialism, the common enemy of the Korean and Chinese peoples, will be defeated without fail and the Koreans and Chinese will surely emerge victorious."

By using this method, Choe had held a great number of puppet Manchukuo soldiers under his thumb and had turned many against the Japanese. What is surprising is that the letters in the Chinese language he sent to the commanders of the puppet Manchukuo army were written by himself.

Throughout the latter half of the 1930s he rendered a positive help to the activities of the Chinese guerrilla units in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, operating continually in the vast areas of northern and southern Manchuria. This earned him the title of internationalist fighter from the Chinese people and from his revolutionary comrades. Chinese friends everywhere praised him with deep affection and respect for the exploits he had performed for the sake of proletarian internationalism and friendship between Korea and China.

What exactly made Choe Chun Guk a renowned anti-Japanese general at that particular time throughout southern and northern Manchuria?

Every second the anti-Japanese revolution transformed the people beyond recognition in the same way that a day, a month or even a decade at ordinary times would do. As pig iron is heated and turned into steel in a furnace, those who had been ignorant, ill-clad and wretched grew up into fighters, heroes and standard-bearers in the great whirlwind of revolution, transforming society and ushering in a new era.

Choe Chun Guk devoted his soul and body to the revolution and trained himself without interruption in the struggle.

Here is an interesting anecdote that shows his human traits.

Shortly after Choe Chun Guk started married life after liberation, Lim Chun Chu visited his house. He

asked Choe's wife, as a joke, whether she liked her husband. Smiling bashfully, she inquired of him whether her husband had really been a guerrilla. Then she told him of an episode of a few days before at an athletic meet for Choe's unit.

That day the families of the servicemen were invited to watch the athletic meet. Choe's wife, too, went to enjoy it in holiday attire. Returning home in the evening, Choe asked her in apparent ill humor: "Don't you have any better clothes? You were wearing hempen clothes in front of the whole unit."

At the words "hempen clothes" she burst out laughing, for he had mistaken ramie cloth for hemp.

"They are made of ramie cloth, not hemp. There is no better summer wear than this cloth." "There isn't?"

Bewildered, he flushed and apologized to her.

Relating it to Lim Chun Chu, she said she wondered with what sort of courage Choe, gentle as he was, had fought against the Japanese.

Hearing her story, Lim laughed for a good while, then became serious and said.

"Madam, you have seen him right. Comrade Choe Chun Guk is a good-natured, weak-minded man. After raiding an enemy police branch at a ferry in Onsong, he came back to the base without wiping away the blood that was oozing from the nose of a young servant who had been kicked by a policeman. He felt painful remorse for many years for this failure. And yet, he is a very strong man. If you look at his left leg carefully, you will find a scar.

The leg bone was broken by a bullet; I performed an operation without any anesthetic and stitched up the wound. He endured the excruciating pain without as much as a groan. As gentle-hearted as a lamb towards the people and comrades, as fierce as a tiger with the enemy, and as hard as steel in the face of difficulties? this is your husband. Living with him long will teach you what a strong man he is."

But contrary to his words, their promising married life did not last long. On July 30, 1950, shortly after the eruption of the great Fatherland Liberation War, Choe Chun Guk, commander of the 12th Infantry Division in the battle to liberate Andong, was fatally wounded. When ii Pyong Hak, chief of staff of the division, rushed to him, Choe was lying in a jeep parked by the roadside. He was already breathing his last. Opening his eyes with much effort as Li repeatedly called his name, Choe requested the army surgeon to prolong his life for five more minutes. In those last five minutes, he struggled against his pain to explain in detail his tactical plan for encircling and annihilating the enemy in Andong.

"I ask you to carry out the orders of the Supreme Commander in my stead." These were Choe's last words to Ji as he gripped Ji's hands.

When I got the news of his death, I could hardly believe that he was really dead. His image, limping

slightly in the left leg, was too vivid in my mind's eye. The left leg had become a little shorter, for the bone had been broken in a battle during the anti-Japanese war. Nevertheless, he had walked thousands of miles on those uncomfortable legs.

Entrusted with the heavy duty of a branch director of the Security Officers Training Center immediately after liberation, he devoted himself to the strengthening of the country's military power, crossing rivers with his cadets when they were having river-crossing training, and scaling steep cliffs with them when they were being taught mountain-climbing. On a street of Onsong, his home town on the River Tuman, which he had often frequented in his youth to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy, stands a bronze statue of him in the military uniform worn in the days of the anti-Japanese revolution.

The sculptors visited his wife to get an idea of his correct image and personality. The first thing they asked her was, "What is your most impressive memory of Comrade Choe Chun Guk?"

"There is nothing specially impressive. If there is, can I say that he was very reticent?"

During a few years of our married life, he said less than 100 words in all. If he had been rough and slapped me across the face, it would have remained in my memory.

She was quite regretful that there were no particulars worthy of remembering in their married life. Then, she said significantly, "Please meet my second son. He is the perfect image of his father, very gentle. To resemble his father more, there should be something steadfast in his character, but I am not sure yet. But I'll bring him up to be strong-willed without fail."

Unlike the first days of her married life, she was now well aware of what an excellent man her husband had been.

A gentle, yet strong-willed man - this was the courageous general of the anti-Japanese war, Choe Chun Guk.

## 18.5. The September Appeal

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In September 1937 we issued an appeal to compatriots throughout Korea to cope with the changing situation in the Sino-Japanese War, and dispatched a large number of political operatives to the homeland.

I also made up my mind to infiltrate the homeland at places where there were large working class forces in order to make a breakthrough in the preparations for an all-people resistance. My first destination was the Sinhung area in South Hamgyong Province, and the second was the Phungsan area. A dozen men were to keep company with me. In those days it was not a simple job to go into the depth of the homeland, a dangerous area under enemy rule, accompanied by only a small number of bodyguards.

The military and political cadres asked me several times not to go. When I presented myself in a Western suit, old man Tobacco Pipe tried to dissuade me, saying, "You mean to say you are going all the way to :Han Thung looking like that? I heard the enemy there is very vigilant." Nevertheless, I did not change my mind. At that time I was racking my brains as to how to stage a recovery after the failure of Kim Ju Hyon's small unit in its attempt to penetrate the homeland.

I accepted the September Appeal from the bottom of my heart as an appeal to myself.

Kim Ju Hyon and his small unit members were most embarrassed when I announced my intention to visit the homeland. Kim Ju Hyon was under the impression that the Commander himself was taking the risk of working in the homeland because his small unit had made a mess of the great undertaking. For that matter, I was still not altogether free from anger on that score.

In the appeal, which was called September Appeal because it was published in September, we attached importance to two major issues. One was giving our people a correct understanding of the correlations between the Sino-Japanese War and the Korean revolution in order to enable them to intensify, without losing confidence, their anti-Japanese struggle.

Among the regular readers of newspapers in those days were quite a few pessimists who, on reading about the development of the Sino-Japanese War and the increasing battle results of the Japanese army, considered the independence of Korea to be impossible. From early August of that year on, Choe Nam Son, Yun Chi Ho, Choe Rin and other "renowned figures" published a series of articles in the home and foreign papers preaching compromise with Japanese imperialism.

I, too, read these articles. Choe Nam Son, defining the existence of Japan and her development as the strength of Asia and a beam of light in the Orient, wrote that the Oriental nations should all unite for the same cause under Japan's leadership.

A draftsman of the March First Independence Declaration, he had declared earlier, "Mt. Paektu is the heart of everything in the Orient, the nucleus of Oriental culture, the deepest root of the Oriental spirit, ancestral home of the Oriental people and the main axis of their activities.

The very air of the Orient originates on Mt. Paektu, and sweeping our foreheads at all times and in all places is the wind that blows from Mt. Paektu. We quench our thirst with the spring water of Mt. Paektu, and plough, plant, harvest, and till the earth of Mt. Paektu." When this man so abruptly changed his attitude and called the existence of Japan "the strength of Asia and a beam of light in the Orient," I could not but be astonished.

Choe Rin preached that "national devotion" should be demonstrated Korea's being one with Japan. This was too treacherous and traitorous to be believed as a statement made by one of the 33 persons had masterminded the March First Independence Movement. Yun Chi Ho asserted that the Koreans and Japanese were in the boat sharing the same destiny. The people who are well versed in modern history of Korea know him well, a high-ranking official in last days of the Lee dynasty. In spite of his government post, he had staunchly opposed to the "annexation of Korea by Japan".

For this had been put behind bars. At the time of the July 7 incident, he was the wrong side of 70. It is hardly imaginable that the old man would abruptly have begun to flatter Japanese imperialism in the hope of winning glory or of saving his skin. It is said that he committed suicide at the age of 80 or more after liberation because he could not face living on. No doubt he was a man of conscience and tried to atone for his crime by means of suicide.

In my view he surrendered to the Japanese imperialists because he overestimated Japan and misjudged the development of the situation. Jang Hae U, who guided us from the neighborhood of Samsu when we were on our way to the Sinhung area, was very anxious about the future of the Sino-Japanese War. I told him, "If you take a shortsighted view of the war, you will be driven to despair.

The war will force the greedy Japanese militarists to scatter their troops over a vast area on their own accord, bringing disastrous consequences on themselves by suffering from a lack of troops, materials, war supplies and raw materials. That is why the war is opening a bright future for our independence, not despair. In other words, it is offering us a golden opportunity for attaining our goal. This is why we must speed up the preparations for a nationwide all-people resistance and a do-or-die battle with Japanese imperialism.

The other issue to which we attached great importance in the September Appeal was the matter of clarifying the strategic ways to make preparations for an all-people resistance. We pointed out the following facts in the appeal: The war between China and Japan is becoming more and more strained.

There is no doubt that China will ultimately emerge victorious. As there can be no better chance than this one for us, we must act in the most determined manner in the event of emergency. It is especially imperative to form paramilitary corps and workers' shock brigades as vanguard executive organizations

for armed revolt and subversive actions behind enemy lines. The paramilitary corps and workers' shock brigades must enlist their members in armed revolt, organize subversive actions, set fire on and destroy munitions factories and other important enterprises in the rear... and in the time of the all-people resistance join forces with the KPRA in its military operations, so as to defeat the Japanese army. Only in this way can we carry out our task, the independence of Korea.

We set out the strategic policy of expanding the preparations for an all-people resistance, centering on the workers' shock brigades and paramilitary corps.

We chose the Sinhung area as the first destination for our launch into the homeland after making public the September Appeal, because the area included Hamhung, Hungnam and other big industrial cities where most of the working class of our country was concentrated.

Thanks to our political operatives, several secret camps had already been set up in the dense forest at the southern foot of the Pujon mountains, which were used by small units as bases for their activities. The political operatives and core members of the labor and peasant unions active in various places on the east coast such as Hungnam were to gather in one of those secret camps.

The Phungsan area was selected as our second destination because a large number of laborers at a hydroelectric power station project lived there, as did the many believers in the Chondoist faith affiliated with the ARF. As we had to go to Phungsan via Sinhung, it was more than 200 miles in a straight line on the map.

We mimeographed the September Appeal and kept the copies in Kim Pong Sok's pack when setting out on the journey. I gave one first Jang Jae U. While we were having a rest halfway up Mt. Chongsan near Samsu, Jang read the appeal several times; he was especially pleased by our attaching importance to the organization of paramilitary i corps and of workers' shock brigades. He said that the general strike in Wonsan had fully demonstrated the esprit de corps of the working class. It was true that in the general strike of 1929 what was most noteworthy was the unity, fighting power and the spirit of cooperation of the working class.

The general strike was followed next year by a revolt of miners in the Sinhung Coalmine. Subsequently, workers' strikes continued in various parts of Korea every year. Nevertheless, most of the mass strikes were frustrated without realizing their demands. When writing our appeal we tried not to repeat the bitter failures of the strikes. Instead, we assimilated the good points and cast aside the bad points of the former labor movement in order to pave a new road for the movement.

Modern industrial labor emerged in our country as a result of the open-door policy around the turn of the 19th century, which brought in an influx of foreign capital. Some people look back to the 18th century for the origin of our industrial labour, but it can be said that it was still germinating at that time. After the feudal government opened the door, foreign capital flooded in without a hitch; in this context, ports were built, railways laid, factories set up and mines opened, resulting in the rapid expansion of the ranks of

such industrial workers as dockers, miners, railway men and civil engineers.

The emergence and development of industrial labor led to the formation of labor organizations. Already at the end of the 1890s a man named Lee Kyu Sun had formed a dockers' union, which some people call the origin of labor unions.

The early labor organizations took the form of sworn brotherhoods and mutual-aid associations, which gradually developed into workers' associations and unions. After the "Ulsa Treaty" was rigged up, modern labor unions similar to those in Jinnampho, Sinchang-ri in Pyongyang and Kunsan were formed in many parts of Korea.

Needless to say, the unions in those days were formed spontaneously with factories as a unit, but undoubtedly the mass struggle of the workers for the class interests started after the formation of these labor organizations. Entering the 1910s, labor disputes arose in various parts of the country. In the 1920s such nationwide legal labor organizations as the Workers' Mutual-Aid Society, Labor Congress and Labor League Congress were formed, and these developed the workers' struggle from a simple dispute for the improvement of labor conditions to a patriotic, political movement opposing the aggression of Japanese imperialism. The Japanese imperialists, proclaiming the "Public Peace Maintenance Act", began to suppress the mass labor organizations.

They arrested the workers involved in labor disputes, disbanded labor organizations and banned assemblies. This was a telling blow to the labor movement in our country.

In this situation, the executive bureau of the Red International of Labor Unions adopted the resolution, Theses on the Tasks of the Revolutionary Labor Union Movement in Korea, also known as the September Theses, in September 1930. The resolution emphasized that labor unions should be formed by industries and keep factory committees or labor consultation rooms there in order for a union to have a solid infrastructure. And in October 1931 the secretariat of the Pan-pacific Labor Union made an analysis of the actual situation of the labor movement in Korea and set immediate tasks for forming underground Red labor unions.

Supported by the international communist labor union movement, a brisk campaign was unfolded in our country from 1931 on to form Red labor unions in such industrial cities as Pyongyang, Hungnam, Wonsan, Chongjin, Seoul, Pusan and Sinuiju. The unions played a considerable role in propagating Marxism among the working masses and awakening them to class consciousness, but they were destined to end their existence without really coming into their own because of the schemes of factionalists and harsh suppression by the enemy. At the time we were going to the Sinhung area with our September Appeal, most of the labor union leaders were behind bars, where they turned traitor, or took shelter in a life of seclusion. In actual fact, the labor unions existed in name only.

We had learned a serious lesson from the history of the labor movement in our country, a movement full of twists and turns because of the incorrect leadership of the revolutionary masses. Analyzing the history

of the previous labor movement critically, we came to the conclusion that the preparations for the all-people resistance could only be promoted in a proper way if we mixed with the working class, restructured the labor unions as soon as possible and relied entirely on the strength and wisdom of the working masses.

In this sense, the publication of the September Appeal served as an occasion to revitalize the labor and peasant union movements, which had been extremely dull. Its publication would also bring about a turn in our line to cope with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. While climbing Mt. Chongsan, I talked with Jang Hae U about the labor unions.

As he had traveled around Korea, China and the maritime provinces of the Soviet Union on behalf of the independence movement, Jang was well-informed on the people in Hamhung and Hungnam, who had been connected with the Pacific Labor Union in the past. He told me that the chief of the Korean branch of the Pacific Labor Union in Vladivostok, a subordinate to the Red International of Labor Unions, had been a Korean named Kim Ho Ban, and that under his guidance a Hamhung committee was formed in February 1931, bringing the Hamhung Workers' League for the first time under Red influence.

Through Jang I came to know the names of quite a few cadres of the Red labor unions in Hamhung, including a Japanese worker named Baba Masao. According to Jang, Kim Ho Ban operated with his wife in Hamhung, Pyongyang and Seoul, carrying with him 1,200 won sent by the Vladivostok branch of the Pacific Labor Union as union funds. In the summer of 1931 he was arrested by the police. Even the Japanese members of the labor unions in Hamhung affiliated with the Pacific Labor Union were arrested in 1932 or in 1933.

In order to fill the vacuum created in the labor movement at Hamhung and Hungnam, and to breathe new life into it, we had already seen to it that Kwon Yong Byok dispatched to this area Park Kum Jun, Kim Sok Yon and other political operatives experienced in underground work. Nevertheless, they also were unable to escape the dragnet of the Japanese imperialists who were determined to root out the labor movement in this area. Several labor union leaders, including Park Kum Jun, had been arrested or detained, leaving a lot of things undone.

In view of this situation, we had dispatched since spring 1937 several political operatives trained in West Jiandao to the Hungnam area.

When we reached the summit of Mt. Chongsan, Han Cho Nam, head of the small unit operating in the secret base of the Sinhung area, came to us unexpectedly.

When I asked him why he had come when I had told him to wait for us in the secret camp, he said that he could not feel easy, for there was a Noguchi's villa in Pujon, and the enemy surveillance in the region was stricter than ever before. As he arrived, I sent Jang Hae U back to Sinpha. From there Han guided us.

Soon a wide, blue lake appeared before us. Han explained that this was dam No. 2 of Pujon Lake.



Walking along the left shore of the lake, we could see the dam No. 1. There was a police station near the dam, and Noguchi's villa was one mile up from there, Han said.

In order to build up a munitions industry in Korea and monopolize the power and chemical industries in the country, Noguchi, head of a newly-emergent financial combine, had built hydropower stations, a Korean Nitrogenous Fertilizer Co., Ltd and a munitions plant in Hungnam. Then he had a villa built in a place convenient for supervising the construction of the hydropower stations at Pujon and Hochon.

If one traces the tragic history of Pujon Lake, one can see how cruelly Noguchi exploited Koreans.

After inspecting the Pujon Plateau in 1925, Noguchi wrote to Governor-General Saito that the area was rich in water and forest resources and that labor was cheap. He added that he would like to build power stations there. Saito replied that he was free to start the projects with the cheap labor since the Constitution of the Empire of Japan guaranteed his right to do it.

The Pujon dam project started in the mid-1920s and during the construction of the watercourse, 3,000 Korean workers lost their lives in various accidents because no safety measures had been taken. When the dam project was finished, they closed the sluice gates without bothering to move the peasant households on the lake because they were in a hurry to fill the dam. As a result some 600 peasant households were left homeless in this man-made flood disaster. They then claimed that the dam would be protected by the god of water if a girl was offered as a sacrifice and committed the atrocity of throwing a young girl into the water on the opening day of the waterway.

Noguchi always babbled about his conviction that Korean workers should be regarded as simple draught animals. He behaved so cruelly during the project that even the Japanese people were disgusted, saying, "Not a grass grows on the places trodden by Noguchi."

As the surveillance in the vicinity of Noguchi's villa was strict, we skirted around it and arrived at the Tonggol Secret Camp in Sinhung, our main destination, after some days.

On our way we met nearly 20 young men who were living in mountains to escape the Japanese imperialists. Their reasons for taking shelter on the mountains were different. One had run away after killing a vicious foreman with a stone at the construction site of the Pujongang Hydropower Station; some had escaped when discovered stealing dynamite at the site; and others had run away after being caught by police while carrying around leaflets reading "Down with Japanese imperialism!" and "Noguchi manufactures fertilizer out of our blood". These leaflets they had picked up on their way from Hamhung to Hungnam.

A tall young man nicknamed Choe Myonjang, hailing from Kowon, called himself an "officially-approved communist." "Myonjang" is a nickname his fellows had given him, not because he held an official post, but because his face was long, like a radish. (In Korean, Myonjang has two meanings - one, sub-county chief and the other, long face.) "Communist" was a nickname he had given himself. Leaving

middle school in Seoul in mid-course, as his family could not afford the school fee, he had returned to Kowon and wandered about the streets for some time with no particular job.

Mund that time a Red labor-union incident had broken out in a factory nearby. The enemy had detained not only the people involved in it but also those under suspicion, "Choe Myonjang" being one of them. During interrogation he had told them he knew nothing. They had put him under torture for allegedly telling a lie, even pouring water mixed with ground pepper into his nostrils.

Unable to bear any more, he had falsely confessed that he had engaged in the labor union movement. Ironically, it was a detective from the special political division that at this point turned him into a communist by inadvertently teaching him things of which he had been unaware.

The detective said, "How come you believe in communism? I want to know your reasons. You will say you don't know. All the communists say that they will wipe out exploitation and oppression in this world and build worker-peasant power. So, didn't you engage in the communist movement for that purpose? Tell me." He had answered, "Yes, I did." During a three-month-long preliminary examination of this kind, he acquired an elementary knowledge of communism, and by the time he had served his one-year prison term, he had become a full-fledged "communist".

The Japanese police continued to shadow him. "Communist Choe Myonjang", brought into existence by the detective of the Kowon police station, had set off northward, scaling mountains in search of the true communist movement. On his way he had come across other young men and had been living with them in the mountains. He said that all the young men present there were determined to fight the Japanese and fight for communism.

Kim Phyong laughed most at his story. Saying that even Marx and Engels would burst into laughter at his tale, Kim Phyong told us, "I them. Now the Japanese imperialist police have manufactured a communist who will entomb them."

I told my men, "You see? Had we not come to the homeland, would we have come to know this reality? The young people here are wandering in the mountains, searching for us, determined to fight Japanese imperialism."

I gave the young people a copy of the September Appeal and told them to get in touch with the secret base on Mt. Okryon.

On my journey through the Pujon mountains I inspected some secret camps and studied the terrain. I found the area most suited for the armed struggle for the future all-people resistance. The range was linked to the Paektu mountains.

Arriving at the secret camp in Tongogol in a dense pine forest, we found about 30 political operatives, heads of revolutionary organizations, core members of labour and peasant unions from the east coast area

along the Pujon mountains.

Wi In Chan, Kim Kong Su and Kim Hyok Chol, who had built up secret organizations in the Hungnam area under the guidance of Kim Jae Su and Kim Jong Suk, appeared in the camp. They reeked of fish. When I asked them what the matter was, they said that they had each brought a pack of mackerel in order to disguise themselves as fish peddlers to hoodwink the enemy. Three of them were bosom friends who had grown up together in Taoquanli from childhood. In their boyhood they had longed for the Soviet Union so much that they had gone on an adventurous journey to her maritime provinces without the knowledge of their parents. The parents and relatives of the three men were very sound in their ideology.

On assignment from the ARF organization in Taoquanli, Wi In Chan infiltrated the Hungnam area around May 1937. He was soon reinforced with Kim Kong Su and other operatives. At that time Ho Sok Son was dispatched to Wonsan, Lee Hyo Jun to the Sinhung Coalmine and Kang Pyong Son to Changsong. Park U Hyon in Chongjin began to work with the ARF organization there.

The Hungnam chapter of the ARF had been formed in August of that year, I was told. The organization had already embraced quite a number of workers and was running in a lively manner. Wi In Chan, head of the chapter, had his mother keep a snack-bar for workers and used it as a liaison place; then he reported his work to Kim Jae Su from time to time. The story about how they formed the first organization in Hungnam was very instructive.

The operatives from Taoquanli set foot first in the construction site of a chemical factory in Pongung. There was a 14-year-old boy among the workers whose job it was to bring heated rivets and throw them up to a riveter working in a high place. One day a tragic accident resulted in the death of the boy. A heated rivet he had thrown up hit an iron rod that was falling down; the rivet fell straight into a carbide drum, exploding the drum. The boy was burned all over and by the time the other workers had rushed over to him, he was already dead.

A Japanese foreman made haste to take the dead body to a hospital. If he made it seem as if the boy had died after receiving medical treatment, he could appease the workers, who were bound to complain about the lack of safety apparatus. He could also avoid having to compensate the boy's family for his death. When our operatives exposed the foreman's calculations to the indignant workers, they raised a hue and cry. Frightened, the foremen did nothing with the corpse. The workers held a funeral for the boy and put pressure on the factory authorities to compensate his family.

After this incident our operatives in Hungnam won the confidence of the workers and formed the first organization among the workers of the hydrochloric acid workshop. They ran it as a legal organization under the name of "Aid Association". One day an unusual event took place. A middle-aged man appeared abruptly in front of the association and introduced himself, saying, "I'm from Profintern." Profintern was an abbreviation for the Red International of Labor Unions. Apparently he had been active in the Pacific Labor Union at one time.

Introducing himself pompously in this way, he went on to advise them: "I warn you, be prudent. The Japanese have gone wild these days with the start of the Sino-Japanese War. Don't offend them. I advise you not to make yourselves unnecessarily conspicuous just to get something like compensation. You might ruin me, as I'm on their blacklist." He then disappeared in haste.

From then on the operatives in Hungnam began to guard against those who had been related with the labor unions, saying they changed themselves from ultra-left to ultra-right. Kim Sok Yon, who had been dispatched on a mission to expand party organizations in the labor unions in Sinhung, Hungnam and Soho, grumbled that many of those who had been involved in labor unions in the past became frightened by the Japanese imperialist suppression and were following the road of compromise, just like the "White labor unions" in Japan and the trade unionists in Europe.

According to Jang Hae U, the Red labor unions in the Hungnam area had fought efficiently against Japan in their early days. In 1930 the labor union there had built a cellar near the factory to keep secret documents and had conducted their activities briskly. The union members printed appeals in the cellar and at night put up anti-Japanese leaflets in the streets. Where had the brave Red labour union gone?

I pointed out that it had been wrong for them to neglect the people involved in the Pacific Labor Union and that these people would not take the road of trade unionism if they were given some good revolutionary guidance. I also indicated the way they should follow in their future struggle.

"First of all, we must form more organizations subordinate to the ARE in towns, rural communities, fishermen's villages, and mines on the east coast. We must discover all the people who were formerly involved in labour and peasant unions and are hiding now, so as to prepare the resistance force of tens of thousands in Sinhung, Hungnain, Ilamhung and Wonsan in at least a few years. Secret guerrilla bases should be built centering on the Pujon mountains and in the immediate future a number of armed units, each with hundreds of men, should be formed. Shock brigades should be organized among the workers, and paramilitary corps among the peasants. These must all be invisible secret organizations.

"We must ensure that the September Appeal penetrate into the masses as silently as an underground current.

"In the early days of the anti-Japanese revolution our men outnumbered our weapons, but now we have more rifles than men. We must arm all the young people in the homeland with our surplus rifles so that they can rise up in an all-people resistance at a decisive moment." This is the gist of what I said at that time.

The next day, after the talk, I proceeded to the Sinhung Coalmine, where enemy surveillance was less severe. Lee Hyo Jun, representative of the mine at the meeting, guided me along with Han Cho Nam.

The unfortunate miners' families, numbering 300, were leading a suffocating life in decayed, ramshackle barracks. At the mine scores of people died every year from labor accidents and various diseases. I

gathered the organization members and core elements of the labor union in a secret place on the mountain behind the mine and explained the September Appeal to them.

During my visit to the mine an organization member called on me and told me that his cousin had been a cadre of a Red labor union and was now living under an assumed name. I found that his cousin had come to Sinhung when there was a crackdown of labor union members. As the union had misguided a strike, many had been arrested and others had become stooges of the Japanese imperialists, giving away the organization's secrets. As the police were arresting the labor union leaders, the man had narrowly escaped to the mine. He was not appearing in public because he was ashamed to see his colleagues of the labor union.

Before leaving the mine I met him and asked him to wage the revolution with us. He said that he would come out from his hiding place, put the damaged union back in order and meet the demands of the September Appeal at any cost. He had the list of the union members and knew most of the people who had been engaged in the labor unions in the Hungnam area.

Having established a link between him and the members of our organizations in Hungnam, I left for Phungsan with a light heart. I slept a night at the Phungsan Secret Base on Pulgaemi Hill and proceeded directly to the building site of the Hwangsuwon dam. The pitiable existence of the laborers there, who were building a dam despite the rain and wind in the rough land of Ryongbuk, was no different from that of the coalminers in Sinhung who suffered from backbreaking labor and diseases.

Kimppai, a former believer in the Chondoist faith and a political operative we had dispatched to the area, guided us in Phungsan, wearing a Western suit and wielding a walking stick.

Then we passed by the county town of Phungsan and met Park In Jin in a secluded hunter's house in a slash-and-burn farming village. I still remember the night in that village, where we shared our anxiety over the destiny of the country while eating roasted potatoes freshly harvested that year.

That night Park In Jin denounced Choe Rin as the worst quisling in the country. He hated most Choe Rin, Choe Nam Son and Lee Kwang Su, the so-called "three patriots". The reason he loathed them especially, he said, was that they despised blindly the Korean nation as uncivilized.

"I've never yet seen any man who regards his nation as inferior follow the right path," he said.

He was right. A man wages revolution with faith, and faith puts confidence and pride in his compatriots above confidence in a political ideal. If a man has no confidence or pride in his fellow countrymen, how can he have patriotism?

Walking in the dark night after saying good-bye to Park, I thought about it all the way. I quoted his words when I explained the idea of the September Appeal to the political operatives in Phungsan. I emphasized that the only way for us to follow was to prepare for an all-people resistance with confidence

in our people, in our working class.

The secret visit we paid to the homeland with our great programme for the liberation of the country, at a time when the mountains and fields were rich with autumnal tints, was not futile.

After we had made our rounds in the Sinhung and Phungsan areas, the forces for nationwide resistance increased rapidly in various parts of the country?Pujon, Hamhung, Hungnam, Wonsan, Tanchon, Phungsan and Sinhung.

One after another, news arrived of the formation of Huchiryong paramilitary corps following the creation of workers' shock brigade at the construction site of the Hwangsuwon dam.

Strikes were continually being staged in factories and contract laborers deserted their work places en masse.

Workers' shock brigades were formed in many factories and coal mines in the Hamhung-Sinhung area. They organized slow-downs and sabotage through faulty construction and a succession of explosive accidents.

It was around that time that a propaganda poster on the September Appeal was found plastered on the railing of the Manse Bridge and at the Kuchon Pavilion on Mt. Tonghung in Hamhung. A rumor also spread that Kim Il Sung had had his hair cut at a barber's in downtown Hamhung, while another rumor had it that Kim Il Sung had even been admitted to a Japanese army hospital.

The heads of organizations in Hamhung and Hungnam took a new turn in their work with labor unions after receiving the September Appeal. They discovered nearly 100 people who had been involved in labor unions and were in hiding, and embraced them all in the ARF. The labour union in Hungnam became a reservoir for workers' shock brigades.

Had it not been for the "Hyesan incident", the members of the organizations in the Hungnam area would have carried out even greater amounts of work. Owing to the aftermath of this incident, Wi In Chan, Kim Kong Su and Kim Ung Jong were arrested and confined in Hamhung Prison.

The activities of our organizations in Wonsan, Munchon and Chonnaeri were also brisk. The members of the organization in the Chonnaeri Cement Factory organized a strike involving 1,000 workers in the autumn of the year when the September Appeal was published, throwing the enemy into confusion.

Jong Il Ryong, who was once Vice-Premier, had worked at the Munchon Smelter. He was proud of the fact that there were many organization members in his smelter before liberation. He said that he fought against the Japanese foremen on many occasions under their influence, but at that time he was not aware that it was the members of secret organizations who were pulling the strings. The very day when I made a speech in Pyongyang at a triumphal return ceremony after liberation, the smelter started turning out its

first molten ore. This was also a patriotic deed, initiated by the members of the ARF who had been engaged in underground activities.

Our political operatives and organization members continued their struggle even in prison, giving publicity to the September Appeal.

Our September Appeal exerted a truly great influence and played a decisive role in linking the revolutionary movement in the homeland to us on Mt. Paektu.

Minister of Construction Choe Jae Ha, who had been a worker at the Suphung Hydropower Station, said, while he was still alive, that from the end of the 1930s on nearly all the workers in big factories and construction sites in northern Korea apparently acted under the influence of the organizations connected with Mt. Paektu, and that he had participated in strikes and slow-downs on several occasions.

It was true. The ARF took root in all industrial regions of the country at the time and the working class waged a dynamic struggle under its influence. This was an answer to the Japanese imperialists who had provoked the Sino-Japanese War and were hell-bent on suppression and exploitation of the Korean people.

No matter how zealously those men who had abandoned their original aim of anti-Japanese national salvation and surrendered to Japanese imperialism conducted anti-communist, pro-Japanese propaganda, our working class fought and remained loyal to their principle of patriotism.

One day five or six years after the issuance of the September Appeal, newspapers carried Jo Man Sik's article advising the Korean students to volunteer for the Japanese army. There is no knowing whether it was written by Jo Man Sik himself or invented by the Japanese imperialists, but anyhow the article startled the public. It seems that the people at that time thought, "As even Jo Man Sik turned traitor, which of the leaders of the national movement will be converting next?"

Nevertheless, the working class did not waver; they sped up the preparations for an all-people resistance in response to our policy. In a secret munitions factory in Hungnam, where special weapons were being developed, a tremendous explosion took place. According to the enemy's investigation, it was a deliberate explosion, not an accidental one. The members of our revolutionary organizations infiltrated into such strictly guarded factories and organized silent activities, dealing blow after blow to the enemy. Our working class actively carried out the September Appeal.

The September Appeal served as a powerful weapon for communists engaged in the anti-Japanese armed struggle. When the situation changed at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, we went deep among the ranks of the working people and used this weapon to awaken them to revolutionary consciousness and to rally them around the great cause of national liberation.

## 18.6. My Experience of the "Hyesan Incident"

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The year 1937 was a landmark year in the anti-Japanese revolution. With the entry of our main-force unit into the area of Mt. Paektu, both the struggle for national liberation and the communist movement of Korea were experiencing an upsurge of unprecedented breadth and depth.

But just as everything was progressing smoothly according to our plans, the Korean revolution was suddenly faced with one of its most serious challenges to date. In the days when we were operating in the region of Fusong and Mengjiang Counties, after leaving the area of Mt. Paektu, the enemy fabricated the so-called "Hyesan incident", following it with a whirlwind of large-scale repression of our revolutionary forces. They destroyed at random the secret organizations we had built up in the year following our advance into the area of Mt. Paektu, arresting en masse and executing revolutionaries faithful to our leadership and line.

In several roundups, the enemy arrested thousands of patriotic people. Many were tortured to death in prison.

This incident dealt a serious blow to the Korean revolution. The building of party and ARE organizations, which had been progressing at full speed, thanks to the positive activities of the Homeland Party Working Committee, suffered enormous losses.

I heard the news of the "Hyesan incident" in detail for the first time in the secret camp in Dajialazi, Mengjiang County, through Kim Phyong and Kim Jae Su. I don't know how to describe the burning fury I felt at that moment, fury combined with a feeling of great loss similar to the emotion I experienced after the "Minsaengdan" fuss in which a great number of our people were killed.

In the wake of this incident I thought deeply about the faith and will of a revolutionary. The incident can be called a great trial in which every man's loyalty to the revolution, the intensity of his faith and the strength of his will were tested. In other words, it was a severe test that separated real revolutionaries from sham revolutionaries. Those with strong faith and will stuck to their revolutionary principles and emerged victorious in the showdown with the enemy; those with weak faith and will abandoned their revolutionary dignity and chose the road of betrayal and submission.

The betrayers who yielded to torture and divulged our secrets to the enemy in the first days of the incident included the underground operatives who had been working at the construction sites of the railway between Kilju and Hyesan and between Paegam and Musan. We had intended to build revolutionary organizations through them among the working class at the construction sites, but after they had been hauled off to the police station and flogged they quickly surrendered to the enemy.

They lacked the iron-willed determination and unbending fighting spirit to keep the secrets of the



organization and defend the interests of the revolution, even if it meant a threat to their own lives. Had those few people not yielded up the secrets, the revolutionary organizations in the Changbai area might well have remained untouched. We had suffered a terrible setback in the enemy's first roundup in that Kwon Yong Byok, Lee Je Sun, Park In Jin, So Ung Jin, Park Rok Kum and other core leaders and members of revolutionary organizations were arrested.

Faith and will are the basic qualities of a revolutionary. A man without these qualities cannot be called a revolutionary.

When we speak of the qualities of a "true man", we are primarily talking about his thought and faith, for the more tenaciously he sticks to his thought and faith, the clearer will be the aim of his life and the more sincere his efforts to attain it.

This is why we devote so much energy and effort to imbuing the people with faith in communism when undertaking to train them into revolutionaries. This is because the building of socialism and communism, conducted under the banner of national liberation, class emancipation and man's liberation, is the most arduous and protracted of all revolutionary transformation movements undertaken by mankind. Without steel-like faith and will, one cannot attain final victory for this movement to realize and defend man's independence in the face of all restraints and challenges of both nature and society.

Will is the strong companion and defender of faith.

However, faith and will are not immutable. They can become either firmer or weaker and degenerate, depending on the circumstances. When a revolutionary's faith and will degenerate, the revolution has to pay dearly for it. This is why we consider education in faith to be the most essential process in training men of the communist type.

Faith and will are cultivated only through the life in the revolutionary organization and practical activities; they can be made firm and secure only through unremitting education and self-cultivation. Faith and will that are not tempered by these processes are castles built on sand. An example of this can be seen in the people who did not defend their revolutionary faith in the interrogation room at the Hyesan police station.

They had not trained their bodies and minds sufficiently in the life in the revolutionary organization and in practice. They all had joined the guerrillas in the heyday of the anti-Japanese revolution and fought only victorious battles. Hence their ideology had not been tempered in the tempest. When a revolution is on the rise, chance elements who are not steadfast ideologically slip into the revolutionary ranks, simply following the current.

Soon after receiving the report on the "Hyesan incident", we held an emergency meeting of the Party Committee of the KPRA and discussed the measures for preserving the revolutionary organizations in the immediate crisis and for building the party and the ARF organizations in a more resolute manner.

After their first roundup of the core leaders in the Changbai area, the enemy went on to extend the scope of their investigation, spreading their evil grasp over the whole region of West Jiandao and the Kapsan area across the Yalu. Although they were wildly elated, boasting of their exploits and claiming to have cut off the life-line of the Korean revolution, they had not managed to destroy all the underground organizations we had built up with so much effort.

Many people in the areas of Changbai and Kapsan had escaped the enemy's dragnet either by running to other areas or taking refuge in the depth of the mountains. Owing to the arrest of Kwon Yong Byok, Lee Je Sun, So Ung Jin and Park In Jin, the leadership of the Changbai County Party Committee and the ARF organizations in Changbai County was on the verge of disintegration, but the leadership of the Korean National Liberation Union centering on Park Tal, Kim Chol Ok and Lee Ryong Sul remained active.

As our first measure, we dispatched Jang Jung Ryol and Ma Tong Hui to the homeland to find the leaders of the KNLU who had taken refuge, find out from them the extent of the damage done to the organizations, and take measures to reconstruct the destroyed organizations. Our general goal was to prevent the loss incurred by the enemy's suppression as much as possible and turn the misfortune into an advantage.

While traveling through the mountain villages in Kapsan County in search of the members of the KNLU, Ma Tong Hui and Jang Jung Ryol were themselves arrested in Namhung-dong. This happened as the result of betrayal by Kim Thae Son, clerk of the highland agriculture guidance section there.

Kim Thae Son and Ma Tong Hui came from the same village and had been friends for a long time. Even after moving to Kapsan, they spent their youth in an extraordinary friendship. When Kim Thae Son had to discontinue his studies in Changbai for lack of money, Ma Tong Hui supported him with an advance of 5 won from the safe of the village school so that Kim could continue to study. Later he continued this support by earning money through weeding fields for others, selling firewood and writing letters for the illiterate.

When Kim Thae Son accepted the job of clerk to the highland agriculture guidance section after finishing his course, Kim Thae Son called on Jang Kil Bu, Ma Tong Hui's mother, and said, "It is thanks to Tong Hui's sincere help that I have become literate and am able to earn my daily bread. I won't forget his friendship as long as I live."

Having come to Kapsan on a mission to make contact with the leadership of the KNLU, Ma Tong Hui and his comrade-in-arms took shelter in Kim Thae Son's house in Nambung-dong because Ma trusted the friendship. But Kim Thae Son had in the meantime changed into a faithful servant of the enemy. He provided both of them with warm food and beds; then he reported to the enemy that two of Kim Il Sung's men were staying in his house. He was this kind of a snake.

From the time they were arrested, Ma Tong Hui and Jang Jung Ryol followed different roads in life.

The story of how Ma Tong Hui endured torture and how he kept his secrets has been recounted both by reminiscences of anti-Japanese war veterans and in works of art and literature. When asked what kind of man Ma was, even primary school pupils know that he was a man who bit out his tongue to keep the secrets of the organization. Not everyone has the guts to bite out his own tongue. Determination such as this belongs only to the true man who chooses to die for his faith rather than continue living a traitor's life. Once a man has determined to die, he can do anything.

Ma Tong Hui's courage and self-sacrificing spirit derived from his unshakeable faith. The courage was an expression of his iron will which no torture or intimidation could bend. He knew that if he kept his secrets, our organizations would continue to live. He knew the revolution would emerge victorious, even if he himself died.

It was revolutionary practice that had trained him into a man of strong faith. While living in Paegam, he organized an Anti-Japanese Association and inculcated patriotism in the children of the slash-and-burn farmers as a teacher. After joining the People's Revolutionary Army, he participated in the arduous expedition to Fusong with the veterans, and as a lecturer to the Guard Company tried to enlighten the guerrillas by improving their political and cultural erudition.

He accepted it as a truth that a man of a ruined nation was no better than a dog in a house of mourning, that the means for survival for the nation was struggle, that the only way out was the revolution, and that without the revolution the nation would live in slavery for generations, leading an existence that was worse than that of draught animals. He made the truth his unshakeable faith.

From his childhood on he had the traits with which to acquire this faith. He never compromised with what he saw as unjust, shameless or unconscionable. Once he deemed a man to be tainted, he broke off with him without hesitation, even if the man happened to be his teacher. Ma's tutor in his days at primary school was a philistine named JO, a man without an iota of conscience as an educator. He kept the pupils' school records in a thoroughly dishonest way, basing the records on his relationship with a pupil rather than according to the pupil's real abilities.

He gave good marks to all those whose families had offered him tidy sums by way of a bribe and who hailed from rich and influential families, irrespective of their abilities. He did not hesitate to resort to lowering the marks of excellent pupils in order to favor those to whom he was partial. Even when Ma was studying in the graduating class, Jo continued to practice the habit. In order to give first place to the son of an influential man who had bribed him heavily, he intentionally scored Ma Tong Hui as second instead of first in his history examination.

Furious with the teacher's conduct, Ma, who was an excellent pupil in all subjects, did not hesitate to call on him and demand to see his examination paper. Instead of showing him the paper, Jo slapped him across the face, saying that he was an ill-mannered ruffian. Jo's behavior enraged Ma. Declaring that he would leave school in mid-course, he tore his academic record book to pieces in front of Jo and went back home.

His father, Ma Ho Ryong, was reluctant to see his only son leave school and plunge into the struggle to earn a living at such a tender age. Showing his son the school cap he had bought him at the market that day, he said, "I was so sorry to see you going to school bareheaded that I bought this cap for you. Yet now you say you will leave school to work on the land. What's this nonsense? It is an everyday occurrence that a teacher favors a child from a well-to-do family and builds up the minds of high-ranking, influential men. What is the point of your challenging your teacher on that? Go back immediately and apologize to him."

But Ma refused to compromise, even preventing his father from going to see the teacher himself.

Later on the teacher and he followed opposite roads in life. While Ma Tong Hui devoted himself to the patriotic front as a man of resistance, born of the times, Jo took the traitorous road of betrayal after abandoning teaching. As a policeman, and later a detective, he was obsessed with ferreting out patriots. Ma Tong Hui was one man he watched with a sharp eye. He followed Ma's every footstep, trying to lead him to the scaffold even if it meant fabricating some incident out of thin air.

Jo started to shadow Ma in real earnest when the latter came under the influence of the People's Revolutionary Army while frequenting the Changbai area. One day Ma went to Changbai and met Kim Ju Hyon, representative of the guerrilla army; on his way back, having got permission to join the guerrillas, he met the detective Jo, who had been waiting at the bridge across the Yalu. Jo was goggling at him with bulging eyes. Although Ma perceived in an instant the tense atmosphere at the bridge, he went calmly back home and made preparations for leaving for Mt. Paektu.

That day his mother cooked farewell meal for her son, which he was unable to take: Jo suddenly appeared in the yard of his house with a gaggle of policemen to arrest him. He escaped through the back door and crossed the Yalu to safety.

The scurrilous act of a teacher willing to arrest his pupil was a tragedy created by the anti-human trend imposed by the Japanese imperialists. Whenever she met me after liberation, Mrs. Jang Kit Bu would tell me this story of her son as if it were a legend. After the battle on Mt. Kouyushui, Ma met Jo near the battlefield. Jo had narrowly escaped in one of the enemy's botched "punitive" operations against our unit and was running away.

As soon as he saw Ma, he started firing wildly at him. Ma Tong Hui shot him to death on the spot. It was a fitting end to a brazen, pro-Japanese reactionary who took no thought of his native land, his nation or the pupils under his care.

This anecdote clearly illustrates the qualities of Ma Tong Hui as a man and on what he based his faith.

He was with me for about one and half years. He was a faithful guerrilla loved by all, but he did not leave many anecdotes or affairs special enough to be engraved in the memory of the people during his life in the guerrilla army.

And yet, I cannot forget one episode related to him. This happened when we were obtaining grain for a military and political study session in the secret camp in Donggang after the expedition to Fusong. At that time the 3rd Company, 7th Regiment Ma Tong Hui belonged to was assigned to obtain grain each day. One night his company commander, leaving to search for grain, assigned to frost-bitten Ma Tong Hui and other recruits the task of remaining in camp and grinding maize with a millstone for breakfast the next day. As ordered by the company commander, he began to grind the maize with millstone. He felt unbearable fatigue after a day-long arduous march in the snow, followed by the languor of eating a meal.

But he shook off his sleepiness by rubbing his face with snow. The recruits in the meantime said that they would forgo the meal and lay themselves down, as they were tired. While Ma was milling the maize alone, they remained flat on their backs without doing a thing. As he finished the work, they worried about how to repay him for his painstaking work. They were typical young recruits, too half-witted to know any better, but Ma was so fed up, he criticized them severely.

When I arrived at the camp, Ma complained about it before anything else. How we could wage the revolution, he lamented, with men such as these, who were devoid of comradeship and knew nothing? I told him that although they lacked training in the organization at the moment, they would become excellent soldiers once they had been given the proper education.

And in fact the recruits did later become truly courageous soldiers who worked with great devotion and fought bravely.

Ma grew up to be an excellent combatant in a very short period of time after joining the guerrillas. He performed the mission of scouting around the streets of Pochonbo in a highly responsible way. As a commendation for the devotion and initiative he had displayed in this task, I gave him the honor of accepting, on behalf of the soldiers of the KPRA, a congratulatory banner from the people's delegation at the joint celebration of army and people after the victory in the Battle of Pochonbo.

As his life in later days proved, he was an outstanding revolutionary fighter fully qualified to represent the soldiers of the KPRA, a man to be recommended as a model communist.

He knew the exact whereabouts of Headquarters, but he did not yield up the secret. Because of this, we were safe.

The day after he died, his father, Ma Ho Ryong, went to Hyesan with a coffin. While passing the police station carrying his son's corpse on a cart, he came across the inspector, Choe. On seeing him, Choe asked, "Hey, how do you feel, carrying your dead son?"

Ma Ho Ryong, who had since long regarded Choe, butcher of the nation, with hatred, resolutely wiped away his tears and answered: "My son Tong Hui died while fighting for the liberation of Korea. So did my daughter and daughter-in-law. They never died for stealing goods from the Japanese. I feel proud to be their father."

For these words he was arrested later. To his last moments in Hamhung Prison he fought with dignity against the hangmen without losing his principles as a patriot and father of a revolutionary fighter.

In contrast to Ma Tong Hui, Jang Jung Ryol exposed the secret camps and secret organizations familiar to him soon after he was lashed a few times. While Ma Tong Hui stuck to the revolution, even to the point of biting out his tongue, Jang Jung Ryol forsook the pledge he had made for the revolution as easily as casting off his worn-out shoes and chose the damnable road of betrayal. Why?

Jang was in no way inferior to Ma in his academic career, the level of his theoretical attainments and his working ability. Considering his duration of service in the guerrilla army, he could be called Ma's senior. Clever and sociable, Jang was rumored among the rank and file soon after joining the army as a "man fit for a cadre". Our Headquarters also saw him in the same light. He jumped at one bound to the post of head of the youth department of a division without going through the gradual course mandatory for most of the recruits. This meant that he was trusted as much as Kim Phyong and Kwon Yong Byok were.

When the Changbai County Party Committee was organized, we elected him to be a member, a fact that eloquently proves how we trust-ed him. In short, we gave him all we could.

He went hungry, had his hands and feet frost-bitten and burned the midnight candle with us. He did not feel particularly pessimistic, nor did he lose confidence when faced with the same difficulties we all faced; he endured all hardships with us without complaint. And yet as soon as he was put behind bars, how easily he yielded. Although he had endured all possible hardships, he could not withstand the torture-chamber and quickly renounced the honor and principle of a revolutionary, as if they were bits of waste paper.

Hearing the report about the course of Jang's betrayal, I got a keen understanding of how a man's outlook on life could change when he was behind bars. Whereas Jang's outlook on the world outside prison had been communistic, his outlook on the world in the prison was that of Judas. He simply became a businessman who had traded off the interests of the revolution for his own life.

He told the enemy many secrets: he disclosed all the organizations he had had a hand in, listed all the leading members of the revolutionary organizations who were in contact with him in Shanggangu and Zhonggangu, Changbai County, and the whereabouts of Headquarters and secret camps to the extent that he knew them. Then he led the police to a secret rendezvous in Shijiudaogou, helping them arrest Ji Thae Hwan and Jo Kae Gu.

Jo Kae Gu also became a turncoat, the same as Jang Jung Ryol. He guided the police to the secret camp in Ganbahezi, where our sewing-unit was stationed. They killed all the members of the unit, the women guerrillas, among whom was Kim Yong Gum, Ma Tong Hui's wife. How could Jang Jung Ryol degenerate into such a foul, detestable person? Had the faith he had cherished in communism been merely a facade?

Needless to say, he had talked much about faith, but his faith, being cheap, had not been based on a solid foundation. In front of the dreadful sight of the torture-chamber and the malicious faces of the policemen, he was overwhelmed by the commanding presence of the Japanese Empire and succumbed to the skeptical outlook that defeating the Empire through the anti-Japanese revolution was an impossible, futile daydream.

What, then, is a faith that is based on solid foundations? It is absolute confidence in the ideal a man cherishes, the ideal for which he is determined to die from cold or hunger or from a beating. In other words, it is a conviction in the justness of his cause and in the might of his class and fellow people; it is also a determination to carry out the revolution by overcoming all difficulties through his own efforts. A man must be prepared to die from a beating to defend the interests of the revolution. But Jang Jung Ryol was not prepared to die such a death; he thought that no matter what happened to the revolution, everything was alright as long as he remained alive.

Although he preserved his physical existence at the cost of the revolution, he lost his political integrity, a far greater thing than life. This is why Ma Tong Hui remains in people's memory, while Jang Jung Ryol is forgotten.

Whenever I recall Ma Tong Hui and Jang Jung Ryol, I also think of Kim Hyok and Jang So Bong. They started the revolution at the same time, at the same place and on the same track, but the terminus at which they each arrived was totally different. Again, the difference in their final destinations can be traced to the difference in their faith and will.

While Kim Hyok was sincere in the life in his organization and in revolutionary practice, Jang So Bong was proficient in theory and clearheaded, but self-opinionated and weak in practice. Having tasted both the sweet and the bitter in life, Kim Hyok did not flinch from hardship. Jang So Bong, on the other hand, did not plunge himself into the backbreaking labor of the revolution.

One was a man of passion ready to go through thick and thin, while the other was a cool-headed, calculating man who, being caught in a shower, would roll up the trouser legs and pick his way along a muddy path in a manner designed not to get mud on his shoes.

When we were frequenting Kalun and Guyushu, my friends admitted that Kim Hyok was a man of talent; but they did not think that he would play a great role in the revolution. They had the prejudiced view that the scholar who composed poems and songs could not be efficient in a revolution.

It was no wonder that those who did not really know him saw him in that light. At that time a man walking the streets with a guitar on his shoulder was considered to be a street musician.

In contrast, they all pinned a far greater hope on Jang So Bong. Although he was to betray us later, he was a famous man. He wrote many articles and published them under a pseudonym. He was the most enthusiastic contributor to the magazine Bolshevik, a proficient theoretician and an agitator no less

experienced than Cha Kwang Su. The level of his theoretical attainment was so high that even Kim Chan, chief of the Tuesday group, always found himself cornered in an argument with him. During the Kalun meeting I stayed in his house.

My colleagues and I never dreamed that he would write a letter of conversion in prison a few years later, and as a faithful dog of Japanese imperialism attempt to persuade us to surrender to the enemy.

The maturity of one's political integrity - the other life a man has in addition to the physical one - is decided by whether he has a faith, and by how strong that faith is. The stronger his faith and will, the longer he maintains his political integrity. The political integrity of those who forsake their faith early ends before its time.

Lim Su San, who had been chief of staff of our main-force unit before defecting to the enemy, resorted to acts of betrayal more despicable than those of Lee Jong Rak or Jang So Bong. He became commander of the enemy's "punitive" force and went on a rampage to do as much harm as he could to his former comrades-in-arms, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with him in the same trench in bygone days. Having become useless to the enemy as their agent, he was abandoned by them. From that time on, he pushed a cart around, peddling wine. From chief of staff of a division to a wine-peddler, this was the sad consequence of his forsaking of his faith.

Immediately after liberation he was on his way from Antu to Hyesan via Samjiyon, carrying wine drums on a cart. On his way he met a small unit led by Ryu Kyong Su. That day Ryu Kyong Su and his men were headed out on my orders to wipe out the remnants of the defeated Japanese army, who were making an appearance in the neighborhood of Mt. Paektu.

Feeling awkward about meeting men who had been under his command in past days, he said, "I see you've come down from the mountains. Is General Kim Il Sung still up there? Why did you come down alone without him?"

At that time Ryu Kyong Su, Lee Tu Ik and other anti-Japanese war veterans, enlisted to wipe out Japanese army remnants, were all in Japanese military uniform. Lim Su San thought from their appearance that they all had followed his wake and submitted to the Japanese. He was so ignorant of developments that he did not even know that Japan had been defeated. A man who does not preserve his faith and stick to his principles comes to such a pass.

Needless to say, the overwhelming majority of the people who traversed the arduous road of the anti-Japanese revolution with me, arms in hand, were indomitable fighters with strong faith and will. They did not abandon their revolutionary principles, nor did they disgrace their faith in the liberation of their country, even in the face of the worst adversity.

Dying in the barren fields of an alien land, my comrades-in-arms and fighters had requested: "Love the future!" and shouted, "Communism is youth!" Only men with unshakeable faith can embellish the last



moment of their life in this way. But for this faith, our anti-Japanese guerrillas could not have withstood the biting cold and hunger of Manchuria.

When talking about the faith and will of a revolutionary, I always mention Ryu Kyong Su as a prime example for people to follow. He took the ideas of his leader as his own faith and lived his life in defence of this faith.

I first met him in September 1933 just after the battle of Dongning county town. When my men were resting on our return to Xiaowangqing after the battle, Choe Hyon and his men from the Yanji guerrilla unit came to visit me. Among them was a young guerrilla that followed Choe Hyon like a shadow: this was Ryu Kyong Su.

Ryu felt immense regret that the Yanji guerrilla unit had missed the battle of Dongning county town through a mistake of the messenger. He took out his frustration at missing the battle and being a "latecomer" on Choe Hyon.

"How can we go back without doing a thing except live off others, back."

In an instant I could see that this fellow was a man of guts. He was 18 years old at the time. He had joined the anti-Japanese armed forces at the age of 16.

"Sam Son is a gallant fighter in spite of his youth, Commander Kim. He is also very adamant," said Choe Hyon.

Sam Son was the original name of Ryu Kyong Su. This was Choe Hyon's general estimation of Ryu Kyong Su, one that told me he was very fond of Ryu Kyong Su.

Mirrored in the short life of the 18-year-old young guerrilla was the sad history of our ruined nation. Ryu had been a servant in another's house since his younger age and had participated in the spring uprising in his teens. He was arrested by the warlord authorities and thrown into Longjing Prison, where he was tortured. There were a great many revolutionaries in Jiandao, but few had suffered the water or chili-powder tortures in Longjing Prison at the younger age. Unlike Jang Jung Ryol and Lee Jong Rak, he endured these trials manfully. I inadvertently took his hands and found them so callused that his palms felt like iron.

I felt even greater sympathy for him when I heard that he had educated himself through "gleaning". Learning through "gleaning" is the method of acquiring knowledge in an unofficial way by learning by means of one's own eyes and ears beside someone else who is studying. On his way back from the market after selling firewood, he would squat on his haunches under the window of a private school and copy what the teacher had written on the blackboard. He did this by writing on the bare earth with a stick. In this way he thoroughly assimilated the Korean alphabet and the multiplication table.

Soon the whole school had heard about his learning through "gleaning" and sympathized with him. Moved by his zeal for learning, Kwak Chan Yong (alias Kwak Ji San) enrolled him in the school and bore the boy's fees himself. The firewood collector who studied through "gleaning" was an unusual boy, and the teacher who enrolled this strange boy in the school and paid his school fees was also an extraordinary educator.

Nevertheless, Ryu Kyong Su was not able to finish the school owing to family problems. He left the school in mid-course and went to work for a landlord as a farmhand. When Ryu left school, Kwak Chan Yong was greatly disappointed. He left his job as a teacher and went to work on the revolutionary enlightenment of workers and peasants instead. Later he joined the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, where he became an officer.

While serving the landlord as his farmhand, Ryu Kyong Su continued to get guidance from Kwak. Kwak's love and concern for his old pupils was really exceptional. He was caught in the anti-"Minsaengdan" fuss and put on a trial on a false charge. The left-wing chauvinists demoted him from the post of company commander for no reason. Every move he made had been watched by guards.

The day Kwak was led to the people's court, Ryu Kyong Su spoke for him at the risk of his own life. His speaking for his old tutor at the trial was a courageous deed that deserves praise from all. In those days he himself was on the list of suspected members of "Minsaengdan". For a suspected member of "Minsaengdan" to speak in defense of "the accused", or express sympathy with him, was as suicidal as rushing directly at the muzzle of an enemy rifle. Nevertheless, Ryu Kyong Su proved the innocence of his old tutor at the risk of his life. For this "crime", he himself was dragged into the prison for "Minsaengdan" members.

His daring deed was the most noble kind of loyalty a disciple could show for his mentor. He strove to perform his duty as a disciple to repay the affection his tutor had shown for him.

It was because his faith was strong that he could be so loyal to his mentor. By nature, a man with strong faith is ethical and faithful. It was his creed that a revolutionary should defend justice, hate injustice and speak only the truth, and that he should be determined to sacrifice his life to remain faithful to his comrades and fellow countrymen.

He said firmly that most of the people labeled as "Minsaengdan" members by the left-wing chauvinists and factionalists were innocent, and that it was a crime to stigmatize people who were loyal to the revolution as being "Minsaengdan" and to execute them. He was convinced that although the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle was being conducted in a ultra leftist manner now, creating a chaos in the revolutionary ranks, things would be put to rights some day. With this conviction, he staunchly defended the steadfast revolutionaries and patriotic people who were falsely charged with being involved in the "Minsaengdan".

The story of Ryu's determined rescue of his former teacher at the trial stirred the revolutionaries and

people in eastern Manchuria. When I heard the story in Dahuangwai, my thoughts went back with deep emotion to my meeting with him in Xiaowangqing.

Seeing off the comrades-in-arms from the Yanji guerrilla unit in Macun, I had said to Choe Hyon, jokingly, "Sam Son is such a good, all-round fighter, I feel like taking him with me. Won't you hand him over to me in memory of our meeting?"

Choe Hyon answered, half joking, half serious: "Not this time. He fights very bravely, but mentally he is not yet completely ripe. I'll train him for three more years, then bring him to you. How's that?"

It was after the meeting at Xiaohaebaling that Ryu Kyong Su fought as company commander in the same unit as me. For nearly 10 years after our first meeting at Xiaowangqing, he fought in Choe Hyon's unit as a machine-gunner, which meant that I did not get many chances to meet him or give him the care I would have wished. The only thing I did for him was to give him the title of "young revolutionary".

Ryu Kyong Su, on his part, accepted the title as a commendation. He regarded me as the support of his life and made up his mind to devote his whole life to the revolution. I still remember the time when we were launching an offensive into the Qianbaoshan area after our successful thrust into the Musan area.

Suspecting the course of our march, the enemy concentrated their "punitive" forces in Qianbaoshan and in its surroundings, unfolding a large-scale clean-up operation against the People's Revolutionary Army. In order to weaken the enemy forces who were rushing upon us, Choe Hyon's unit attacked the town of Qianbaoshan. The battle was so fierce that the enemy even mobilized women, forcing them to throw grenades. Most of the enemy in the town were annihilated.

However, Choe Hyon was not satisfied with this. Determined to lure the enemy into a trap in order to destroy even more of the "punitive" forces, he organized a combat corps of 50 men from his unit, concealing the other men in ambush in a forest eight kilometers away from the town of Qianbaoshan. The combat corps included Ryu Kyong Su.

The corps raided one camping site of the "punitive" forces after another to draw them out. One night they made two raids on one camp; another night they captured the map of their "punitive" operations before returning; this infuriated the enemy into chasing the People's Revolutionary Army. For three days in a row Ryu Kyong Su fought in all the most dangerous and important battles, not even stopping to take a drink of water. After liberation Choe Hyon frequently recalled Ryu Kyong Su's exploits in that campaign.

Choe Hyon's unit mowed down the enemy in battles that raged across seven mountains. In one marsh the enemy suffered hundreds of casualties.

Thanks to Choe's unit, we were able to move into the Qianbaoshan area safely with very little resistance from the enemy. We met Choe Chun Guk's unit there, instead of Choe Hyon's unit, with which we had originally planned to meet. While we were greeting the men and officers of Choe Chun Guk's unit, Choe

Hyon and his men were making preparations for another battle of allurement at a place miles away from Qianbaoshan.

Choe Hyon told me later that all the guerrillas of the 4th Division had been very disappointed in failing to see me at that time.

Ryu Kyong Su's obligation to me was truly gratifying. Just how ennobling and sincere that obligation was I felt more keenly in the days when we engaged in small-unit combat.

His traits as a revolutionary showed up most clearly in that he carried out his Commander's orders and instructions absolutely to the letter. He did not make any flowery pledges and promises, but once he did make a pledge or a promise, he carried it out without fail. This was a highly laudable trait in him.

"We have no one to trust other than Comrade Commander. It is only when we uphold and support him with all our hearts that we can liberate our native land and carve out our destiny as a nation. We will win only by doing as our Comrade Commander intends." This was the faith Ryu Kyong Su cherished, and it was with this faith that he carried out my orders in every adversity.

In the early spring of 1941 I left the training base in the far eastern region of the Soviet Union and went to the area of Mt. Paektu with Ryu Kyong Su's company to provide guidance to the small units operating in various parts of Manchuria and the homeland. In these days Ryu Kyong Su and his men were a great help to me.

After locating Headquarters in Hancongou, I often dispatched small groups to various places. Ryu Kyong Su transmitted messages for me on many occasions. Whenever he left Headquarters, he would give the grain allotted to his group to the guardsmen as an addition to my rations. And for the sake of my security he frequently attacked the enemy, enticing them into following him, thus drawing their attention elsewhere.

When Headquarters was located in Hancongou, I gave him the order to go to a liaison place in Laojinchang, Huadian County, to meet Wei Zheng-min. It was a difficult task that could be performed only by breaking through scores of enemy outposts and districts under their siege, so Headquarters assigned 10 men to him. But he left for Laojinchang with only two men, fearing for the safety of Headquarters. Without my knowledge he gave the sack of rice I had allotted for three of them to Jon Mun Sop and took only about five kilograms with him.

They returned from the mission to discover that Hancongou had been transformed into a sea of campfires belonging to enemy "punitive" troops. Several campfires were burning on the very spot where our Headquarters tent had been pitched. They had little time left to the hour I had ordered them to return. The two young men shed tears of worry over my safety. Indeed, no one would have thought our Headquarters to be safe, seeing all the campfires in Hancongou that night.

But Ryu Kyong Su did not hesitate in the least, saying calmly, “Only 30 minutes are left. If we fail to go to our appointed rendezvous spot surrounded by campfires in these 30 minutes, we will have disobeyed Comrade Commander's order. One way or another, he will be waiting for the three of us in that dangerous place.”

Leaving them on a mountain peak, he crawled down to the place where the Headquarters tent had been pitched to be met by a man I had left behind. My confidence that Ryu on his return from the mission would go without fail to the place where Headquarters had been perfectly agreed with his decision that whatever the circumstances, his Commander would wait for the men returning from their mission at the exact spot from whence they had been dispatched.

His exactitude in keeping to the day, time and place I had fixed was rooted in his unshakeable faith that his Commander would not abandon his men under any circumstance and in his sincere obligation that he should be prepared for any sacrifice and suffering to live up to the Commander's trust and affection.

With this same faith and obligation he made great contributions to organizing a railway guard corps and a tank unit after liberation, and to executing the plans of operation of Supreme Headquarters at each stage of the Korean War.

This is why, whenever I meet the leaders of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, I tell them to train their soldiers to become strong-willed fighters, loyal men who stick to their faith no matter what the situation or how great the adversity.

History shows us that when a revolution gains victory after victory and the situation is favorable no one vacillates or becomes a turncoat. However, when the situation at home and abroad becomes complicated and tremendous obstacles are placed in the way of the revolution, ideological confusion arises. Suddenly, vacillation will appear in the ranks, as will stragglers and those willing to surrender, doing great harm to the revolution. One such great international event was the Japanese imperialists' occupation of Manchuria and their aggression in China proper.

This was a shock that awakened political awareness and gave rise to a great ideological confusion, both among those engaged in the national liberation struggle and within the communist movement of our country.

While the more steadfast communists looked upon the days after the September 18 incident as the right historical period for launching a full-scale anti-Japanese armed struggle and leading the Korean revolution to a fresh upswing, a number of nationalist and communist fighters who lacked strong revolutionary convictions came to the conclusion that one could no longer fight the Japanese imperialists, who were so strong that they had even occupied Manchuria. They therefore gave up the fight.

The same thing happened when the Japanese imperialists invaded China proper.

At that time we judged that the large-scale invasion of China by the Japanese imperialists would inevitably bring about the dispersion and consumption of their forces and create in Northeast China a situation favorable to the development of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. At the same time we were fully aware of the fact that the Sino-Japanese War would create fresh political and military obstacles. We paid careful attention to the favorable aspects in the rapidly-changing difficult situation created by the war and made active efforts to turn the unfavorable phase into one that was favorable to us. This kind of indomitable fighting spirit and faith is crucial to a revolutionary in a time of crisis.

Nevertheless, there arose in this period of history, too, a hopeless confusion in the ideology of the chance elements and fellow travelers who had found their way into the ranks of the anti-Japanese movement. Judging the general trend of history at this point to be a downward one because of the invasion of China proper and the occupation of Wuhan Sanzhen, by the Japanese imperialists, they thought that no force on earth could check the trend. This process of ideological degeneration gave rise to defeatism, sinking a large number of stragglers of the revolution, philistines and renegades into a morass of pessimism.

To make matters worse, the Japanese imperialists launched successive large-scale "punitive" offensives to root out the anti-Japanese movement in Manchuria. At the same time they made preparations for the Pacific War after occupying the greater part of Chinese territory. As a consequence, most of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units, which had been so active in many parts of northern and southern Manchuria, were wiped out. Yang Jing-yu's unit in southern Manchuria suffered heavy losses in the whirlwind of the expedition to Jehol.

At that time, when many units of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army were faced with hardship owing to the failure in the expedition to Jehol, some Chinese surrendered or deserted their units.

In the summer of 1938 the 1st Army Corps under the command of Yang Jing-yu fell under siege by a large force of enemy troops the moment they started another expedition to Jehol. As a result they faced indescribable adversity. At this time the enemy combined their military offensive with a campaign to persuade the anti-Japanese guerrillas to defect. The so-called "magnanimous measure" of the Emperor of Manchukuo - the promise that those who surrendered would not be punished but would be treated merely as defectors - was made public, tempting the cowardly, the feeble-minded and those who had degenerated in the revolution.

While conducting the evil "punitive" operations against the anti-Japanese armed units, the enemy intensified their scheme of "severing the people from the bandits", thus the revolutionary army could not expect any assistance from the people. Having started on their hopeless expedition in the direction of Jehol, leaving their familiar guerrilla bases, the Anti-Japanese Allied Army units went through all kinds of tribulations because of the enemy's repeated "punitive" attacks without getting any support from the people in the unfamiliar land.

At this time Cheng Bin, commander of the 1st Division, 1st Army Corps, who had been called Yang Jing-yu's right-hand man and who was famous as a gallant anti-Japanese general in southern Manchuria, shot to death a political officer who was against surrendering in Benxi,

Liaoning Province. He then went on to commit an act of betrayal: leading his unit, he defected to the enemy. This put serious obstacles in the way of the 1st Army Corps; in fact, it was almost a fatal blow to the corps, as Cheng Bin knew the careers of all the commanding personnel in the corps, the number of the units in the corps and the whereabouts of secret camps. Cheng Bin's defection threw the corps' planned expedition to the west into utter confusion.

As an agent of Kishitani, chief of the police in Tonghua Province, Cheng Bin later took the lead in the operation to track down and kill Yang Jing-yu. To our sorrow, the valiant anti-Japanese general in southern Manchuria, Yang Jing-yu, was killed in a fierce battle with the “punitive” troops led by Cheng. When Kishitani was transferred to the post of vice-governor of Jehol Province, Cheng followed him and organized a police "punitive" force called "Jehol Ilsim Corps" with himself as commander.

As can be seen from the examples of Cheng Bin and Jon Kwang, the higher the defectors' ranks, the more wicked the aspects of their betrayal and the graver the consequences.

When we heard about Cheng Bin's defection, we did not find it easy to believe, for he had had no special reason to defect to the enemy camp. He had not been discontented with his post. What was the reason for his defection then? In my judgment, his betrayal was caused by his losing of faith in the victory of the revolution. He had been intimidated by the high spirit of the Japanese army, which was improving its battle results almost on a daily basis after the July 7 incident, and as a result he saw the prospects of the revolution as being very gloomy. It would be better, he decided, to live in luxury than to suffer for the sake of a hopeless revolution, even if it meant that he was labeled a traitor. This appears to have been his ideological motive for defecting.

Cheng Bin was an efficient fighter, but he had not sufficiently cultivated his ideology. By ideological cultivation, I mean education in faith and optimism. When a man does not cultivate his ideology properly, he easily yields in the face of difficulties. This is why I still insist on the theory of cultivating one's ideology first.

After the Japanese defeat in the war, Cheng Bin's master, Kishitani, committed suicide along with his family members. But, Cheng Bin himself killed many Japanese POWs to save his own wretched life, disguised his real identity and joined the 8th Route Army; he then won a commander's position.

Nevertheless, such luck could not last for long. Although he had disguised himself as a patriot, he could not hide his true identity for ever. One year after liberation, as he was walking up a street in Shenyang under an umbrella on a rainy day, a man stepped under his umbrella. The man was another traitor, also living under an assumed identity. He knew well what Cheng Bin had been. For one reason or another, both men reported to the authorities respectively that the other was a traitor. In due course it was found that Cheng Bin had been a defector. The people's court passed judgment upon the despicable man who had abandoned his faith, defected to the enemy's camp and inflicted tremendous damage on the revolution.

Cheng Bin's fate is a graphic example of the end that awaits those who forsake their faith and betray their comrades.

After Yang Jing-yu's unit was vanquished, the spearhead of the enemy's "punitive" attack was directed to us. Claiming that the annihilation of Kim Il Sung's unit would mean the end of the anti-Japanese movement in Manchuria and Korea, the enemy encircled us from all directions and launched a desperate series of attacks. The road ahead of us was beset with steep ups and downs. This being the situation, cowards and surrender began to appear even among the men who had been waging the revolution since the days of the Down-with-Imperialism Union. In these days Fang Zhen-sheng and Park Tuk Bom who had been commanders of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army, surrendered to the enemy.

At the time the neutrality pact was being signed between the Soviet Union and Japan, there again appeared deserters in our ranks. Quite a number of our soldiers had entertained the idea of relying on the Soviet Union (flunkeyism in present-day terminology). As some leaders paid little attention to educating their men in the spirit of national independence, emphasizing only the importance of the Soviet Union, the need to defend the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union-first idea, there appeared an ideological deviation in the ranks of the men, who believed that everything would be resolved if they believed in the Soviet Union and depended upon her. In other words, they thought the liberation of Korea was impossible without support and help from the Soviet Union.

Never before had I felt more keenly than at that time the truth that the consciousness of national independence is a decisive factor determining the faith of a revolutionary. There were no deserters or renegades among those who held strong views on liberation through self-reliance, the idea that the revolution should be carried out independently through the effort of the nation's own people. The stragglers and defeatists appeared among those individuals who slighted their own power and that of their people, and attempted to carve out the destiny of their country by relying on the help of a large country.

A man who does not believe in the strength of his own people falls prey without exception to defeatism when he finds himself in a difficult situation. He immediately loses faith in victory in the revolution and gives up the struggle halfway. Men of this category think that the revolution in their own country is as good as finished when the revolution of a big country experiences setbacks. It is a good thing that the communists, who aim for the unity of the international anti-imperialist forces, express sympathy with failures experienced by communists of other countries, or regard their sorrow as their own, since revolution has an international character.

Failure in a big country might also affect the revolution in their own country to some extent. But if those in a small country abandon their struggle, thinking that their revolution will fail because the revolution in a large' country has suffered a setback, they are making a big mistake.

Revolution assumes a national character before it takes on an international character. Since revolution is waged with a national state as a unit, the communists in each country must struggle with unshakeable determination and faith, relying on the strength of their own people and completing the revolution



through their own efforts. Only through self-dependence can they perform difficult tasks with success. This is my firm belief.

My experience shows that when the situations at home and abroad become complicated and the revolution is faced with trials, those who take the road of the traitor are without exception the people who joined the fighters' ranks with the thought that the revolution was an easy job. They are people of uncertain faith and weak will, defeatists fettered by factionalism who slight or ostracize other people.

After Lim Su San and a number of others betrayed us, I often talked to my comrades-in-arms in the following manner: "Even though the situation is bad and the struggle getting more and more arduous, we are unanimous in our belief that our revolutionary cause will triumph and our country will be liberated; it's just that no one knows exactly when that day will come. Therefore those who are not confident enough to follow us to the last may go home, free from anxiety. Desertion is dastardly, but going home after informing us of your decision is not a misdeed. After all why should we part without so much as saying good-bye when we have fought for the revolution for more than 10 years? If any of you want to go home, we will see you off, and we won't take issue with your giving up the struggle halfway. What can we do if you leave the ranks for lack of strength or firm faith? Those who want to go home, feel free to go."

Talking to them open-heartedly in this way, I educated my men to have an unwavering faith in the victory of the revolution. In spite of my announcement, nobody went home. Without ever losing faith, no matter how complicated the situation, and in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles, the true communists of Korea went on with the resistance, finally defeating Japanese imperialism and brilliantly achieving the great cause of national liberation.

Although we received a heavy blow from the "Hyesan incident", we took measures in time to save the situation and retrieve our losses. Thanks to the Korean communists' strenuous efforts, the building of party organizations and the expansion of the ARF organizations went on with no letup.

Following in the footsteps of the heroes and heroines from the era of the anti-Japanese war, many men of strong will, indomitable in adversity, have made their appearance today in difficult posts. The dynamic revolutionary struggle in the age of Kim Jong Il provides the soil for the growth of men of sturdy faith and powerful determination. The example of Lee In Mo, whom Comrade Kim Jong Il calls the incarnation of faith and will and on whom he bestows great praise, teaches us many things. The Party members and other working people across the country are endeavoring to follow the example of Lee In Mo, as Comrade Kim Jong Il has advised. I think this is quite a good thing.

The 1990s is a decade in which faith and will are more valuable than gold. The times in which we are living demand that not only the people but also the Party and state put their iron faith in socialism and communism, defending our beliefs and our system from the tenacious policy of siege and reactionary ideological offensive pursued by the allied imperialist forces, and that with our diamond-hard will, we break through the difficulties that prevail.

In several countries where the faith, won at the cost of the blood of the revolutionary forerunners, has been forsaken and where socialism, a creation of that faith, has been abandoned, the people's livelihood is now in dire distress and all forms of social evils, immorality and depravity are rampant. History always receives due payment from those who have abandoned their faith.

Our country has become a powerful one that does not sway with every storm and stress. This is due to the strong faith of our Party and our people. A party of vigorous faith does not become degenerate; a state with a steady faith does not fall; and a people with unshakeable faith does not disintegrate.

We have so far had a hard climb; we might be forced to make an even steeper climb in future. Nevertheless, our people are completely unafraid. Only a nation that advances steadily, firm in its beliefs, can successfully scale the peak to the age of independence.

# 19.1. The Matanggou Secret Camp

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The former name of Jingyu County in Northeast China was Mengjiang County. In that county is a vast forest called *paizi*, and in the eastern part of the forest is a place called Matanggou. It was there that the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army carried out intensive military and political training for four months, from the end of November 1937 to the end of March the following year.

In later years, whenever the education of schoolchildren, students, officials or soldiers was under discussion, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung always used to refer to the experiences of studying during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. The following is a part of the great leader's recollections as he spoke to people who were studying the history of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

For about four or five months in the winter of 1937, the officers and men of the main force of the KPRA carried out intensive military and political training at the secret camp at Matanggou, Mengjiang County. It is known that there was intensive training also at the Tonggang Secret Camp for about a month in spring that year, so you may wonder why another cycle of training was needed. Actually, there is nothing extraordinary about it.

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

As you know, we have long believed that people are the masters of everything and that they decide everything. Having this viewpoint, we looked upon ideology as the decisive factor affecting the victory of the revolution. That it is man who makes the decisions means, in the final analysis, that it is his ideology and his intellectual abilities that decide everything. Man's ideology and intellectual ability must be cultivated steadily through study.

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

If we had not concentrated on ideological education and military training for our men in these circumstances, it would have been impossible not only to strengthen our own revolutionary force, but also

to carry the independent line of our revolution through to the end with confidence.

Confusion created by this or that line spread in the name of the Comintern also posed a major problem. The Left adventurists, who were entrenched in the Comintern in those days, issued the line of the expedition to Rehe, which was highly unsuited to the actual situation at the time and did tremendous harm to the revolutions both in Korea and in China.

An Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party, allegedly drawn up by a group of proponents for a reconstruction of the Korean Communist Party, and the text of a speech made by a certain Kim at the 7th Congress of the Comintern, were in circulation and were winning considerable popularity among those who strongly desired communism. It is understandable that Korean communists, who had been swayed to the right and the left in their efforts to find a correct guideline after the dissolution of the Party, tried to get pointers on which way to go from the Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party and from the speech made at the Comintern Congress.

The sound of Korean voices ringing from the forum of the Comintern Congress or from its mouthpiece was, of course, welcome. Regrettably, however, the Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party and the speech at the Comintern Congress contained many words and phrases that did not accord with the specific situation of the Korean revolution.

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

We believed, therefore, that we must first give the officers and men of the KPRA a correct understanding of the independent line of the Korean revolution. This was one of the reasons why I wrote *The Tasks of Korean Communists* and used it as a textbook for the intensive political training we had organized. In this article I dealt again with the character of the Korean revolution and its immediate objectives, and outlined the tasks of the Korean communists in carrying out the Korean revolution along an independent line.

I thought it was also necessary to organize military and political training again in order to toughen our recruits politically and militarily. Matanggou, which was far away from the base of enemy rule, was an ideal place for the military and political training of the revolutionary army during the winter months that year.

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

We first held a meeting of military and political cadres and set out courses of study for each man and officer, and then saw to it that each unit, each organization and each study group held a meeting at which

the men vowed to study hard. "Studying is also a battle!" and "Studying is the primary task of a revolutionary!" were the slogans we set up at the beginning of the military and political training. I made sure that the slogans were put up in large letters on the walls of all the barracks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There was another recruit, a certain Kwon, who neglected his education, complaining that he was too much of a blockhead. Whenever he was advised by his comrades to study harder, instead of listening to

them, he used to argue that General Hong Porn Do, an illiterate like him, had been a good commander in the Independence Army - where he had picked up that story, God only knows - and that it was nonsense to say that an illiterate could not work for the revolution. His avoidance of studying dwarfed even that of Park Chang Sun. He was such a diehard and trouble-maker that his company commander and his political instructor brought his case to me.

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

When he received the note, Kwon was embarrassed. Without a doubt, it was a serious case for a rank-and-filer not to be able to understand in a message what his Commander wanted. The man went around calling on his friends and asking them to read the note for him, but the latter made one excuse or another for refusing his request. Now, pale with anxiety, he ran about from platoon to platoon, from company to company, asking a favor from anybody he could get hold of.

But nobody would read the note to him. What anguish he suffered! As a last resort, Kwon came to see me and begged me to tell him what I had said in the note.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The comrades of the secretariat and the printing shop worked hard to ensure the success of military and political training. They set up a publishing centre at a little distance from the secret camp and put out a lot of textbooks and reference materials needed in training. Choe Kyong Hwa, editor of Jongsori, and Kim Yong Guk, who was in charge of the publication of Sogwang, were first-rate writers in the secretariat. They and old man "Tobacco Pipe" wrote commentaries on the textbooks and literary pieces helpful to trainees, and included them in the army publications.

They also obtained true-to-life articles and battle accounts from enthusiastic readers. Even members of the class in which the basics were taught, to say nothing of the self-teaching class, were highly enthusiastic about making contributions to newspapers and magazines throughout that winter. Writing widened their own mental horizons and increased their zeal to learn.

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

We also devoted great efforts to military training at Matanggou. The central task of this form of training was to assimilate completely the contents of Guerrilla Actions and the Guerrilla Manual, in which the systematic rules of guerrilla warfare were listed. Commanding officers concentrated on tactical training, and the men were instructed mainly in marksmanship and drill movements. It was training in rules, combined with practical skill.

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

the great task of raising a regular army after the liberation of the country.

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

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

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

Choe Kyong Hwa had been picked up and trained by Kwon Yong Byok when Kwon was guiding Party organizations and organizational work of the ARE in West Jiandao down at Wangjiagou. I will not Kang Ton was a man we had dug up and trained in West Jiandao. Although he had finished only the advanced course of primary school, he had continued to teach himself by reading written lectures for middle school and a history of social development. He had undertaken mass enlightenment work in the initial period of his activity and contributed greatly to inculcating anti-Japanese patriotism in the people's minds. The night schools he had established and guided became renowned and he had trained numerous revolutionaries at these schools. There were many of his pupils in our unit, among them, Lee Ui Sol. Nowadays, a man who has promoted and developed a youngster who becomes a hero is praised a great deal. In this context, Kang Ton was a highly meritorious man.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

I have never seen a man of strong faith emerge from among people who have no enthusiasm for studying, nor have I seen a man of intense loyalty to revolutionary obligation come from among those who are weak in their convictions. Unremitting study gives a man a strong faith in his cause and inspires him with great enthusiasm for the revolution. Comrade Kim Jong Il said that a man sees, hears, feels and absorbs as much as he can understand. This is an aphorism with profound meaning.

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

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

Our songs reverberated across the camp, on improvised stages, as well as over the battlefield. Loud

singing means a high morale, and a high-spirited army knows no defeat. Loud songs make the revolutionary ranks optimistic and strong. Where the singing is hearty, victory in the revolution is assured.

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

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

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

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

I told Oh Jung Hup to inspect the men's weapons. He called the company to line up and first got his own weapon inspected by the first platoon leader. Confirming that it was a pass, he began examining the men's rifles. I made sure that all the visiting officers joined him in the inspection of the company weapons, the state of the uniforms, barracks, kitchen, and the ablutions area. After the inspection, I told them to point out any shortcomings they had found. They unanimously agreed that the mark was an A.

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

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

The general objective of the intensive military and political training at the Matanggou Secret Camp was to educate all our officers and men to be communist fighters qualified to carry out the Korean revolution.

The basic aim of education and edification in any society is to train people to serve the given social system in good faith. Having occupied our country, the Japanese gave a semblance of education to Korean children and young people for the purpose of taming them just enough to get them to work as slaves. That was why they refused to give Koreans higher education. They considered that a minimum of practical skills was enough for slaves.

Although there is a saying that science knows no national boundaries, it can be beneficial or harmful, depending on whom it benefits and how it is applied. If knowledge is to be beneficial to people and humanity, education must produce true people who are well prepared ideologically, mentally, morally, technologically and culturally. This requires good ideological and moral training. Love for humanity, one's compatriots and one's country does not fall from the sky. It grows on the basis of sound ideology and conviction. I have never known immoral people to love humanity, their fellow people or their country.

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

Military and political training at the Matanggou Secret Camp was also a process of human transformation aimed at producing people with the qualities and qualifications of true communist revolutionaries. On our way back to the secret camp from the attack on Jingantun, a recruit lost a weapon, which happened to be Kang Ton's rifle. When Kang was taken to the secret camp because of the frostbite he had got during his blocking mission, he handed over his rifle to the care of Ju Jae Il, the company political instructor. As the unit withdrew from the battlefield, a recruit who had not yet received a weapon volunteered to help the political instructor by carrying Kang Ton's rifle. The political instructor handed over the weapon to him as requested.

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

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

When I asked if he had had any thoughts on what would be a proper penalty for the man, Ju Jae Il said he had none. I told him to go back to his quarters and give some careful consideration as to what kind of penalty would be most appropriate. The carelessness of the recruit who had lost the weapon was a serious mistake, but I found it more serious that the political instructor was so rash and irresponsible as to have put the weapon in the hands of the recruit in the first place without at least cautioning him.

Ju Jae Il was an experienced soldier and knew how to carry out his duties with prudence. I really regretted that he, who was always so careful in dealing with everything and had a high sense of responsibility, had made such a mistake. I wanted to give him time to think over the case in hopes that he might use the opportunity to reflect upon himself deeply. The next morning Ju Jae Il came to me and said that he himself, not the recruit, should be punished because it was his own carelessness and irresponsibility that had caused the accident. He realized his mistake clearly and criticized himself honestly.

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

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

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

The recruit who had lost the weapon went to Ju Jae Il and apologized to him in tears. Ju Jae Il criticized himself again before the man.

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

On the closing day of military and political training, I removed his penalty and reappointed him political instructor of the Guard Company. Kim Ju Hyon, who had been dismissed from the job of logistical officer of Headquarters, was also reappointed regimental commander about the same time, for he had improved himself ideologically and studied hard.

As you can see, training at Matanggou was very effective in improving the political and military qualifications and mental and moral qualities of every soldier and each officer. Following the battles of Liukesong and Jiaxinzi, we had also about 40 days of military and political training at Baishitan.

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

There were many illiterates among the recruits. They were firmly resolved to fight for the revolution, but their ideological level in general was low. Many of them did not understand why the working class should

be the leading class in our country since it was the peasantry that made up the overwhelming majority of the population.

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

Although he was a lumberman before his enlistment, he was thinking in the initial days of our training at Baishitan that the peasantry should be the leading class in the revolution because peasants far outnumbered workers. Most of the recruits did not know how to handle a rifle, nor had they any idea on how to drill. The People's Revolutionary Army had a dozen kinds of small arms. It had Japanese, German and Czech machine-guns, in addition to various types of rifles, and more than four kinds of pistols. A guerrilla needed to master the use of all these weapons.

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

I made a manual for the operation and care of the machine-gun and taught it to the men. We had to go through so much trouble just to learn how to fire a single machine-gun and how to take it apart and reassemble it, so how could we expect the former lumbermen to be qualified guerrillas without giving them military and political training?

We got O Paek Ryong to harass the enemy by luring them away to different places and then throw them off about 200 kilometers from Baishitan. We sent small units to fetch the supplies and weapons we had hidden at various locales before we started training at the secret camp. Hearing the news that we had recruited hundreds of new men, Choe Hyon sent us dozens of weapons.

Training at Baishitan was given in two stages in anticipation of possible changes in the situation. The first stage was to teach the basic subjects quickly, and the second stage was to repeat the same subjects so as to consolidate what had been learned the first time. For the veterans we set the objective of raising the level of their knowledge at least by one grade and of helping the recruits in their training. For the recruits the objective was to learn how to read and write and master different types of weapons in a one-month period.

Competitions in reaching the objectives were organized between regiments, companies and individual soldiers. When beginning military and political training at Baishitan, we gave the slogan "The more difficult and complex the situation, the harder must we study!" in addition to "Studying is also a battle!"

Every single recruit became literate during this training period. To test their new abilities, we got them to write to their parents and siblings at home. Each of them was able to express his thoughts and feelings freely in the Korean language. They also mastered the methods of handling, disassembling and reassembling different types of rifles, pistols and machine-guns. Some of the recruits even wrote articles for army publications.

Throughout that winter, in fact, the veterans and recruits all contributed to periodicals. On the day of reviewing the first training period, we had a grand citation ceremony with entertainment. Those who had been the best students were awarded quality watches, gold rings and fountain-pens.

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

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

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

In subsequent years I instituted the motto, "Knowledge gives us foresight into the future," and I have constantly emphasized the importance of learning so as to encourage our officials to keep on improving their political and practical qualifications. Today, under the revolutionary slogan "The entire Party must study!", proposed by Comrade Kim Jong Il, everyone in the country has acquired the revolutionary habit of learning while working and working while studying.

## 19.2. The Weasel Hunter

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

Here is a lesson we learned at that time.

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

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

Kim Ju Hyon's meeting the old man from the Independence Army gave me a particular hope of finding out the whereabouts of Sim Ryong Jun with the old man's help. Sim Ryong Jun had been an important figure in Chamui-bu when the three organizations of the Independence Army - Jongui-bu, Sinmin-bu and Chamui-bu - were scrambling for power in Manchuria. In his Chamui-bu days he worked in Humnan, 1-luadian, Mengjiang and in the surrounding areas, and after the merger of the three organizations into Kukmin-bu it was rumored that he was living somewhere in Mengjiang.

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

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

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

Sim Ryong Jun was living and how he was getting along.

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

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

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

Seeing that the Japanese army was sinking ever-deeper into the mire of the Sino-Japanese War, we strengthened the common front with the Chinese anti-Japanese forces on the one hand, and on the other made unremitting efforts to form a united front with the anti-Japanese forces connected with the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai. The idea of joining hands with the anti-Japanese forces, which had ties with the provisional government, required people capable of linking us with the provisional government. Sim Ryong Jun was the right man for this task.

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

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

At that time Wang De-lin's special envoy was already staying with our unit. We had given him the job of Guard-Company instructor, although the job was not cynical to the company. My men used to address him as Instructor Li. He was good at Chinese chess, so I often played with him.

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

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

Chen Han-zhang said that he had met Wang De-lin when he went to Tianjin on Wu Yi-cheng's orders as



his subordinate in the National Salvation Army. At that time Wang De-lin told Chen Han-zhang that he had left Northeast China for China proper in order to be able to fight against the Japanese on a larger scale with the help of Chiang Kaisek and Zhang Xue-liang. At that time Chen Han-zhang had probably informed Wang De-lin in detail of the armed struggle of the Korean communists.

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

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

Having received this report from Kim Ju Hyon, I could not help wondering about Sim Ryong Jun. His absent-minded attitude to my letter fell a little short of my expectations. I had expected from him a strong response to the letter, even though he might not be able to pay a personal visit to the secret camp. It seemed that he had been a little too cool towards my letter.

He might have been embarrassed by our appeal for him to come back to the anti-Japanese front, being a man who had buried himself in family life after fighting, arms in hand, for the restoration of national sovereignty. The appeal meant his renewed commitment to the independence movement, and in this context it could be regarded as natural that a man who had abandoned his cause should think matters through when confronted with our proposal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the meeting we also discussed whom to send as the political operative to work in the capacity of Sim's

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

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

I considered his two requests in a favorable light.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The crag at the gateway to Matanggou was very steep, almost perpendicular. All my unit had great difficulty in climbing it. The men toiled up inch by inch, sweating and gripping at bent tree branches and dry grass roots.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As he confessed later, the remark by the sentry had given him the feeling that General Kim Il Sung, who had been known to anticipate events three months ahead, probably knew their plot, and that his being dragged to such a place meant that he was as good as dead. It was natural that he, who had been inveigled into the plot against his will, felt uneasy at the words of the sentry.

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

Jun were to meet.

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

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

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

After hearing out the report of the small-unit leader, I commented that he had acted correctly in both cases.

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

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

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

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

In the years of the three organizations, Sim had enjoyed a great reputation and the people had expected much from him. He had made a lot of touching speeches to stir up the people against the Japanese. What a

shame for such a man to have degenerated into a Japanese dog! I asked the hunter how he found out that Sim was a turncoat.

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

According to the hunter's confession, all the letters Sim had sent me were written after discussion with a Japanese in a back parlor. Whenever we had given him an assignment, he met the Japanese to inform him of the content of the message. He then acted according to the instructions of the Japanese.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Depending on one's interests, one may give an impetus to the revolution or stand in its way. The ideology

of a man who fights by placing the interests of his fellow people above everything else will remain as immutable as a diamond, whereas a man who seeks only personal safety and comfort, disregarding the interests of the revolution and his fellows, will soon degenerate ideologically. It is the people who have been poieasily in times of difficulty.

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

## 19.3. The Last of the Independence Army Forces

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The Independence Army raised the flag of armed struggle at a stage of Korean history when the country was mourning over the loss of its sovereignty. It was the product of a burning desire for independence on the part of patriots who fought desperately to win back their lost national sovereignty through a volunteer-army struggle, through a patriotic cultural enlightenment movement and through various other forms of struggle, legal and illegal, armed and unarmed.

Though in decline because it was lagging behind the times and lacking a strong mass foundation, the Independence Army was the only anti-Japanese armed force that represented the nationalist movement.

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

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

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

What kind of a man was Choe Yun Gu?

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

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

When I was going to primary school in Fusong the local people called him Chamsa Choe. My father and mother and his immediate superiors, Jang Chol Ho, O Tong Jin and Yang Se Bong, also addressed him as such. "Chamsa" indicated his military rank. After his promotion to platoon leader, I called him "Uncle Chamsa", and even after he came over to us in command of his unit, I still addressed him as Uncle Chamsa whenever we were alone. Choe Yun Gu, too, liked me to call him that. If I had called him Platoon Leader he might have felt uncomfortable.



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

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

Choe Yun Gu's father was a smith. After attending the Confucian village school for some time, he worked, helping his father in his forge when he was barely more than ten. One wintry day I saw him stripped to the waist and having a cold rub-down, muscles bulging all over his body like those of a martial arts champion. My father admired him, saying that to be a man one needed to be sturdy like him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although we returned from southern Manchuria without tangible results, we did not abandon the idea of cooperation with the independence campaigners. A united front with the nationalists was not a matter so simple as to allow us to remain indifferent over its success or failure, nor was it something to be picked up when we were weak and discarded when we were strong, or to be maintained only during the struggle to gain political power and to be ignored after success in the struggle. It was a lasting strategic line we had to maintain for complete national harmony and unity.

Comrades, just think: Haven't we continued to emphasize the united front with nationalists all through the many decades since the country was liberated?

It is absolutely correct that since the early years of our revolutionary activities we have looked upon the line of a national united front as a lasting strategic line that should be maintained consistently for great national unity.

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

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

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

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

Frankly speaking, our reason for attaching such great importance to cooperation with the Independence Army was not because we were after some great benefit from them. By 1936 the Korean People's Revolutionary Army had grown into a great force in terms of both numerical strength and fighting efficiency. We were prepared to fight on our own without their help.

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

Kim Myong Jun, a veteran of the anti-Japanese revolution and Choe Yun Gu's mate in the Independence Army under Kim Hwal Sok's command, was later to come over to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

In a note written in 1960, Kim Myong Jun recalled his enlistment in the Independence Army and its circumstances in subsequent years:

"In autumn 1932 we... went to an Independence Army unit which was billeted in a village near Mt. Yantong. The village was busy with preparations to welcome the soldiers. My companion and I went to help the people butcher pigs in order to win favour from the soldiers. We also ran some errands for the

sentry. But the commanding officers of the Independence Army rejected our application for enlistment because we were too young.

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

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

After joining the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, Kim Myong Jun was by the side of the great leader for some years at the Far Eastern training base during small-unit actions. The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung learned a lot from him about the various aspects of the Independence Army under the command of Kim Hwal Sok. The great leader said that the Independence Army's transition in the wake of Choe Yun Go to the KPRA was an inevitable result of the development of the nationalist movement in our country.

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

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

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

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

When they ran out of food supplies, one of their small units would rob the raftsmen on the Yalu River of their food. In the guise of bandits, they would hide at a bottleneck in the river, let off a few rounds of threatening fire when the rafts approached, get them to row to the water's edge and then rob the raftsmen of their food.

What a disgrace to the Independence Army! Even a last resort should have some limits. It was truly shameful for the Independence Army to have come to this pass - an army that should have protected and helped to save the people!

Discipline in this army gradually loosened as well, and deserters appeared one after another. Kim Myong Jun's platoon leader stole his commander's seal, pistol and money from the locker at headquarters and ran away with some of his men who were on duty. When encountering soldiers of the Independence Army, even mountain rebels disarmed them. The Independence Army was isolated literally from every quarter.

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

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

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

Worship of the strong is nothing special. It appears when a weak person looks up to others and seeks to live off them. It is neither innate nor does it fall from the sky. A man who disbelieves in his own strength or underestimates it may be reduced to a sycophant, no matter how great his love for his country.

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

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

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

I still remember what Kim Myong Jun told me when we were at the Far Eastern training base. Once his small unit of the Independence Army happened to meet a detachment of the People's Revolutionary Army

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

The Independence Army soldiers who went out to make water before dawn were surprised to find the revolutionary army soldiers sleeping in the open, huddled together around a flickering camp fire. They had neither mattresses nor blankets. They were sleeping on spread-out corn stalks. Who would not have been moved at the scene?

The following morning the soldiers of the Independence Army were even more strongly impressed as they saw the officers and men of the revolutionary army gathering up the corn stalks, fetching water, chopping firewood and sweeping the yard to help the old host and hostess. The Chinese old folk of the house were also moved by the actions of the guerrillas. They held the men's hands in theirs, saying that they had never seen such kind-hearted soldiers before, and declared that the guerrillas were truly a people's army.

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

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

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

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

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

We had previously met with the headquarters of the Independence Army on a few occasions on our own initiative. They were not opposed to our idea of cooperation between the anti-Japanese national forces, but they had given no answer to our proposal for an alliance between the KPRA and the Independence

Army.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

was sharing its fate with them, had a bright future.

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

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

Kim Hwal Sok, however, rejected the proposal for cooperation, saying that it would only benefit the communists and that if he agreed, his army would cease to exist. His position was that he would not share the board with communists, even if it meant the premature death of his own army. He would not yield an inch, warning his men that they should not be deceived by communist propaganda, that communists knew nothing but class struggle, that their proposal for a united front was a mere deceptive trick, and that the best way was to keep away from such treacherous people.

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

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

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

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

Kim Myong Jun was the first to step forward. This was followed by many others. A pioneer can provide a solution to however difficult a problem. Kim Myong Jun was the pioneer. That is why I have loved him dearly ever since he came over to the People's Revolutionary Army. "It was Deputy Commander Choe Yun Gu who fanned my decision at that time," Kim Myong Jun said in recollection of the event.



"Although he said nothing, his glance encouraged me to act on my decision.

The Independence Army was divided in consequence, and they all wept. The commander and his deputy and everyone else wept. What pain they must have suffered as the body of their fighting force was torn apart!

With a promise to meet again when Korea became independent, the two groups left each other in different directions. One under Choe Yun Gu's command came over to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, and the other group of several dozen men under Kim Hwal Sok's command moved towards Fenghuangcheng. The last armed force of Kukrnin-bu, which had been fighting against the Japanese imperialists in southern Manchuria, was dissolved in this manner.

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

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

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

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

I would say that Choe Yun Cu's coming over to our side provided the revolutionary movement with a link between my father's generation and his son's generation. From the point of view of his ideological trend, Choe Yun Cu belonged to my father's generation. Most of his generation aspired after nationalism, whereas ours supported communism. The patriots of the two generations, who considered communism and nationalism to be diametrically opposed to each other, finally took the road of joint anti-Japanese struggle by transcending the differences in ideology.

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

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

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

Kim Hwal Sok's own sick, anti-communist and sycophantic mind was the cause of his ruin. Our nation's history shows that sycophants and anti-communists have, without exception, taken the road of treachery to the nation.

Sun Yat-sen, though a leader of bourgeois democratic revolution, was able to continue with revolution, enjoying support from the broad section of the population, because he cooperated with communists. Kim Gu marked a proud page in the nation's history when he made a fresh start and went from anti-communism to patriotic alliance with communism in his closing years. Had he taken the road of alliance with communists, Kim Hwal Sok, too, could have ended his life as a patriot loved by the people, instead of falling into a trap laid by the Japanese.

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

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

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

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

The historical experience of the Independence Army force, which joined the Korean People's

Revolutionary Army in the war of national liberation against the Japanese imperialist aggressors, eloquently proves that all the patriotic national forces in the north and south of Korea and abroad can and must join efforts in the struggle against foreign forces by transcending differences in thought, ideas and political views.

## 19.4. Village Headman Wang and Police Chief Wang

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

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

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

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

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

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

I gave the political instructor an assignment in addition to win over Village Headman Wang. Thus the name of the village headman got on our recruiting list. We learned about him in detail through the underground organization at Dahuanggou over the next half a year. Our work with Wang bore fruit in the spring of 1938.

This was the time when we were moving to Changbai after finishing military and political training at

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

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

Near Dahuanggou was a village by name of Xiaohuanggou. The underground organization at Xiaohuanggou was also connected with the man who had been admitted to the Party by political instructor Ju Jae Il at Niuxinshan. It was now in great danger. The organization had done a good job and was spreading offshoots in neighboring villages. But the enemy caught it by the tail and fell upon the village, killing the organization members and setting fire to their houses. Even old people and children were shot or stabbed with bayonets.

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

I sent my operatives to Dahuanggou to approach the headman.

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

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

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

In fact, it took more guts than normal to allow the survivors of the Japanese atrocities to settle down in

his village and to look after them. Doing this would involve the risk of exposing the village headman himself to severe punishment. We could therefore say that Wang was ready to face the worst.

I told my operatives going to Dahuanggou that the village headman was quite conscientious, and that if they should approach him boldly and explain to him clearly our aim of fighting against the Japanese imperialists, they would be able to bring him round to our side. On arrival at Dahuanggou, the operatives met Wang through the intermediary of the man living in the peasant hut, and made a proposal for cooperation with us. Wang readily agreed, and even asked for an interview with me. Promising that he would comply with any request of the revolutionary army, he earnestly asked for an opportunity to see General Kim Il Sung.

My officers argued pro and con over his request. As there had been frequent subversive activities by the enemy against our Headquarters, the officers were all getting nervous. I persuaded the arguing officers to consent, and invited Wang to our temporary camp. As soon as he received the invitation, the village headman obtained large amounts of food, footwear and other supplies through his villagers and brought them to our Headquarters. Wang was a handsome man of about 35, gentle, well-mannered and open-hearted. He made a good impression on me.

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

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

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

"I cannot find words to express my gratitude to you for your confidence in a man like me. I'll remember your words all my life, General, and I'll do my best to fight," he said. He had brought along brandy and a snack, and I thought this showed that he was a thoughtful and sociable man. We drank the brandy in my tent. He drank first to assure the purity of the brandy, then offered me a glass.

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

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

In the course of time a lovable boy was born to them, a boy destined to be the village headman. He grew up to be good-looking and proved himself clever as he grew older. Because of poverty, however, the

parents were unable to bring him up with any of the benefits given to other, richer children.

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

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

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

The boy went to school in the Korean village, so that he got used to Korean customs and spoke Korean well.

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

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

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

At this moment, the band's second in command said, "What's the use of killing the poor boy? Give him to me and set the Korean free to go wherever he likes." The Korean, robbed of his traveling money and the

boy, went away, God only knows where, and the boy remained in the den of the bandits under the protection of the second boss. The man had prevented the boy from being killed because he'd taken a fancy to the child. One night he took off with the boy, escaping from the bandits to Linjiang County, where he bought land and a house in the mountains. He was now rich and became the boy's foster-father. He was rich because he had hauled off a large sum of the bandits' ill-gotten money.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Police Chief Wang was also won over much the same way as Village Headman Wang. Kim Phyoung, political commissar of the 7th Regiment, was the first to tell me about the police chief. At one point Kim had taken Choe Il Hyon's company to Changbai and Linjiang and directed small unit activities there. While sending off the small units to different places and supervising them, he worked among the local people. One of his small units was active round Sandaogou and Wudaogou, Linjiang County.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The political commissar said, "General Kim has already resolved the problem of 'Minsaengdan', so you

can take your place once more on the revolutionary front with clear conscience. I hope you will work proudly and stalwartly." The hunter was apparently moved to tears at these words.

He had become a close friend of Wang the year before. The police chief had occasionally appeared in his hunting ground. Wang used to hunt only one or two animals at one time, whereas the hunter caught four or five.

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

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

The hunter won the game and Wang treated him to a drink. They drank in the mountain hut.

Wang proposed that they swear brotherhood. The hunter declined, however, saying that he would think the matter over a little further because he would have to be Wang's elder brother if he was to agree to the proposal. He then asked casually how Wang, a man with the heavy duties of substation chief, could afford to be away from his office so often to go hunting.

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

Hearing this account from the hunter, the political commissar gave him the job of building a subordinate organization of the ARF in the area of Jiajiaying. He also gave him the immediate task of arranging an interview between the commissar and the police chief. The following day the hunter brought Police Chief Wang to the rendezvous. The police chief also brought a bottle of brandy and a snack, just as the village headman had done. Brandy was a major means of promoting social fellowship among the officials of Manchukuo. He did not stop to ponder over anything too much, and his answers were direct and clear-cut.

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

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

"That's what Commander Kim Il Sung's men are like," the political commissar replied. "Take me to Commander Kim," Wang said. "Then I will let him know my decision, but on condition that you join my jiajiali, so that I can trust you completely."

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

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

I told the political commissar to swear brotherhood with Wang, because joining his jiajiali would not mean changing his surname. I also told him to bring Wang to my Headquarters. I met Wang at a place near Jiajiaying, and found him as acceptable as the village headman. I remember that he made me a present of three roots of wild ginseng.

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

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

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

From then on the police chief helped us a great deal. Under his protection the hunter formed a subordinate organization of the ARF in Jiajiaying.

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

Through our work with the two Wangs we gained invaluable experience in transforming people. I believe that we can change anything in the world. Transforming human beings is more difficult than transforming nature and society, but if we make the effort we can transform people too. By nature, human beings aspire to what is beautiful, noble and just. We can, therefore, transform everyone if we

give them the proper education. Human transformation means, in essence, the transformation of people's ideology.

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

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

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

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

Our nation has the task of reunifying the country as soon as possible. In south Korea there are many people who have different ideas from ours - landowners, capitalists and other people belonging to the exploiting class, as well as officials, entrepreneurs, and merchants. When the country is reunified, we shall have to live with these people of various strata in the same land. We communists cannot very well live alone, rejecting all these people because they have different ideas from ours, can we?

We must find out the common denominator that will enable us to build a reunified country in cooperation even with people who are not communists. I believe that love for the country, love for the nation and love for the people is that common denominator. We shall be perfectly able to live and breathe the same air with people who love our country, our nation and our people.

## 19.5. Expedition to Rehe

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The ill-fated expedition to Rehe put grave obstacles in the way of military actions and political activities by the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, as well as the development of the revolutionary movement in Korea. and brought about great losses to the anti-Japanese movement as a whole, in the years before and after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.

The event provided a harsh lesson. The expedition served as a vivid example of the nature of the difficulties that revolutions in individual countries had to undergo in the mid-1930s, when revolutionary strategy was imposed upon these countries in the form of an "international line". It was also a notable historical event that showed in particular the enormity of the struggle that was needed to uphold and carry out the independent line in the Korean revolution.

In recollecting the plan of the expedition issued by the Comintern, Comrade Kim Il Sung said: The plan of a Rehe expedition, or an expedition towards the Liaoxi-Rehe area, reached us in spring 1936. Wei Zheng-min conveyed the plan as a directive from the Comintern to the assembly of the commanding officers of the KPRA and the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China, including Wang De-tat.

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

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

Apparently the Comintern aim in implementing the planned expedition to Rehe was to open up a new phase of unified development for the revolutions in the two regions of China. In the years when the Japanese imperialists, having occupied the three provinces of Northeast China, were fabricating Manchukuo, the anti-Japanese struggle in China was waged mainly in its northeastern region. In the course of its Long March of 25,000 li, the Chinese Communist Party criticized the Left opportunist line

and established a new leadership system. From then on, the Chinese people's anti-Japanese struggle entered a new, higher stage of development. The rapid growth in the anti-Japanese movement on the mainland greatly encouraged the people in the Northeast.

The circulation of the plan of expedition made Rehe a hot spot of Sino-Japanese confrontation that focused the world's attention on it. Situated on the coast of Bohai Bay, Rehe was the capital of Rehe Province in the years of Qing rule, and as such it was closely associated with the history of the Qing dynasty, established by the Manchus. Rehe's close connection with the Qing can be explained by the fact that the city was the locale for a royal villa called the Guanghan Palace, constructed by Emperor Kangxi, and that in that villa Emperor Qianlong, renowned in the Qing dynasty, was born. Rehe was also noted for its natural fortification. The mountain range southwest of Rehe was one of the strong points on the Great Wall, and this fact alone shows the importance of the place from the military point of view since ancient times.

Rehe was such a notable place that Park Ji Won, a thinker of the silhak school in the 19th century who had been to China as an attendant of an envoy of the feudal government of the Lee dynasty, wrote his well-known Rehe Diary. In this long travelogue he gave a very vivid account of Chinese cultural institutions and of the features of Rehe as a city. Rehe attracted worldwide attention for the first time when the Japanese imperialists, following the September 18 incident, occupied Jinzhou and Rehe to open a route for their invasion of the Chinese mainland.

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

Li Li-san, who was at the helm of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party early in the 1930s when warlords were running rampant, had a one-sided and exaggeratedly favorable view of the development of the revolutionary situation. He forced the adoption of an adventurist decision on the possibility of winning the revolution in just one or two provinces and ordered general political strikes and armed uprisings in many major cities.

By this order of the Party leadership, the Red Army went ahead and attacked major cities. But the operations failed. In the light of this precedent, it was natural that some people expressed their dissatisfaction with the operations plan from the Comintern. In those days, most of the communists in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army accepted everything the Comintern was doing as fair and above-board. In these circumstances it was noteworthy that some commanders approached the plan of expedition only half-heartedly.

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

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

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

We got the Comintern instructions for the first time in the spring of 1936, then in the summer of 1937 as the Sino-Japanese War was breaking out, and again in the spring of 1938. In 1936 and 1937, as the Comintern was telling us to march westward, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was in the process of stepping up preparations for founding the Party and for the movement of a united front after advancing to the Mt. Paektu area and West Jiandao. At the same time it was in high spirits, extending the armed struggle deep into the homeland. At this time also the Korean communists were making every effort to strengthen the driving force of the Korean revolution, unshakeable in their determination that they had to carry out the Korean revolution on their own. Prospects for the revolution were bright, but we had a mountain of work to do.

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

What were our feelings in this situation when we were told to go on the expedition to Rehe, a venture that promised no chance of success?

Although the Comintern had ordered us to join the expedition, I considered it reckless from the outset. We adhered to a line of independence in the Korean revolution, which we ourselves had set in motion in those days. We fought many major battles in West Jiandao in cooperation with the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps under the command of Cao Guo-an, and we also conducted large-scale offensive operations in the homeland.

Meanwhile, we filled in the military vacuum in some areas of southern Manchuria, which had been occupied earlier by the 1st Corps, and provided sincere support for the forces on the expedition to Liaoxi and Rehe. In other words, we killed two birds with one stone by maintaining firmly the independent line of spreading the flames of armed struggle into the homeland, while at the same time creating favorable conditions for the implementation of the Comintern line. When the armed forces in southern Manchuria were advancing towards Rehe and Liaoxi, Wei Zheng-min, the messenger from the Comintern, followed us, instead of going with the 1st Corps.

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

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

In its new instructions for the expedition, the Comintern demanded that the main force of the KPRA move down towards Hailong and the Jihai line, previously occupied by the 1st Corps, take direct part in the partial encirclement of Changchun and give active support to the 1st Corps, which was advancing towards Rehe. To do this meant that the KPRA had to advance westward, far away from its base in the Mt. Peaktu area. To be candid, effecting a link-up with the 8th Route Army advancing towards Rehe was of no particular significance in a situation in which the whole of the Chinese mainland had become a theatre of war.

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



What would become of the lightly-equipped guerrilla forces in an encounter on the plains with the regular army forces of the enemy, which were equipped with heavy weapons and tanks?

The outcome was as predictable as daylight. From the point of view of the 8th Route Army, Rehe was within hailing distance just beyond the Great Wall, but it was hundreds of miles from Northeast China, where the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces were operating. For a relatively small guerrilla army to march such a long distance over the open plains, where enemy forces hundreds of times stronger were concentrated, was against common military sense.

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

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

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

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

I subsequently found out that, as Wei Zheng-min said, Zhou Baozhong, operating in the east of Jilin Province, had an optimistic view of the start of a great event and declared that he needed to make use of all the possibilities simultaneously with this event to effect a direct link-up with the guerrilla force of the 8th Route Army advancing rapidly towards the Rehe line.

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

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

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

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

I told him: "I understand your intention to carry out the expedition to Rehe in spite of the risk of sacrifice. However, I cannot help wondering seriously whether or not the Comintern, when planning the expedition, correctly understood the situation in Northeast China and the requirements of the Chinese revolution, whether or not it made a correct calculation of the military feasibility of the plan, and especially whether or not the attempted expedition accords with the characteristics of guerrilla warfare.

I can say that not only does the expedition plan lack an insight into the present state of the Chinese revolution, but also the Comintern has failed to give any kind of consideration to the Korean revolution. I think Wang Ming is a man of extraordinary subjectivity, even though he is a representative of the Chinese Communist Party to the Comintern."

Wei Zheng-min, too, admitted that Wang Ming was strongly subjective. The expedition plan was issued in the name of the Comintern, but it was Wang Ming who drew up the plan and sent it down.

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

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

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

We had a serious discussion with Wei Zheng-min about the course of action to be taken by the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces under the 1st Corps and the main force of the KPRA. Wei Zheng-min wanted the KPRA to move into the Hailong region and the area of Jihai line, where the 1st Corps had been operating. To do this would make it impossible for us to consolidate the military and political success we had achieved in the Mt. Paektu area. I therefore answered that we would conduct mobile operations in Linjiang, Fusong and Mengjiang over a period of time for the development of the Korean revolution, and then move gradually into that area when the time was ripe.

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

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

In spring 1938, however, his 1st Corps had a hard time since it was surrounded by the enemy the moment it set off on the expedition. To make matters worse, Cheng Bin, commander of the 1st Division, surrendered to the enemy, taking his unit along with him. His surrender messed up the 1st Corps' plan for a westward campaign. In mid-July Yang Jing-yu called an emergency meeting of the officers of the 1st Corps at Laoling, where he officially cancelled his expedition plan and adopted measures to reorganize so as to prevent the divulgence of the secrets.

Cheng Bin's surrender was a great shock to us as well. The 1st Corps was in danger of crumbling. In order to help it, we prepared weapons and other war supplies and ordered part of our force to start moving towards the Tonghua line by way of Jinchuan and Liuhe Counties by skirting Mengjiang County.

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

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

Meanwhile, the main force destroyed the enemy in many places. The raid on the road construction site

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

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

When the battle was over, a few Japanese contractors requested an interview with me. At the interview they offered a liberal amount of money for their lives. I said, "By undertaking this construction, you are, of course, helping Japan's act of aggression. But we have no intention of killing you. We, the revolutionary army, do not accept the ransom you offer. Taking it would be an act of banditry. You may go, but you must keep your hands off this project. If you wish to contract, do it elsewhere." We then released them.

Our raid on the construction site gave rise to the widespread news that Kim Il Sung's guerrillas had appeared in the west of Linjiang. Apparently the contractors spread the news far and wide. Following the battle of Badaojiang, we destroyed the pursuing enemy around Naichagou and Waichagou, then fought the enemy again at Xigang, Fusong County, thus drawing its forces towards us.

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

The Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces in northern Manchuria also suffered no small casualties in the westward campaign. A number of army corps in northern Manchuria started the expedition in July 1937 and fully committed themselves to the campaign in 1938. As was the case in southern Manchuria, the expedition by the northern forces ended in failure. The Rehe expedition, which confused the revolution in Northeast China and took a heavy toll in reckless battles for some years, fizzled out in southern Manchuria in 1938, and in northern Manchuria in 1939.

Why, then, did the expedition, which wasted so much energy, manpower and materials, fail? Many analysts have attributed the failure to the well-established order of the Japanese and the Manchukuo ruling machinery and to the overwhelming number of the enemy forces - that is, to objective conditions. I think this is a correct analysis.

The policy of internment villages, pursued by the enemy in real earnest at this period, cut off ties between the guerrillas and the people. As the enemy put it, it was a "separation of bandits from the people". This policy consolidated the ruling institutions of the enemy, whereas it laid many obstacles in

the way of the anti-Japanese armed forces. These obstacles kept the expedition almost out of contact with the masses, hence from its route of food supplies.

The people, confined in their internment villages, had no means of getting in touch with the expeditionary forces, still less of sending supplies to them even though they wanted to. In these circumstances, the expeditionary forces had no alternative but to capture food and clothing from the enemy. The sound of their gunshots provided the enemy with ceaseless information about their whereabouts and strategic maneuvers. Worse still, the expeditionary forces encountered deep valleys, the enemy's high gun-emplacement towers and barracks, blocking lines every step.

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

Any line that is not accepted by the masses or that cannot touch their hearts will invariably fail to bring good results. When we adopt a policy or a line, we go deep among the people and listen to their opinions in order to avoid committing the error of subjectivity. When a man is affected with subjectivity, he becomes as good as blind. Some officials these days consider themselves the wisest of all and slight the opinions of their subordinates. They are grossly mistaken. Zhu-ge Liang was a renowned talent, but the popular masses are wiser and more intelligent than he was.

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

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

The directives from the Comintern had much in them that did not suit the actual situation. Nevertheless, we approached each of the directives with care and tried to think carefully and act shrewdly so as to

combine international and national interests while carrying out these directives in the context of our specific situation.

The more obstacles there are standing in the way of the revolution and the more complex the situation is, the more firmly do we maintain the consistent principle of adhering to an unrestricted line of our own and of acting independently. As was the case in dealing with the Comintern, we have always combined an appropriate balance of independence and internationalism in our relations with our neighbors. That is why I can say that we have been able to lead the revolution straight to victory. I still believe that our position and actions with regard to the Rehe expedition were right.

In autumn 1970 I paid an informal visit to China, at which time my Chinese hosts gave a banquet in Beijing in celebration of the founding anniversary of our Party. The banquet was also attended by one of Wang Ming's erstwhile colleagues from the Comintern. I told the Chinese cadres about how many twists and turns the Korean revolution had gone through because of pressure from those around us and about the torments the Korean communists had experienced? more than anyone else - because of the prevailing circumstances.

I pointed out that a large number of Korean revolutionaries had been sacrificed during the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign, and that in the latter half of the 1930s especially we had suffered great losses in strengthening the KPRA and developing the anti-Japanese revolution as a whole because some people at the Comintern forced upon us a line that did not at all suit the situation. At this, Zhou En-lai remarked that Wang Ming was to blame for the mistake, and that Wang Ming had obviously done much harm not only to the Chinese revolution but also the Korean revolution. Stalin also admitted that the Comintern had committed many subjective errors.

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

Many years have passed since the expedition to Rehe. My reason for referring to the expedition now is not to point the finger at who was right or who was wrong. Even if I were to point out who was wrong, there is no place to appeal to. There is neither a Comintern nor a symbol of authority at present. However, communists must learn a serious lesson from this expedition, which incurred so many losses because of subjectivism and blind actions. History will never make a present of a good future to those who ignore the principles of revolution and act only through subjectivity.

## 19.6. My Meeting with Yang Jing-yu

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

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



*Photo: Gen. Yang Jing-yu, Commander, Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army.*

Since the southern Manchuria forces often requested reinforcements of our troops, we sent them many military and political cadres whom we had trained with great effort.

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

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

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

The eastern section of the forest was called Dongpaizi, the western section Xipaizi, and the southern section Nanpaizi. We had military and political training at Dongpaizi in the winter of 1937, and held an important meeting with the cadres of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army at Nanpaizi to discuss the task of

eliminating the aftereffects of the expedition to Rehe. The rugged terrain of Nanpaizi, with its innumerable quicksands that swallowed up men and horses in an instant, was an ideal place for secret meetings by our units. The meeting at Nanpaizi is also called the Mengjiang meeting because Nanpaizi belonged to Mengjiang County.

In the days before and after the meeting at Nanpaizi, our revolution was in a very complex and difficult situation. One aspect of the difficulty was the enemy's constant offensives aimed at crushing our revolution, and the other was Left-adventurists scheming on the part of some officials working at the Comintern. While directing their main efforts southward in China, the Japanese aggressors stepped up their "punitive" operations against Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces in Northeast China in an attempt to promote security in their rear. The enemy's dogged counterrevolutionary offensive was arresting the development of our armed struggle and the anti-Japanese revolution as a whole.

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

If we were to break through the difficulty facing the revolution, it was imperative for us to adopt a new tactical concept capable of defeating the enemy's offensive and take practical steps to wipe out the grim consequences of Left adventurism. For this purpose, the KPRA and the 1st Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army decided to meet at Nanpaizi. At that time I eagerly awaited Yang Jing-yu's arrival, for I knew that he had suffered the heaviest losses in the expedition and that he was having to come to Mengjiang through many hardships. Yang Jing-yu was also said to be impatient for the day of our meeting.

I sent some of my men out to welcome him and to guide his unit, and prepared adequate accommodations for them, as well as clothing. When we finally met each other after so many hardships, we were both elated. Yang Jing-yu's luminous eyes attracted my immediate attention. There is a saying that a person's eyes are worth 800 pounds out of his overall worth of 1,000 pounds, and I could see at a glance that Yang was a man of honesty and passion.

We chatted briefly over a small fire. After warming himself a little, he casually broached the topic of the Koreans in the 1st Corps. He said that there were many Koreans in the corps, all renowned fighters, and that not all of them had been left alive to come with him. He lamented over and over the loss of these excellent comrades. He was grieving over the death of his Korean comrades so deeply that I finally had to console him. Yang and I were destined to fight in close cooperation against Japanese imperialism.

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



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

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

An article dealing with Yang Jing-yu's death said he was a leader of the anti-Japanese guerrillas whose name was well-known to the Japanese next to that of Kim Il Sung. Another article in those days said: "Kim Il Sung, a dyed-in-the-wool communist guerrilla, is a young man this side of thirty.... However, he seems to have about 500 men under his command, with hide-outs in areas beyond the reach of punitive operations, such as Linjiang, Fusong, Mengjiang and Changbai. His is the strongest force now in the area of Dongbiandao." (Tiexin, May issue 1937, p. 106.)

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

When we showed Yang Jing-yu to the tent for the cadres of the 1st Corps, he was deeply moved. He said, "I have heard that you, Commander Kim, are hospitable to your guests, but I never dreamed of being accorded hospitality as warm as this in this valley, in this severe winter!" He hesitated to enter the tent. I told him to go in, have a sleep and break the fatigue that had accumulated for so many months, but he declined my offer.

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

Tong Chang-rong was the first to tell me about Yang Jing-yu. Apparently he had heard about Yang when he was doing Party work in Dalian. He said that miners at the Fushun coalmine followed Yang as they would their own brother. When he was in my secret camp with his unit, Cao Guo-an, commander of the 2nd Division, also heaped praise on Yang.

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

people from Shandong were living, it was favorable to appear in the guise of a Shandong provincial.

Fushun coalminers wanted to strike against the Japanese owner, but they had no leader who could champion their rights and interests. So they chose as their leader Yang Jing-yu who had a way of saying the right thing. Yang led the strike forcefully, but was arrested by the police. Even in the hands of the police, however, he demanded the rights and interests of the working class and was outspoken about all that he believed to be right. He never once yielded to threat or torture. The underground organization and the miners finally rescued him from the enemy's hands.

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

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

I could not repress my own emotion at the sight of the tears he was shedding when he thought of his fallen men. Yang obviously loved his men dearly. I gave a simple party in honor of Yang, who had come through so many hardships. A few glasses of brandy and some dry snacks were all on the table on this occasion. Declaring that he was undoing his belt for the first time in many months, he removed his pistol and field bag from his waist.

As he did this, So Chol, who had arrived with Yang, whispered to me that Yang had never done such a thing before and that he was breaking his own rule of always maintaining as neat and soldierly appearance as possible. Although it was our first meeting, Yang talked a lot. I was surprised to hear that he had once studied textile design at an industrial school. How interesting it was that a man, destined to be a commander of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, should have studied textiles!

He said he had done this in the hope of some day beautifully clothing his fellow Chinese who had been so ill-clad and had lived in poverty for so many generations. I think this was an expression of his class consciousness. Such class consciousness is the basis of a determination to commit oneself to the revolutionary struggle for the good of the exploited and oppressed masses. Already in his school days, when he was a little over ten years old, he started resisting the unfair educational policies of the school authorities. This single fact is enough to show that he was unusually upright and had a strong sense of justice.

Yang Jing-yu came from Henan Province, not from Northeast China. He came to Northeast China, on assignment from the Communist Party, to do underground Party work and conduct an armed struggle. At first he worked for the special branch of the Fushun Party organization, and then did underground Party work in Harbin.

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

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

Among the comrades who had been sent to the guerrilla army in southern Manchuria was So Chol, who had been doing work for the Young Communist League in Harbin with us. Although he was a Korean, So Chol was sent to the guerrilla army here as a medical officer, with instructions to act as a Chinese in order to serve as a liaison between the army and the people. The organization ordered him to behave as a Chinese towards everyone in southern Manchuria, except Lee Hong Gwang and Lee Tong Gwang.

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

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

He is now a member of the Political Bureau of the Party in our country, but at that time there was no way for him to escape the beating. He suffered from injuries for months. From that time on he hated the police, as well as the landowners and minor officials who were in league with them. Having fully accustomed himself to the land and the way of life in Northeast China, So Chol was the right man to play the role of a Chinese to help the southern Manchurian guerrilla army out of its difficulties.

He behaved like a perfect Chinese so as not to fail the expectations of the organization. He made no small contribution to enhancing the prestige of the Panshi guerrilla army and improving the relation between the army and the local people. By the time Yang Jing-yu arrived at our camp in Nanpaizi, not many of his men had survived to come with him under his command. He told me the memory of the losses he had suffered in the Rehe expedition was breaking his heart.

He said his unit had not only shed a great deal of blood during the expedition, but had also gone through terrible hardships on the march from Jian to Mengjiang. The enemy had pursued them without giving them a single moment to breathe, even using airplanes and heavy weapons, including artillery, against them. At one point the whole unit was surrounded by the enemy and fighting desperately for its life. They were being attacked from the air, Cheng Bin was shouting at them to surrender, and the enemy was tightening the noose around them, showering them with artillery fire from all directions.

He had the feeling there was no way out. But the Korean soldiers in the 1st Corps, he said, were first-class fighters, and he praised over and over again Park Son Bong's regiment and Park Song Chol's company who had displayed their courage at this most difficult battle of Waichagou. He had been prepared for the worst at Waichagou, he said.

It was Park Song Chols company that played the decisive role in the battle of Waichagou, for all of Park's company became human bombs and death-defying corps to break through the encirclement and thus rescued Yang Jing-yu's unit. Had it not been for the Korean soldiers, Yang said, his entire unit would have been wiped out at Waichagou, unable to break through the encirclement. Had the Chinese and Korean communists fought separately, rather than as the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, he would not have been here in Nanpaizi with me, he declared, and heartily thanked us for the many Korean cadres we had trained and sent to him.

I seem to remember that we held the meeting at Nanpaizi for ten days or so. In the course of it we analyzed and severely criticized the Left-adventurist nature of the expedition to Rehe, as well as its grave consequences, and earnestly discussed measures to eliminate its evil effects. We decided to move the KPRA forces to the border area around Mt. Paektu and to invigorate our military and political activities in order to counter the enemy's massive offensive. We also resolved to rehabilitate and improve the damaged organizations of the ARF, further activate mass political work, and adhere to the independent position in the revolution. The meeting also reorganized the KPRA into directional forces, appointed their commanders and designated the theatres of their operations.

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

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

At the Beidadingzi meeting in spring 1939, we reaffirmed the policy adopted at the Nanpaizi meeting and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you adopt only dispersed actions when you are surrounded by a large enemy force, you will find it difficult to destroy the large force of attackers. If you fail to destroy the enemy force, you will be pursued and fall completely on the defensive. Needless to say, the dispersed unit finds itself at a disadvantage when compelled to fight a large enemy force.

Aware of the fact that Yang Jing-yu's unit was moving in small, dispersed groups, the enemy sent out even larger forces to the flank and rear of each small unit to destroy them. To make matters worse, Yang Jing-yu built secret camps and stayed there throughout the winter instead of carrying out mobile

maneuvers, with the result that he was unable to evade the enemy's massive "punitive" operations.

To my surprise, at the head of these "punitive" operations was Cheng Bin, who had been commander of a division under Yang's own command and who had surrendered. Cheng Bin became commander of the Tonghua police force in January 1940. In an encounter with Yang's main force Cheng Bin had a six-hour battle with him at Xigang, Mengjiang County. In early February he, with the support of an additional battalion, had another clash with Yang's main force.

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

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



*Lee Wha Rang - Photo: Yang Jing-yu, commander-in-chief of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army was killed on Feb. 23, 1940. Cheng Ping, Yang's trusted lieutenant, led the Japanese to Yang's hideout. Yang was wounded and surrounded by his enemy - but refused to surrender and fought to the end. The Japanese showed their respect to this gallant warrior and gave a samurai burial with Japanese honor guards.*

In spite of the difference in our personal backgrounds and nationality, I shed many tears in secret when I thought of our meeting. The enemy cut Yang's head off, photographed it and scattered the photos all over Manchuria from the air. They even ripped his belly open. Apparently they wanted to know what he had been eating in the wild mountains and how he could display such a superhuman fighting spirit. His stomach was said to have contained nothing but digested dry grass, roots and tree bark - literally no grain or food, just grass, roots and bark.

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

memory of Nanpaizi is so painful.

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

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

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

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

## 19.7. Grandmother Lee Po Ik

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

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

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

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

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

I was operating in command of my unit around Mengjiang County when I got the news that my grandmother had been taken to the village of Jiazaishui, Changbai County, and was locked up there. The enemy locked her up at night and dragged her around the mountains during the daylight hours, forcing her to shout: "Sung Ju, your grandma is here! Come down from the mountains for the sake of your grandma!"

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



the mountains immediately to see her."

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

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

The news left me in shock; my blood boiled and I shook with rage. Was it really possible that those wolves in human skin could drag about an old woman in her sixties over the frozen wilderness at 40 degrees below zero?

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

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

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

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

All through my childhood I had basked in the exceptional warmth of her affection. This was one of the reasons I was barely able to keep my mental balance when I learned of her captivity from the letter sent

by the underground organization at Jiazaishui. I cannot find the words to express the pain of my emotions at the time.

In my childhood and boyhood, grandma was no less dear to me than my mother. The childhood memory that made the greatest impression on me at Mangyongdae involved a toffee peddler who carried a flat wooden box with toffee in it and who used to shout, "Buy my toffee, buy my toffee!" Sometimes toffee peddlers came with pushcarts in which they collected rags and worn-out rubber shoes. When they clinked their broad-bladed scissors to announce their arrival, all the village kids used to run out and gather around them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

After my father's death, grandma's affection for me grew even stronger. She found the joy of life apparently in my growth, in the growth of the eldest grandchild in her family. What else could ever have given her joy in life? Could she afford good food, or smart clothing or the luxury of travel?

Her simple and earnest dream was to see her country independent. Her work and pleasure was to do all she could for her children, who were fighting for Korea's freedom, and to give them her loyal support while she waited for the day of independence.

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

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

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

She had nothing that shallow in mind. This means that her aim was very high, so to speak. Her words inspired me with great strength, for the fact that she entrusted me with the great cause of national independence was a sign that she had complete confidence in me. She stayed at Fusong for some time, instead of returning to Mangyongdae. When we moved to Antu, she also stayed with us, consoling my mother and my uncle's wife.

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

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

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

Park Cha Sok, one of my mates at the Whasung Uisuk School, came to see me at the secret camp at Nanpaizi. He was there just as we were holding an important meeting with Yang Jing-yu and other cadres of the 1st and 2nd Corps. His purpose was to persuade me to "surrender". Lee Jong Rak was also there after Park Cha Sok left me. Park Cha Sok honestly confessed his crimes to me, telling me of how he had

dragged my grandmother around West Jiandao. It was he who told me she never once yielded to the enemy, just as I knew she wouldn't.

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

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

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

Lee Jong Rak, embarrassed, said, "The newspaper lied. Sung Ju is alive and continues taking part in the unsuccessful independence movement. He's having a terrible time in the mountains and he isn't getting any results. The whole Oriental world is now in the hands of the Japanese, but he doesn't even know the fact. He's living on raw rice and pine-needles on Mt. Paektu without a grain of salt, and he's covered with hair like a wild animal and his feet are worn down to dull butts, he's losing all his human shape. Because he uses the art of contracting distance, fighting and evading us, we can't bring him down from the mountain.

The Japanese government says that if he comes over to them, they'll give him absolutely anything he wants, including the post of commander of their Kwangtung Army or commander of their Korea Army. His family will, of course, live in luxury in a palace. So we must bring him around as soon as possible, and you, grandma, are the best person to do the job." He produced a fat roll of bank-notes, thousands of yen, and said that this was an advance. She could buy whatever the family needed with it and even hire a cook.

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

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

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

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

Park Cha Sok once consoled her when he saw that her feet had blistered. He said, "Grandma, we are awfully sorry to have put you to this trouble. To tell the truth, I myself feel bad about this, and I'm doing it against my will. So how much more pain you must be feeling." Apparently, he felt sympathy for her even though he had become a turncoat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The superintendent was so shocked at her reply that he dropped his wine glass. Although he was a nasty

brute who used to draw out his pistol and resort to cruelties at the slightest provocation until the offender begged for mercy, he was so overwhelmed that he dared not think of hurting her. Instead, he exclaimed, "Kim Il Sung's grandma is no ordinary woman. Her grandson is said to be the tiger of Mt. Paektu, so she must really be an old tigress!" Park Cha Sok confessed that he had felt reminded of his despicable treachery every day by her upright and dignified manner.

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

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

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

The grandparents at Mangyongdae kept the letter with care until Comrade Kim Il Sung returned to the homeland after liberation. The letter was published in the newspaper Jon gno, in its issue dated May 29, 1946, and thus came to the attention of the public. Jongno was the precursor of Rodong Sinmun.

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

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

The text of the letter is as follows:

"I treasure your warm heart, Grandma.

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

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

Comrade Kim Il Sung's family at Mangyongdae were all moved to tears by the letter. Later Grandmother Lee Po Ik was again taken to North Jiandan and subjected to all sorts of cruelties by Lim Su San's "surrender hunting team".

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

I heard the news of grandma's second forced and tortuous travel around Manchuria when I was in the vicinity of Chechangzi, Antu County. The "surrender hunting team" consisted mostly of Japanese special agents. Lim Su San, who had been the chief of staff for our main force, also belonged to the hunting team. When surrendering to the enemy, he had pledged to his Japanese boss that he would capture me at any cost. This hunting team first meant to take Uncle Hyong Rok as a hostage. Probably they thought it would be useless to take grandma because she had not obeyed them the first time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Because it had produced many patriots and even the commander of the revolutionary army, my family suffered indescribable hardships for several decades. In the closing years of Japanese imperialist rule, Uncle Hyong Rok got himself some simple fishing tackle and lived by fishing in the waters off Nampho, away from enemy oppression.

Grandma suffered the most in my family. When I went back to my home for the first time after liberation, I said to her, "Grandma, you have been through a lot because of me."

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

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

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

Her words were too profound to be judged as compliments from a countrywoman who was nearly seventy years old. I was moved by her words and believed that she herself was really great. I can say that it was a tremendous victory that at a time when Japanese military rule was at its highest she upheld her dignity and honor as the mother and grandmother of revolutionaries, without yielding to the enemy's power and threats. In my country there are many patriotic grandmothers like mine.

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

I think that my family tradition and the revolution turned her into such a heroic woman. What do I mean by my family tradition? I mean that to my family the country and the people are the most precious in the world and that they feel they must give their lives without the slightest hesitation for the good of the country. In short, it's their love for the country and the people, love for the nation. Grandma was greatly influenced by her children. She could not help being influenced by her sons and grandsons, because they were all committed to the revolution.

In a family whose children are devoted to the revolution, the parents tend to work for the revolution as well. If they don't actively work for it, they at least sympathize with the revolution, or help their children in the revolution. People often say that children with good parents will grow up to be useful adults because of their parents' influence. That is right. Likewise, parents who have intelligent children will be



enlightened and awakened by them and will try to stay in step with them. For this reason, I always emphasize the importance of the role of younger people in revolutionizing their families.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"My grandmother is an old countrywoman who knows little. However, she did not in the least object to her sons, nephews and grandsons taking the road of revolution; on the contrary, she encouraged them.

Having left her, these revolutionaries were killed by the enemy, locked up in jail, or went missing. But

she never once lost heart. She was taken to Manchuria by the enemy and was subjected to all sorts of cruel treatment, but she lived up to her original principles. "What does this mean? It means that although she did not know how to read and write, she fought through to the end with the strength of hope. She looked into the future and relied on her hope to the last. Her hope was finally realized. Korea's liberation on August 15 last year was the fulfillment of her hope.

"My grandmother lived to see that day and saw it at long last while she still lives. "I hope there will be many more banquets like this, and I wish her a long life."

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

How was she able to survive the stifling age of darkness and live such a long life? The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, who witnessed the more than eighty years of her life, so much of which was spent in suffering, said: Work was one thing that enabled my grandmother to live long. My grandparents worked all their lives. The ceaseless toil of my grandmother to feed and clothe her children hardened her both physically and mentally. People who carry out diligent physical labor in order to create something beneficial to community life usually live long.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wishing to give some rest to my grandparents, who had grown old while working all their lives, I occasionally invited them to my home.

Whenever they came, they asked for something to do. So I once gave them a cracked gourd to mend. Grandma said that the food cooked by her granddaughter-in-law was delicious and that it was lovely to embrace her great-grandchildren, but all the same she was bored to death without work to do. She could feel something start to bum inside her as soon as she was not treading on soil, she said, and went back to Mangyongdae in less than a week on each visit.

When we occasionally wanted to give her something to help her in her life, she declined the offer, saying we didn't need to worry about her. She told us to worry instead about the people. A premier is also a man, and why should I not wish to pile comforts on my grandmother, especially when I think of her so narrowly surviving all the cruelties she had suffered while traveling in the shadow of death?

My honest wish was to give thick, cotton-padded clothes to my grandmother, who had lived all her life in thin clothing, and to take a few bottles of soju (Korean liquor) to her on her birthday to wish her a long life. However, she even declined this simple offer.

Had I been an ordinary citizen, not Premier, I'm sure I could have done more for her. I could have cut trees with my own hands and built a tile-roofed house for her, taken her to the theatre to see *The Tale of Sim Chong* and so on, made sure that she lived in comfort the rest of her life.

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

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

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

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

## 19.8. In the Forest of Nanpaizi

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In the latter half of the 1930s when the anti-Japanese armed struggle was at its height, the Japanese imperialists stepped up their military offensive against the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, while at the same time doggedly pursuing a scheme they had cooked up to get what they had failed to get with guns.

They figured that if they set in motion a "hunt for surrender" by sending traitors to the revolution as emissaries to the guerrilla army, they would be able to undermine the revolutionary fighters ideologically. They made turncoats and those who had dropped out of the revolutionary ranks their "surrender hunters". Among these stooges were some of the great leader's schoolmates and others who had had some connection with his revolutionary activities.

Whenever he referred to the meeting at Nanpaizi, the great leader mentioned Lee Jong Rak and Park Cha Sok, his mates at Whasung Uisuk School as well as his comrades in the days of the Down-with-Imperialism Union, for it was these two who had come to the secret camp on a mission to hunt for the great leader's "surrender".

I think I will touch in passing upon Lee Jong Rak and Park Cha Sok who came to see me at the time of the meeting at Nanpaizi. They were my mates at Whasung Uisuk School, and joined me in organizing the Down-with-Imperialism Union and the Society for Rallying Comrades<sup>13</sup>. They had also worked with me in raising the Korean Revolutionary Army. People working together for revolution over several years become bonded to each other as closely as if they were blood brothers. These two schoolmates were also my comrades in the revolution for four to five years.

Park Cha Sok and Lee Jong Rak became my close companions a little earlier than Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su and other comrades in my Jirin days. When we were forming the DIU at Huadian, Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su had not yet joined us. Park Cha Sok and Lee Jong Rak were the core of the organization. I can say, therefore, that they were my earliest comrades and companions in the revolution.

It's a highly significant moment when people who were committed to a student and youth movement and an underground struggle happen to meet again after many years of forced separation. People who have been unable to hear from one another and have no idea whether the other was alive or dead because one might have been fighting arms in hand in the mountains while the other was locked up behind bars by the enemy - such people will have a deeply meaningful reunion.

To my regret, however, our reunion was not even pleasant, because Lee Jong Rak and Park Cha Sok had come to the secret camp on a mission from their Japanese bosses to cajole us into "surrender". They came to see me not as old comrades of the revolution, but as marionettes of the Japanese under orders to bargain for my capitulation. That these erstwhile prisoners had undertaken such a bargain meant they had

betrayed not only me but the revolution as well. Hence they could not be seen as honorable guests.

I found it a bitter experience to sit together with these old schoolmates who had betrayed the revolution.

I seem to remember it was in the latter half of the 1930s that the enemy launched their "surrender hunting" campaign against the Korean People's Revolutionary Army on a large scale and in a more atrocious manner than ever before.

In the early days the Japanese imperialists had not yet adopted "surrender hunting" as the basic strategy in their war against the anti-Japanese armed forces. They had concentrated all their efforts on armed attacks against the young anti-Japanese guerrillas and the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist forces. They had not recognized or used or permitted any other method than the armed attack. They had concentrated only on the policy of the "punitive" attack. In this context, Japanese army headquarters had not even approved of "surrender hunting", probably considering such a thing to be childish and contrary to their samurai spirit. As a matter of fact, they had actually enforced a rule they called "strict prohibition of inducing surrender".

From this we can see that Japanese army headquarters had looked upon the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China as a target capable of being destroyed by armed attack alone and countered us only by that means. No doubt it had boosted their confidence in their military capabilities when they saw Zhang Xue-liang's 300,000-strong army collapse overnight at the time of the September 18 incident.

However, their armed strike had failed to check the growth of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army and the development of the armed struggle against them. In these circumstances, the Japanese imperialists invented what they called "cultural punitive operations", by which they meant "rooting up basic evils", "ideological indoctrination" or "surrender hunting".

It is interesting to see what the Japanese imperialist aggressors had to say and to discover why they came to employ the tactics of "cultural punitive operations" which were supposed to "eradicate the basic roots" of the anti-Japanese armed struggle and "prevent the regrowth of these roots".

The Thought Monthly, published by the criminal bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Justice, has the following to say in its issue No.77 (pp. 139-41. November 1940): "As for the reason why it is so difficult to punish the communist bandits, this is because the communist army burns with a fanatical fighting spirit based on communism. It uses cunning propaganda as well as guerrilla tactics expressed in phrases such as, 'We retreat when the enemy attacks, and we advance when the enemy withdraws.' It operates from the guerrilla zones, that is, dense forests in deep mountains, and wins over the people by means of clandestine propaganda activities. That is why it is understandable that armed punitive attacks alone are unsuccessful....

"Recourse to armed forces alone may be effective for a time, but will never eradicate the basic roots or prevent their regrowth; it will have no more effect than brushing away flies from food, or cutting off

weeds at the shoot.

"In other words, the main reason for the failure to prevent them from acting as they please in spite of repeated punitive operations is that so far only armed efforts have been made. We have neglected the work of eradicating the basic roots, that is, ideological work, and have left the matter to the army alone, without enlisting the cooperation of all the state machinery."

While conducting "surrender hunting" on a large scale in the name of "cultural punitive operations", the enemy pursued the policy of "wiping out bandits by using bandits". They formed "punitive" forces with those who had deserted the anti-Japanese armed ranks and surrendered or defected to the enemy, putting them to work conducting "punitive" operations against their former comrades-in-arms, superiors and subordinates.

The fact that the enemy stepped up the use of such a non-military method as "cultural punitive operations" in the latter half of the 1930s is a clear indication of the total failure by that time of their one-sided policy of military action, a ploy they had considered unbeatable at that time. That was why they had to resort to the despicable scheme of "surrender hunting".

In the 1937-38 period our anti-Japanese armed struggle was in full swing. Our force was very strong, and our battle results were brilliant. We could even attack a number of large walled towns without difficulty. Under the influence of the armed struggle, the mass struggle also increased in intensity. However, the anti-Japanese revolution, which was at its peak thanks to our unremitting efforts, suffered a tremendous setback with the expedition to Rehe. Yang Jing-yu's 1st Corps and many other units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China lost the bulk of their troops in the expedition. Deserters and defectors appeared among the anti-Japanese forces. Several commanding officers abandoned the armed struggle and surrendered to the enemy.

With these developments the enemy judged that the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China were on the verge of collapse. They believed that we had been demoralized into a rabble and were divided among ourselves beyond remedy, and that one way or another, they could wipe us out. I think that a few instances of success in their "surrender hunting" also stimulated their appetite for these "cultural punitive operations". The surrender of some major commanding officers from our side left the enemy with the belief that there was a limit to the faith and will of the communists. With this assumption, the enemy undertook a campaign to demoralize the People's Revolutionary Army.

The Japanese imperialists made the Korean People's Revolutionary Army the main target of their "cultural punitive operations" by intensifying the military offensive on the one hand, while on the other persisting in "surrender hunting".

Why did they direct their main "punitive" efforts at the Korean People's Revolutionary Army? Obviously, because the KPRA was their main enemy, having threatened the Japanese imperialists most dangerously all through the first half of the 1930s, and also because the KPRA was the strongest of the

anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China, the most difficult enemy to destroy. That was why the operations of the KPRA so often appeared in press reports. The news of our struggle even reached the United States.

An article published in *Sinhan Minbo*, a newspaper for Korean compatriots in the United States, reads in part: "A detailed Tianjin news dispatch says that the most courageous and efficient fighting force among the Korean and Chinese volunteers is the Korean division under the command of General Kim Il Sung, a Korean. (According to newspapers in Japan and news from Korea, Mr. Kim Il Sung's armed force, operating from its base in Jiandao, crossed the border last June and attacked Pochonbo, Kapsan, to strike terror into the hearts of the Japanese army and police. The subsequent actions of his army were frequently reported by *Tong-A Ilbo* and other newspapers.)....

"They are solidly united and determined to share life and death with each other. Their unity is all the stronger because it is supported by a sort of systematic family rule and by traditional spiritual training leading to self-sacrificing cooperation, loyalty and courage. Under the Commander's orders the men will go through fire and water....

Their aim is to destroy the enemy to save their nation, and their strategy is based mostly on guerrilla warfare - appearing from God knows where and disappearing to God knows where - to throw the enemy off balance.

"A Soviet military expert observed, 'If China and Japan declare war formally against each other, the Japanese will need 200,000 troops to cope with the volunteer forces in this one corner of Manchuria.' If this observation is reliable, then they are truly a great force." (*Sinhan Minbo*, September 30, 1937.)

The Japanese imperialists tried to wipe out the KPRA by resorting to military means, misleading propaganda and so forth, but they failed. They were literally helpless. The more the enemy intensified their offensive, the stronger our forces grew, and the wider the news of our fighting spread.

Failing in both their "punitive" operations and their lying propaganda, the Japanese imperialists adopted the idea of "surrender hunting" because they were at their wits' end. How much they pinned their hopes on this method can be seen in the fact that they went and dragged out my grandmother for this purpose. The enemy selected the main targets for their "cultural punitive operations" from among important persons. Their scheme was not simple.

Their scheme to "hunt for the surrender" of Yang Jing-yu was undertaken by the "Provincial Surrender Hunting Section", while the "hunt" for me was in charge of the "Central Special Surrender Hunting Section" that belonged to Police Headquarters under the Public Security Ministry of Manchukuo.

It was said that an official document of the Japanese imperialists existed dealing with their military and police attempts to use my teacher from my days of Fusong Primary School for the purpose of their "surrender hunting". But there was no instance of my teacher coming to see me or sending a message to

me.

Park Cha Sok and Lee Jong Rak appeared at the Nanpaizi secret camp in the midst of the enemy's "surrender hunting". When the enemy failed in their scheme to use my relatives, they sent my old schoolmates to do the job.

I guessed that the Japanese had sent Park Cha Sok to sound out my reaction to their "surrender hunting" and that they had kept Lee Jong Rak for a showdown at the end. Park Cha Sok came to our secret camp when my unit was at Nanpaizi.

One day the security NCO at the guard post sent an orderly to notify me that a man, Park Cha Sok by name, had come to see me. I was surprised at the news. He had been captured by the enemy while operating in the homeland in the summer of 1930. I became suspicious of his purpose in coming to Nanpaizi from prison all of a sudden. Even if he had been released after serving his term, how could he, who had to be on the blacklist, evade the strict surveillance of the enemy and slip into this secret camp through double and triple rings of Japanese troops?

If he had come all the way to work for the revolution again, I might have hoisted him on my shoulders and called for cheers, but it was not normal for the enemy to have given him such freedom. Despite my suspicion, however, I decided to see him, since he had come all this way. I also thought he could tell me how Uncle Hyong Gwon and Choe Hyo Il were getting on in prison, and many other things I wished to know.

I found a different man in Park Cha Sok, although his appearance was the same as before. He was glad to see me as if he had met a member of his family from whom he had been forced to separate. But at the time, he looked dispirited somehow.

I asked him where his former high spirit had gone, and why he had become so timid. I told him to look into the future and pluck up his courage now that he had survived penal servitude.

He said, however, that he had become a turncoat in prison, and confessed in tears how he had become a stooge of the enemy and why he had come to Nanpaizi. While suffering in prison for several years after being sentenced, he had lost his confidence in the triumph of the revolution and had begun to waver. When he saw Uncle Hyong Gwon tied to a cross and being beaten he had completely lost his spirit to resist. Sensing that Park Cha Sok was vacillating, the enemy had moved him to another prison. Releasing him before his term expired, they had forced him to switch sides and involved him in the "surrender hunting team".

Park Cha Sok was recruited by Jang So Bong specifically for the "surrender scheme" aimed at me. Jang So Bong, himself a turncoat, had distinguished himself earlier in revolutionizing Kalun, working together with Kim Hyok and Kim Won U when we were pioneering in central Manchuria. He was also arrested with Lee Jong Rak at the Changchun railway station in early 1931 while working to obtain weapons. The



enemy put a geisha in his service and made a home for them in Changchun, then went on to use him as their full-time special agent. As the Japanese espionage organization searched for people who had been closely linked with me, Jang So Bong recruited Lee Jong Rak, who in turn picked up Park Cha Sok.

Park Cha Sok confessed to me honestly that when interrogated by the enemy, he had owned up to all the details of his connection with me? that he had been close to me in our DIU days, how we had formed the Anti-Imperialist Youth League, what he had done in Jirin and its surroundings after the formation of the Young Communist League, how he had become a member of an armed group and how he had been sent to the homeland.

I asked whether he was doing this thing on his own, or on someone's orders.

He said that he had no official position, but was forced to come here by the Japanese. He added in tears?although he knew that such a trick would have no effect on me?that he had availed himself of this opportunity just to come and see me in person. I thought he told the truth when he said he simply wanted to see me.

Park Cha Sok gave us several pieces of information we needed. He also told me about his journey to Mangyongdae to wheedle my grandmother into "surrender hunting". He was born in Pyongyang, and as a boyhood friend of Uncle Hyong Gwon's he often visited Mangyongdae to see my uncle. In the course of this, he had got to know my grandparents.

Park Cha Sok said that Lee Jong Rak had informed the enemy of Park's background and had suggested that Park was the right man to play a big role in the scheme to "hunt" me. Park said he deserved to be put to death a thousand times for the crime of dragging my grandmother around, but that he had taken care of her personal safety as best he could. He admitted that he and Lee Jong Rak were worse than beasts and said he wouldn't complain even if he were punished with death a hundred times.

When among us, Park had had a keen sense of justice and had worked with great enthusiasm and ambition as a young revolutionary strong in his anti-Japanese spirit. After the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army, he had worked in a highly responsible manner. When arrested and put in chains, however, his ideology degenerated and his human qualities crumbled. If anything at all remained of his old self, it was the thread of friendship that tied him to me.

Though on the payroll of the Japanese imperialists, he had not volunteered to cooperate with them, nor had he thought of gaining money from such cooperation. He had simply failed to foresee victory in the revolution because he thought Japan was too strong. He had thought himself lucky just to stay alive. The hunger for life had led him to switch sides, and as a turncoat he had had no other choice but to obey the Japanese meekly. Although involved in the "surrender hunting" scheme, he was acting against his will.

Having to obey the will and orders of the Japanese imperialists in spite of hatred for them was the tragic lot of a man like Park Cha Sok, who had abandoned his revolutionary convictions. Seeing Park Cha Sok,

I thought deeply about genuine human qualities. He had grown older, but the look of his face had not changed. And yet he was a different man. His shell remained, but it seemed empty. He had lost his soul. I have to say that it's a man's ideology that makes him a real being. What can remain of a man who has lost his ideology? An empty shell. Once your ideology crumbles, your personality will also crumble. Park Cha Sok became a soulless man because he had abandoned his ideology. Such a man's face looks like the face of one who has lost his sight.

In spite of my knowledge that Park had degenerated, I explained things to him and advised him from various angles, with the feeling of pulling him back from the enemy's grip. This was my reaction to the enemy who had deprived me of my old comrade. I wished to revive at least his love for his country, although it might be impossible to bring him back to the Park Cha Sok of his days in the DIU. My heart also retained some of my old friendship towards him.

I said that a man guilty of crimes against his nation could neither live nor die like a man. Park Cha Sok affirmed that it was true. He went on, "With my surrender to the Japanese imperialists, living itself has become a nuisance, my daily existence is a torture. What is the use of living like this? I have made up my mind to die, but I have no courage to kill myself. Seeing you and talking to you today lightens my heart, but I have no wish to live any longer. Please kill me. I wish to die at your hands."

"Would it make me feel better if I killed you?" I said. "Make a decent, fresh start with a clear conscience so as to atone for your wrongdoing. Do it for the sake of your moral obligation towards your old comrades in the revolution."

Park said he would keep in mind what I told him. To tell the truth, my comrades were all set to execute the turncoat, but I dissuaded them. Because he had confessed and repented honestly, I wanted to treat him humanely. I feasted him on the meat of a wild boar my men had hunted down and drank few glasses with him. While sharing sleeping quarters with him at the Headquarters' tent overnight, I advised him to live like a man, and then sent him back.

He lived up to his pledge to me. He delivered my letter to my grandparents as I asked him to do. Seeing him return safely from the secret camp at Nanpaizi, the enemy sent along Lee Jong Rak some time after. A small unit of the guerrillas who had been to Linjiang brought Lee Jong Rak back with them.

We had sent the small unit to Linjiang to procure clothing for the winter. While performing their mission, the unit met a trader who was a good wheeler-dealer. He was serving the Japanese and at the same time supplying goods to the guerrillas, benefiting from both sides. He entered into a bargain with our unit. He said he would offer the cloth and the cotton wool we needed if they agreed to take a civilian in the service of the Japanese army to Headquarters of the revolutionary army in return.

The unit leader agreed to the bargain on condition that the trader approach his superiors and let them suspend "punitive" actions for a while so that the bulky loads of supplies might be carried away without encountering trouble on the way. As a result, the enemy's "punitive" forces, which had been operating

over a wide area ranging from Jiazaishui, Linjiang, to Nanpaizi, suspended their operations and remained quiet for some time.

Taking advantage of this, the small unit was able to carry large amounts of supplies in safety to Nanpaizi. The civilian who came with the unit at that time was Lee Jong Rak. Lee Jong Rak behaved arrogantly from the outset, earning the dislike of our comrades.

Without showing any sign of fear and behaving with much imprudence in the camp of the revolutionary army, he laughed, talked wildly and carried on like a thoroughly thick-skinned man. On meeting Oh Jung Hup, who was at the entrance to the secret camp in charge of the guards, Lee Jong Rak offered a present of a watch to him, saying that he must be having a hard time in the mountain in the cold. Oh Jung Hup produced his own pocket watch and said he did not need another watch.

"Don't stand on ceremony, take the watch!" Lee Jong Rak insisted. "It's better to have two watches than one." Oh Jung Hup retorted that one should keep time by one watch, not by two watches - by a revolutionary watch one day and a reactionary watch the next. His words were a severe criticism of Lee Jong Rak's treachery to the revolution.

Although Lee Jong Rak behaved in a supercilious way from the moment of his arrival in the secret camp, I did not berate him for his crimes from the start. It seemed to me that friendship could not be slashed off at a stroke or burnt up at once. My old friendship with him was too deep for that. Lee Jong Rak had been one of my closest friends in the old days.

In his days of the DIU he was a stalwart revolutionary with his own strong views. He was the most informed of us all on military affairs, and was responsive to new ideological trends. Around the age of sixteen he had joined the Independence Army and acted under the leadership of Tongui-bu. At that time he was strongly patriotic and acted in a hold, impressive way. He was a man of feeling.

We recommended him to a responsible post in the Korean Revolutionary Army, an expression of our great hope and trust in him. He was very popular among us. What a disappointment it was to us to hear the news of his becoming a turncoat, betraying our love for him and confidence in him! Lee Jong Rak did not hide the fact that he was now a civilian employee of the Japanese army and belonged to its "surrender hunting team".

"Nothing would be better," he said, "than destroying Japanese imperialism, liberating the country and realizing communism worldwide, as the DIU programme said. However, that's all just a pipedream. When I joined the DIU and helped to form the Korean Revolutionary Army, and even when I was jailed, I believed that the ideal could be realized. However, the September 18 and July 7 incidents changed my mind for me. In Korea the communist movement has already been wiped out, and the motto 'Japanese and Koreans are one' has become an established fact. Japan has become the master of East Asia.

There is a saying that whoever is in possession of the Central Plain (area to the south of the middle

reaches of the Yellow River?Tr.) will rule the Oriental world. Look how the Sino-Japanese War is developing! Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing have fallen, and the operations against Xuzhou and Wuhan and the attack on Guangdong have been successful. How can you cope with the invincible empire of Japan, which has swallowed up three provinces in Northeast China and has now occupied more than half the vast East Asian continent? Sung Ju, you don't know how the general situation is changing, because you are always in the mountains. I came here to help you out of your futile suffering here in the mountains." He pretended to have come to do me a great favor.

His words and behavior were proof to me that he was rotten to the core and that there was no hope of saving him. In order to keep the enemy who surrounded us from disturbing us until we finished the meeting, I told Lee Jong Rak to send them a note. I dictated it to him, to the effect that on his arrival in the camp of Kim Il Sung's army he found that Headquarters had moved towards Mt. Paektu, that it would take some time to get in touch with it since it was many miles away, that he was approaching one of Kim Il Sung's units to get in touch with him and that they should wait quietly until further notice from him.

We sent the note, in Lee Jong Rak's handwriting, to the surrounding enemy and continued the meeting with calm and composure. One day I said to him that he looked well, that his hands were plump and smooth, and that he seemed to be faring pretty well. He replied that he was living well on the payroll of the Japanese, and that he owed his good fortune to me. He said that because Kim Il Sung was a great man, the Japanese were trying hard to bring him round to their side, and for this purpose they had gathered his close acquaintances and old friends and were according them high treatment.

"If men like me are given such high treatment," he went on, "think of the honored position you would hold if you came over to the Japanese! They are ready to give you, General Kim, whatever post you want, if you come round to them, the post of the commander of their Korea army or anything else you may ask for. You may administer Korea as their Korea army commander, or have Manchuria under your command here. You can do as you please. They want you to cooperate with Japan in either way.

They say that in future the United States will most certainly extend its force to the west coast of the Pacific and try to gulp down Japan, Korea and Manchuria, and they want the Asian people to join hands with each other in containing and fighting back the United States for the sake of Asian co-prosperity."

The Japanese were very foxy. When they sent Lee Jong Rak to me, they knew that the word "surrender" would have no effect on me. So they told him to negotiate with me in terms of "cooperation" as a compromise.

The idea of Asian cooperation to contain the force of the United States was the expression of the doctrine of "great Asia" which the Japanese loudly advertised in those days. They fussed about building "a prosperous Asia for the Asians" under Japan's leadership. Who would be foolish enough to believe such nonsense? Their doctrine of "great Asia" was simply a cloak to hide their own greed for their monopoly over Asia.

Whenever they invade others, imperialists cook up a pretext to justify their aggression. The Japanese imperialists loudly preached the superiority of the "Yamato race" and spread the idea of a "world family", with Japan at its centre. When they were invading Korea, they said Japan would "take charge of this nation, which is incapable of independence, and lead and protect them."

When they were occupying Manchuria, they claimed to be exercising their "right to self-defense"; when they were fabricating Manchukuo, they fussed about the "concord of five races" and the construction of a "royally blessed land"; and when they were provoking the Sino-Japanese War, they shouted the mottos, "Punish the mobsters' land!" (which meant meting out punishment to China which had turned into a land of mobsters), or they talked about the "construction of a new China", and the "union of Japan, Manchuria and China".

As Lee Jong Rak persisted in preaching the doctrine of "great Asia", I said, "If we push into Japan, keep the Japanese under our iron fists and declare that we will enforce the doctrine of 'great Asia' under Korea's leadership, what will happen? Will the Japanese accept the doctrine as valid?"

I also asked why the Japanese, if they were really so invincible, had been suffering such a headache for so many years, unable to defeat the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, and why they were using such a childish trick as "surrender hunting" through a man like him instead of fighting honorably against us.

Lee Jong Rak could not give me a plausible answer to that question either. He said that it was probably because the Japanese meant to spare Kim Il Sung's life, there would be no other reason. He insisted that the strong defeating the weak was an immutable law of nature; that I should give up my idea of resistance, which stood no chance of success, and accept the Japanese proposal; and that if we continued our resistance, the three Japanese divisions that surrounded Nanpaizi in tight rings might destroy us to the last man by using poison gas or a new type of high-performance gun.

I declared that even if the Japanese were to make me their prime minister rather than merely their Korea army commander, we would continue fighting, and that even if they fired poison-gas bombs or high-explosive shells, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army would never yield to them.

He then went on to tell me about Han Yong Ae. When they were preparing the "surrender" scheme for me, he said, the Japanese intended to bring her into the scheme. But she flatly refused to cooperate. Lee Jong Rak said that he and Han Yong Ae had been in the same prison in Sinuiju, and that she remained unusually loyal to me. By order of the Japanese, he said, he had asked her to cooperate in the scheme, but she rebuffed him. She had severely criticized him, saying, "I won't do such a dirty thing. You shouldn't either. Kim Sung Ju is not a man to be fooled by a stupid 'surrender' trick."

Hearing this, I felt thankful to her and detested Lee Jong Rak all the more. I told him, "See! A woman like Han Yong Ae refused to turn traitor and remains honorable. By contrast, you not only abandoned the revolution, you're also acting as a Japanese dog. Shame on you! You've turned into a thoroughly vile person!"

Realizing it was impossible to persuade me, he tried to hook some of my men. He asked one of my guards if he had parents at home, and if he didn't want to see his family. He tried coaxing him, saying that formerly the Japanese used to kill all the guerrillas they captured, but that now they would not only keep them alive but also give them a chance to start a new life. He suggested that if the guard wanted to lead a comfortable life close to his parents and with a handsome woman by his side, he should go with him, Lee.

Hearing about this, I gave up on him as a dog, a loyal servant of the Japanese. Unlike Park Cha Sok, who was running errands for the Japanese against his will, Lee was serving the enemy of his own free will, not caring a straw about his country or nation. At the unanimous verdict of my men, Headquarters branded Lee Jong Rak a traitor to the nation and executed him. We covered his dead body with a warning that traitors, whether they were my schoolmates or anybody else, would be executed in the same way.

My account of the interviews with Lee Jong Rak and Park Cha Sok at Nanpaizi has been seen by many people as similar to a fictional story. If the event were described vividly, it would make an excellent story. It's a rare real-life event in which a man who has pledged to share life and death on the road of revolution becomes a turncoat, spreads a propaganda about the strength of Japan and stresses the futility of resistance, then tries to get the commander of the revolutionary army to turn traitor and join the enemy. This was one of my most extraordinary experiences.

Frankly speaking, both interviews cut me to the quick. If total strangers had come on such errands, I would not have been so bitterly hurt. Both of them had been so spirited when we were forming the DIU. We all pledged to share life and death, none of our oaths portended treachery. However, the two people I loved most dearly and held in deepest trust betrayed me. When the revolution is going strong, many people take part in the struggle and seldom waver or drop out of the revolutionary ranks.

But when the situation is disadvantageous to the revolution and difficulties start to crop up, waverers, deserters and capitulators appear. This is why officials must carry out ideological work properly among the people when the situation is grim and the country is in difficulty. True, people's ideology is not visible. Nobody has his ideology branded on his forehead, so it is hard to pick out waverers and defeatists who have lost their revolutionary faith. However, people's ideology will never fail to reveal itself through some aspects of work and life. Officials must do ideological work prudently to suit an individual's state of preparedness in order to consolidate his revolutionary faith.

What is the lesson here? It is that one's ideology must be made one's conviction. If it remains mere intellectual awareness, it will be of no avail. An ideology that is not also one's conviction is liable to degeneration. If one's ideology degenerates, one will become like Lee Jong Rak or Park Cha Sok. So: if you acquire an ideology you think is just, you must make it your unshakeable conviction. Intellectual knowledge can serve as a genuine tool for creating that which is new only when it is supported by revolutionary belief. One's eyes see the present reality, whereas one's belief looks into the future.

If one's belief breaks up, one's spirit will die; and if one's spirit dies, one will lose all value as a human

being. A person's morality and conscience are both based on his faith. People without faith cannot hang on to their conscience and morality, nor can they maintain their humanity. Only with strong faith can they shape their destiny properly, remain loyal to their comrades and contribute truly to the Party and the revolution, to their country and their fellow citizens.

# 20.1. Arduous March

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When we talk about the Arduous March, we refer to the trek made by the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army from Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, to Beidadingzi, Changbai County, from early December 1938 to the end of March the following year. Over half a century has passed since the march, but our people still remember this epochal event.

The great exploits performed by the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung during this march and the indomitable revolutionary spirit displayed by the anti-Japanese guerrillas are a priceless heritage our people will pass down through generations as a source for their inspiration.

The following is the transcript of the great leader's recollections about the Arduous March, of an address he made to historians and writers.

You comrades have worked hard to create and disseminate systematic accounts of the revolutionary traditions established by our Party. Our writers have produced many literary works of great educational value that deal with the revolutionary traditions. Over a long period of time I have been getting requests from you to tell you about the Arduous March. I shall take this opportunity to dwell on that event.

Late 1938 to early 1939, the time spent on the Arduous March, was our bitterest time of trial in the entire history of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The situation in those days was not suitable for us to advance into the homeland in a large force. Developments were so unfavorable to us that a man like Om Kwang Ho openly wailed that the revolution was on the wane. A large expedition to the homeland in these circumstances, in fact, involved a great risk.

Yet we ventured upon this expedition towards the Yalu River in order to push into Korea. Why? Because we wanted to turn the adverse revolutionary situation in our favor. Merely worrying about the state of affairs was not a solution to the problem. If we had stayed put in a hide-out somewhere, we could, of course, have passed the winter in safety and preserved our force. Maintaining the status quo in that manner, however, was not the kind of attitude that would overcome the difficulties facing the revolution. This was why we decided to undertake the march towards the homeland, even though it would be arduous. We knew that this was the only way to bring new hope and energy to the revolution.

In 1938 the people in West Jiandao and Korea were in low spirits. During the "Hyesan incident", many underground organization members were arrested and the revolutionary movement in the homeland got bogged down. On top of that, the enemy gleefully boasted that there was no more People's Revolutionary Army. The Japanese propaganda, though a total lie, had its effect on many people. Ominous rumors were so rife that people who normally did not believe the enemy propaganda were feeling apprehensive. Even renowned revolutionaries were losing heart and turning to Mt. Paektu for encouragement.



The enemy was in a much better position than we were to make propaganda, having a powerful mass media at their command. A plausible, shocking story that a KPRA unit had been annihilated at a certain time in a certain place, carried in a newspaper with a circulation of thousands of copies, would be read by thousands of people. The radio also gave out such propaganda, of course.

Our own "mass media" were only a few newspapers, magazines, handbills and written appeals, published by guerrilla units. Occasionally we used some materials printed by underground organizations in different provinces. What is worse, the circulation of these "illegal" publications was carefully monitored and very difficult. Simply scattering a handbill could easily cost the life of a patriot. An underground worker had to risk his life to go into Korea with a knapsack of leaflets.

Advancing into the homeland and shooting off our guns there was the best way to declare that the KPRA was still very much alive and to expose the enemy's propaganda lie that the KPRA had been destroyed. The sound of our gunshots would help set the underground organizations back on their feet.

A liaison man from West Jiandao told us that most of the underground organizations in Changbai had been destroyed. A lot of organization members had been arrested in Korea and there was no knowing where those who had escaped were hiding out, he said.

Listening to his report, I thought that even if the organizations were scattered, something might still remain of them, and that these remnants could be patched together to create new ones. So I decided to go to Changbai to rebuild them and then advance into the homeland. Some people suggested that we hold military and political training in a secret camp during the winter, as we had done in Matanggou, and then launch new operations when warm weather set in. They said there was no need for us to take needless risks in the severe winter cold.

We did not accept this suggestion. How could we remain onlookers when the anti-Japanese struggle in the homeland was undergoing such severe trials? Hardships were nothing new to us; we had gone through them ever since we started the revolution. Had we experienced only a few, unheard-of problems up to now? How could we, the revolutionary army who had taken the cause of national liberation upon ourselves, merely look on with folded arms when the anti-Japanese struggle in Korea was in such trouble and the people were looking up to Mt. Paektu for help?

We had to advance into the homeland, even if it meant living on tree bark and it might involve sacrifices and tribulations. Naturally, we would have to cut our way through a forest of bayonets and face enormous hardships on the way. Nevertheless, we would make big strides and strike the enemy. This was what I thought at the time. This, then, was the motive of the Arduous March to make the homeland seethe with renewed hope.

As you know, we made many hard treks during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The march from Antu to Wangqing in autumn 1932, the march coming back to Jiandao after the first expedition to northern Manchuria and the Fusong expedition in early spring 1937 were all difficult excursions.

However, the trek from Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, to Beidadingzi, Changbai County, was such an unprecedented ordeal that it is beyond comparison with any other expeditions in terms of duration and misery. Because it took about one hundred days, this march is also called "the hundred-day march". To be exact, our journey took 110 days and was indescribably arduous, so it finally came to be known as the Arduous March.

I read many works about other treks in the past. I read the novel Iron Flood and watched its film version. However, I have never read anything describing a trek as full of twists and turns and beset with hardships as our march. In my secondary school days, as I read the Iron Flood, I wondered whether such a tough journey had ever really taken place. I was deeply impressed by Kojuh, who managed to break through one hardship after another. After I experienced the Arduous March, however, I thought Kojuh's trek was nothing compared to our march.

The Arduous March was, in a nutshell, a constant, non-stop struggle against the worst of natural conditions, hunger, exhaustion, diseases and of course the brutal enemy. All of these were accompanied by yet another severe struggle: that of not giving in to all these hardships. It was primarily a struggle to survive and to destroy the enemy. These were the main contents of the Arduous March. Indeed, it was a series of incredible ordeals and hardships from beginning to end.

That year the first frost fell before Harvest Moon Day and after that the first snow fell heavily. Already early in winter rumour had it that a birch tree had frozen and cracked up in the severe cold. Hunger and emaciation piled on top of the cold - and we had to fight several battles a day without rest or sleep. The hardships were beyond description.

Just think: It was only a five or six day walk from Nanpaizi to Beidadingzi, yet it took us more than 100 days to cover the distance! This was because we had to fight the enemy every single step of the way. You have no doubt seen the map of the march route. What do you think of it? You must have found it incredibly complex. The Arduous March was a trek that dwarfed all previous expeditions just in terms of physical exertion and suffering.

What made this trek such an unprecedented horrendous one in the history of the KPRA? The enemy's continuous pursuit and encirclement and nothing else explains it. You cannot imagine how tenacious the enemy was in chasing and constantly surrounding us.

The Japanese imperialists concentrated all their "punitive" troops on our main force, sending all their forces out on the "punitive" campaign against Kim Il Sung's unit, the only force remaining now that the 1st Corps had been virtually annihilated. They whipped up their men's fighting spirit against us. They even used carrier pigeons for their campaign. The enemy's tactic was quite simple: to deny the KPRA any chance to rest, eat or sleep. They hurled hundreds of troops continually against us, to the point where sometimes we had to fight 20 battles a day.

If we had slipped out of Nanpaizi, as we had done for previous expeditions, we would not have gone through such severe troubles. However, it was impossible for us to do this. We had to let our gunshots be heard right from the start. Obtaining food for the march also required a battle, so we attacked an internment village as soon as we had left the secret camp. Having heard our fire, the enemy immediately tailed after us. Knowing where the 2nd Directional Army was moving to, the enemy did not leave us alone for a minute.

The Japanese, who had encircled Nanpaizi, started their pursuit at once. They moved very fast. As we were starting to prepare a meal after a forced march of 20 kilometers, they fell on us, so we could not cook, but had to repack our wet rice. This sort of thing was to take place frequently. Had it been a simple march without battles, we would have had nothing to worry about. It was the enemy's non-stop hounding and encirclement of us, as well as the ceaseless battles, that doubled our difficulties and made the march our worst trial yet.

Shortage of food supplies added to our problems. For several reasons our food supplies had run out. In the autumn of 1938 we had stored up enough provisions for the coming winter, but we then consumed a large portion of the food during the meeting at Nanpaizi. The remainder was distributed among the units that left earlier for their theatre of operations in other directions. In the cold winter it was impossible to gather edible herbs or plants.

If the enemy had not been so frantic, we could have hunted wild animals and eaten their raw meat. But firing between battles was disadvantageous for our activity. Only once did I allow hunting: O Paek Ryong had found a bear sleeping in a hollow tree and suggested shooting it. I said he might shoot if he could kill it at a single shot after assuring himself that the enemy was not nearby. He killed the bear, which was as large as an ox, with one shot. At the beginning of the march we had two meals of gruel a day. As the food ran short, we had just one meal a day. Finally we went without food altogether, only eating snow. Our vision became blurry and when we got up to continue the march, we felt dizzy and could hardly walk.

This is why, whenever I talked to cadres after liberation, I used to say that people who have experienced starvation know how valuable rice and peasants are and that no one without this experience can claim to know all about revolution.

One day O Paek Ryong went down to Qidaogou with my permission, raided a lumber mill and brought back several horses. Because our provisions had run out, we decided to eat horsemeat for our meals. We could not roast it in the enemy's encirclement and had to eat it raw and without salt. At the second meal our stomachs revolted. The raw meat caused loose bowels, which were even more painful than hunger.

In spite of their suffering from diarrhea, the men continued to eat the horsemeat because that was the only thing they had. However, in four or five days, even the frozen meat ran out. There are many short men among the anti-Japanese veterans because they did not get proper nutrition in their youth and because they had to go through all kinds of hardships. These factors stunted their growth.

When we were fighting in the mountains, we often had to do without proper food, eating such things as wild herbs, grass roots, tree bark, malted wheat, rice bran, the residue left over from brewing and so on. We ate mainly coarse food at irregular times, so we suffered from all sorts of troubles of the digestive canal.

When Fidel Castro was on a visit to our country, he asked me how we had obtained food and clothing, where we had slept and how we had endured the severe cold of 40 degrees below zero during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. I told him how we had suffered hunger and the biting cold during the Arduous March. He was deeply moved by my description. Apparently, he had not experienced hardships such as ours during his own guerrilla-fighting days. It is very warm in Cuba, unlike Northeast China or our country, and food is readily available.

When I was fighting in the mountains, I felt sorriest to see my comrades-in-arms unable to eat their fill, suffering all kinds of problems and unable to get married at their most marriageable age. No matter how much I might describe the hardships we suffered during the Arduous March, you who have not experienced it cannot imagine what it was like. Let me tell you further about the difficulties of the march that followed. From the very beginning the enemy used the tactic of "violent attack and tenacious pursuit". This attack and pursuit was so stubborn that we had to keep constantly on the move, chewing raw grain because we had no time to cook.

Their tactic was, in essence, the "dani tactic", which meant harassing the opponent ceaselessly by clinging to it like a tick. The Japanese word dani means "tick". With this tactic the enemy placed a "punitive" force at every single vantage point. As soon as guerrillas appeared, the enemy attacked immediately, and after the attack, tailed after them tenaciously in an attempt to annihilate them. The goal was to chase and strike the guerrillas continuously without giving them time to rest, sleep or eat until they were completely exhausted and destroyed. The enemy themselves could rest by shifts, but the guerrillas were compelled to fight without a breathing space, so their tribulations were beyond description.

An old book on war says that an army caught by a long-distance pursuit by the enemy that comes in shifts will certainly be defeated, so that a good general will avoid such a trap. In other words, once in such a trap, there is no way out. Unfortunately we fell into such a trap. The enemy converged on us from every direction and clung to us like ticks. We found ourselves in a real predicament and had to develop elusive tactics to get out of it.

I racked my brains and thought out a new, zigzag tactic. I summoned the regimental commanders and said: "From now on, we'll march in a zigzag; at every turn of the zigzag we'll lie in ambush and pepper the approaching enemy with machine-gun fire. This is the only way to take away the Japanese ticks."

The zigzag tactic was the best way to strike the pursuing enemy in the Manchurian mountains covered with deep snow. That winter there was an unusually heavy snowfall, so that the men at the head of the column had to tramp down the snow to open a path. The snow was so deep that even the healthy ones

among us were totally exhausted after advancing only fifty or sixty meters. In some places we had to roll bodily on the snow to make a path, and in others we tunneled through. Where the snow was too deep, the men took off their leggings, linked them in a long line and held on while forging ahead. This prevented anyone from falling behind.

The enemy had no choice but to follow the zigzag we were making.

Bringing up the rear of the marching column, Oh Jung Hup would post two or three men with a machine-gun in ambush at every turn of the zigzag to hit the on-coming enemy. While the enemy was disposing of their dead, Oh Jung Hup moved his ambush to the next turn and beat the pursuers by the same method. Because the enemy had to take the single path we had opened, they could not avoid being struck each time. They were thrown on the defensive and suffered heavy casualties, whereas we took the initiative and dealt a series of heavy blows at them.

We continued the march through the heavy snow until we finally arrived at the end of Qidaogou, Changbai County, early in January 1939. Over the course of it we fought many battles, including the raid on the Yaogou internment village, and the battle near Mayihe, in Linjiang County, and the raid on Wangjiadian. You probably know about them.

As the days went by the enemy poured more troops into its "punitive" operations. In their continuing pursuit their casualties increased, but they went on attacking us stubbornly with fresh replacements. Since the enemy had enormous forces in reserve, they thought nothing of hundreds of deaths.

My men walked, dozing, even dreaming. You can imagine how tired they were. As enemy planes frequently came to find our whereabouts, we could not build campfires either. The planes were similar to the plane we use now on Farm No. 5 for spraying agricultural chemicals. Anyhow they were planes. These planes flew over us every day and informed their ground forces of our location.

One day the enemy fell upon us, attacking our marching column in swarms. There were foes everywhere, in front and at our back, on both sides and even in the sky. The situation was so urgent that I ordered the machine-gun platoon to strike the enemy in front of us, the 7th Regiment to check the enemy attacking from behind and others to break through the encirclement sideways.

We managed to get out of the crisis in this way. We could do so once or twice, but it would be no good to have to walk this kind of tightrope all the time. Marching as a large force was disadvantageous in every respect. First of all, it was difficult for us to conceal ourselves. Next, obtaining food was a problem. The food dozens of men brought on their backs with great effort ran out in only a few days. Soldiers fell one after another, exhausted because they were fighting without eating or sleeping.

How were we all to survive and arrive in Changbai safely? After much thought, I decided to disperse our marching column. Not that dispersion would guarantee that everything would go well, of course. Other burdens and difficulties would no doubt result from dispersed actions.

Dispersing the entire army into several directions, I made up my mind to go with the 7th Regiment. But commanding officers present at the officers' meeting unanimously objected to my going with the 7th Regiment. They insisted that Headquarters should go to the Qingfeng Secret Camp, the safest in the secret camps around Qidaogou. They were concerned about my personal safety, worried that if I went with the 7th Regiment, which fought the most frequently, I would be in personal danger.

I could not agree with them. I said that only the wounded and sick soldiers should be sent to the Qingfeng Secret Camp, and that our people needed a fighting Kim Il Sung, not a Kim Il Sung that sat in hiding with his arms folded. When I said this, they no longer objected. In the end we decided to disperse our forces into three directions. Headquarters would go to Jiazaishui, via the Qingfeng Secret Camp, in command of the Guard Company and the machine-gun platoon, Oh Jung Hup's 7th Regiment advancing towards Shanggangqu, Changbai County, and the 8th Regiment and the Independent Battalion operating around Donggang, Fusong County. We can call this dispersion the second stage of the Arduous March.

Today we remember it simply as a past event, but at that time our hearts ached at this parting. The comrades who were leaving me shed tears of sadness. They hugged the men of the Guard Company and earnestly requested them to protect me carefully. Their determination to safeguard me with lives moved me to tears as well. Some of the soldiers' uniforms were terribly torn, exposing their bodies, and the footwear of others was so worn out that they bound their feet with their leggings. Some soldiers used cowhide as foot wrappings. And yet they felt no concern about themselves, but instead worried about my safety. I could not help shedding tears because of this.

As I found out later, before parting from me Oh Jung Hup said he would lure away the enemy towards his own regiment, and told O Paek Ryong's Guard Company to avoid battle so as to get me to the Qingfeng Secret Camp one way or another. The spirit of self-sacrifice and loyalty displayed by Oh Jung Hup to ensure Headquarters' security during the Arduous March is still fresh in my mind today.

From the moment he left Qidaogou, Oh Jung Hup fought one battle after another to lure the enemy in his direction in order to draw danger away from Headquarters. Having disguised his regiment as Headquarters, he shouldered all the heaviest burdens. Because the Japanese thought this regiment was safeguarding Kim Il Sung, whom they were making such frantic attempts to catch, they naturally concentrated their heaviest attacks on the unit. I was told that Oh Jung Hup's regiment fought ceaselessly to fool the enemy and ate nothing for over a week. At the time of our battle on Mt. Hongtou, hearing the sound of our gunfire, he had come running a long way to defend Headquarters.

Thanks to him, we were not harassed too much, and he scattered the enemy force that had been concentrating on Headquarters. But there was no way for us to obtain food and we marched towards Qingfeng with empty stomachs. At one point in the past we had sent supply-service men to Qingfeng to plant potatoes. I intended to give my men a few days' rest eating these potatoes if any remained. There was nothing to eat and we were almost starving to death.

Near Qingfeng we unexpectedly found a field of foxtail millet. Looking around the natural features, I

recognized that this was the field where we ourselves had sown seeds the previous spring on the way to the Xintaizi Secret Camp. Apparently a man engaged in opium farming in a mountain valley had cultivated the field, and when we arrived there in spring, he had been doing his spring sowing. At the sight of our men he had run away. He took us for mountain bandits or Japanese troops, I think.

My men had been very sorry to see the owner of the field running away. We thought he might not come back because he was so scared, so we planted foxtail millet there. We felt we should not leave the field to lie fallow for a year, but sow seeds on behalf of the owner, who had run away because of us, so that he might have something to harvest in autumn.

However, the foxtail millet had remained in the field unharvested. The men were delighted to find the ears of millet in the snow. One man jokingly said that "God" seemed to exist in the world, because nobody but "God" could save us from the danger of starvation. Another man told me, "General, 'God', too, is now on the side of the revolutionary army."

In fact, we did not benefit from the grace of God, but owed our salvation to ourselves. If we had not sown the seeds after the land-owner fled, we would not have made such a lucky find."

Whenever we arrived in a new camp, we made it a rule to break fresh land not far from the camp and plant foxtail millet, potatoes and pumpkins, then mark the field so that we could find it afterwards. Whenever we did it, my orderlies would ask, "General, will we be coming here again in the future?" They meant that such efforts were useless, since we would not be coming back.

I explained, "We may or may not return. Most probably we will not come back. But our liaison men or small units may come. If they can get potatoes or pumpkins when they are hungry in this desolation, think of how glad they'll be!" The routes taken by our units were named Route One, Two, Three and Fifteen. When I asked liaison men or small units on their return from a mission which way they had taken, they replied that they had taken Route Three or Fifteen, and so on. When I asked them if they had not suffered from hunger, they replied that they had picked pumpkins or dug potatoes from the field my unit had planted while camping on the march. They had boiled or roasted the vegetables.

Food shortages during the anti-Japanese revolution were so serious that we even consumed white-birch juice, which was used both as medicine and food. We picked up the foxtail millet ears one by one from the snow, milled them and cooked them into gruel. We improvised our own treadmill for this. About a week of millet-gruel diet gave us back our strength. But even the foxtail millet soon ran out. The only way to get food was to go to Qingfeng and obtain one knapsack of potatoes for each man.

On the way to Qingfeng we came to a river. We had to cross it, but it was not frozen. The mid-streams in steep mountain valleys do not freeze even in winter. We did not want to cross it by the bridge, because an enemy sentry might be guarding it, but there was no other alternative. Risking our lives, we crawled across the bridge one by one.

Hardly had we crossed when the enemy closed in on us and we had to fight. We quickly climbed the mountain on which the potato field was supposed to be. My plan was to contain the pursuing enemy while some men loaded their knapsacks with potatoes. But we discovered that neither the potatoes nor the hut that had been on top of the mountain remained.

Apparently the supply-service men from the secret camp had dug them all up. The "punitive" force was almost upon us, firing machine-guns. It was a real crisis. I told my men, "We must get down through the valley to that moor. Then as soon as it's dark we can find a way out. The snow is awfully deep and we have no food; worse still, the 'punitive' force is still on our tail, so we have to disappear and get as far away as possible by a forced march along the road."

On the forced march we came upon a mountain rebels' hut. The rebels had fled, frightened by the sound of gunshots, and the hut was empty. There was plenty of food, including rib meat. Some comrades said that the food might have been poisoned by the Japanese, but it did not seem so. Playing-cards scattered on the floor showed that it was a hut belonging to mountain rebels and that they had fled in the middle of their meal. The heated floor was still warm. The room was so cozy that if the enemy had not been chasing us, we would have slept off our fatigue. But we had no time to eat the rich food spread out on the table. At a guess, the food was enough for two days' rations for our Headquarters.

I ordered the men to pack it all up. Hardly had we left the hut when the enemy caught up to us. It was a frantic pursuit indeed. We had no time to sit comfortably to eat a meat dumpling or a cracker. One of the reasons our Headquarters was pursued by the enemy so hard was that a man surnamed Kim who had been engaged in underground work in Jiazaishui, was arrested by the enemy. He had joined the revolutionary army in Changbai after our move to West Jiandao. Before joining the army he had worked in an underground revolutionary organization, and in the army, too, he had fought well. For a few years he had fought among us before being dispatched to a local area for underground work. On being arrested he had probably stained his honor by telling the enemy where we were going.

It was thus the enemy found out that Oh Jung Hup's regiment, which was fighting around the Changbai area, was false Headquarters, and so they concentrated all the "punitive" forces on us. Enemy planes, too, flew over our unit every day. Because the enemy attacked us from every direction, we had no room to escape. The men were pale with worry. O Paek Ryong, too, grew anxious, even though he had experienced all kinds of difficulties under my command since our days in Wangqing. The commanding officers, convinced that there was no way out of this trap, could only look at me with apprehension. A stirring speech was necessary in this situation.

During a break, I summoned all of Headquarters and said, "...Even the eyes of ten thousand people will not find a needle in a forest. if we use elusive tactics, we can conceal ourselves from the large enemy force, just as if we were a needle in a large forest. Admiral Lee Sun Sin defeated a large Japanese fleet with only a few warships in the naval battle of Myongryang.

This turned in his favor the tide of the war against the Japanese in 1592. It was a miraculous success



worthy of special mention in the world history of naval engagements. How did Lee Sun Sin defeat the enemy? Of course, his intelligence, tactics and courage contributed to the success. But an even more important factor was his love for his country. He knew that if the Japanese invaders were not destroyed, they would conquer his country and enslave his people. That was why he rose to the occasion and defeated the Japanese. Because of his ardent love for his country he was able to muster all his wisdom and courage.

"If we love our country, we also can break through this difficulty. Needless to say, our situation is grave, but if we have a firm confidence in the victory of revolution and if we do not give in to difficulties, we can reverse the situation. Let's continue our march with confidence."

When I finished the speech, my men said, "General, give us the order. We will follow you to the end." They resumed the march with brighter faces. I, too, felt more encouraged by their reaction. On the Arduous March we used a variety of combat methods and tactics. We can say that the march was a testing ground for all the strategies and tactics that had evolved in guerrilla warfare.

Let me give a few examples of the flexible tactics we used.

To conceal the traces of our march in the snow, we filled up or erased our footprints before disappearing; we also slipped away to the side by treading only on fallen tree trunks. A most thrilling experience was to throw the enemy into chaos by disappearing off to the side so that their forces, closing in on us from the front and back, ended up fighting against each other. We called this the "telescope tactic". It meant that we made the enemy forces fight each other while we looked on from a safe distance. We used this tactic in Hongtushanzi, Changbai County, and on the Fuhoushui tableland to drive the enemy into a mess.

Hongtushanzi was a big mountain, the top of which was bare of trees. At that time, we marched around the mountain with the chasing enemy in our wake, and on the second round, when another enemy force appeared in front of us, we dodged away, picking our way across the fallen trees. The enemy forces came up against each other while one was in pursuit and the other in search of us. Mistaking each other for the revolutionary army, they fell into an exchange of heavy fire. The duel, caused by mistaken identity, ended in a tremendous life-and-death struggle.

On the Fuhoushui tableland, too, we used a similar tactic. A large enemy force was coming in our wake, but we had no way to throw them off, so we circled around the Fuhoushui tableland, as we had done in Hongtushanzi. During the second round, another "punitive" force appeared, this time between us and the chasing enemy. One round was a long enough distance to take us a whole day, so the two enemy forces pursuing us were out of mutual contact. It was a queer situation.

I had earlier ordered each of my men to cut a tree as long as a sleigh pole while on the march. Now we threw them across the tree stumps and slipped away to one side, using the poles as bridges over the stumps.

While we were taking rest under some bushes, wearing white capes and chewing on raw barley, one enemy force closed in upon the other and they battled it out between themselves. We watched them calmly from a distance as they fought and killed each other in large numbers. Having suffered this rather foolish loss on the Fuhoushui tableland, the enemy later said in despair that we were so slippery, it was totally impossible to catch us.

We employed versatile tactics such as this several times a day, killing a lot of enemy soldiers. Still, the Japanese had a never-ending reserve of fighters. Japan's enormous supply of manpower was one reason they set up a clamor for overseas expansion, using the excuse of overpopulation. No wonder it was able to send ready replacements for lost "punitive" troops, no matter how many we killed off. By contrast, we who were fighting in the mountains had no immediate source of replacement, even for a single dead comrade. After the battle of the Fuhoushui tableland, we did a forced march straight through to Jiazaishui, going all through the night.

When I ordered the march towards low hills, my men anxiously said, "General, there is a moor in that direction. We may land up in an internment village."

I said, "In this situation it is better to move straight to the hillock area than to stay in the forest. If we are chased ceaselessly like this, we'll end up totally helpless. The enemy replenishes its forces every day, but we can't. Only our casualties can increase. If one dies today, another tomorrow, and if our force continues to decrease this way, how many men will remain alive? Our comrades of the 7th and 8th Regiments may not be aware that we are in this tight corner, we can't send for them to help us, so there's no other way for us. We must advance to the hillock area and throw off the enemy in the forest. Because the enemy pays little attention to that particular area, we have to go in that direction to preserve our force and recover our breath."

As the saying goes, it's darkest at the foot of the candle, so the place near the village might well be the safest place for us.

We camped on a small hill that commanded a view of the village of Jiazaishui. The hill was dense with pine and oak trees half again as tall as a man. The hill was fringed with a cliff under which a stream flowed. The sound of dogs barking in the village could be heard on the hill. Jiazaishui was also called a watermill village.

We relaxed and studied in combat readiness, making camp at night and striking it early in the morning. That was our first camping since we left Nanpaizi.

We rested ourselves for some time there. I often sat together with my Headquarters and discussed our future course of action and tactics with them. Our plan was to assemble all our scattered forces with the approach of warm weather after the lunar New Year's Day and advance into the border area and the homeland, striking the enemy everywhere and rebuilding the damaged organizations.

In the midst of all this, however, we ran out of food and again came close to starving to death.

I sent Lee Pong Rok, the political instructor of the Guard Company, to Jiazaishui. In this village the underground organization originally built by Kim Il was still active. An organization member called An lived there. He was a farmer with unusual connections to us. When his father was kidnapped by the mountain rebels, I had written to their chief to set him free. The chief owed us a favor from former days, so on receiving my letter he sent the farmer home. The farmer had been helping the revolutionary work under the influence of Kim Il, and after this event, he joined the underground organization. I asked Lee Pong Rok to meet the owner of the watermill in Jiazaishui and try to get in touch with the farmer.

He went down the mountain and first met the watermill owner. He introduced himself vaguely saying that he had come down to find a human habitation because the enemy's "punitive" attacks were so frantic and the food problem was so serious. He asked if they could have a chat, even though it was late at night.

The owner coldly asked him whether he had come down to surrender. Lee said yes, to sound him out. The miller was very disappointed at Lee's reply and answered, "You must have gone through many hardships in the mountains. However, you should not surrender. Once you take up arms to liberate the country, you can't just give up halfway, you have to fight to the end. You must not surrender, even though you have to endure severe hardships." And he asked if General Kim Il Sung was keeping well.

Lee Pong Rok replied that he did not know where the General was exactly, but that he was making strikes at the enemy in command of the revolutionary army. Having heard this the miller rebuked him, "It's not proper that you should betray the General by surrendering while he leads the revolutionary army in good health."

After this confirmation that the owner was a man he could trust, Lee admitted that he had not come to surrender, but had come down to obtain food, and that his comrades-in-arms were still up on the mountain. He asked the owner to help him obtain food, offering money. The watermill owner said, "Buying it is dangerous. I will bury the grain in the heap of husks, the grain I received as payment for milling. You can carry it off in secret when no customers are around." The owner was really a good man.

While obtaining food in the village, Lee found out also that the water-mill owner was a member of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. He was on friendly terms with farmer An.

The organization in Jiazaishui had not been destroyed even after the "Hyesan incident" because our operatives had kept it secret.

When I heard about the watermill owner, I said to myself, "Very good! The people continue to support us as ever. As long as we enjoy support from the people we will win. Now there is a way out." The watermill owner was as good as having joined our Arduous March, carrying food supplies on his back. Had it not been for the food he provided, it would not have been possible for us to plan our future course of action with confidence or to relax by playing chess and similar games. We would in all probability

have starved to death.

Not only the watermill owner but all his villagers helped us.

One day Lee Pong Rok asked for my permission to go to fetch food supplies, including those for the New Year Day party the villagers had prepared.

When I thought of my men having to get along, eating raw rice, raw meat or only water for so many days since we'd started the Arduous March, I had no mind to decline the kind offer of the villagers. I told the men to fetch the festive food, prepared with such warm kindness by the villagers. The prospects of being free from need on New Year's Day in 1939, thanks to the people of Jiazaishui, gave me some relief. My feelings of guilt at having to see my men go hungry seemed to be more or less eased.

Unfortunately, we were finally unable to accept their present: Lee Ho Lim, who went to the village with Lee Pong Rok, suddenly deserted. Lee Pong Rok returned empty-handed and reported to me that he had abandoned all the food because of Lee Ho Lim's desertion. It was the first time that a deserter had appeared among the Headquarters Guard Company men.

There had never been a deserter among them, no matter how terrible the conditions on a march. During the Arduous March, however, four men ran away from our ranks. They took off because they simply could not endure the terrible hardships any longer.

Lee Ho Lim had not served long in the guerrilla army, but I had loved him dearly. My love for him was special, for he came from Korea. He spoke Japanese fluently. When there was a need to reconnoitre enemy movements, I used to assign him to the task. He would take one or two men with him and climb telegraph poles to tap the wires. He was so healthy and knowledgeable that I singled him out for a future officer. Apparently he ran away because he had lost confidence in the success of the revolution.

His defection exposed us to great danger. We had to move out as soon as possible and take safety measures.

We decided to leave the hill behind the Jiazaishui village and pass through the vast plain in broad daylight. I ordered my men to march non-stop, whether the enemy came after us or not.

Dispersing our force to evade a large force of the attacking enemy was a general principle of guerrilla warfare. We maintained this principle thoroughly during the Arduous March. As a result, we were able to scatter the enemy force considerably. On this dispersed march, however, our Headquarters with a small force went through many crises which threatened its very existence.

Why? It was because the enemy knew we were Headquarters and concentrated all their forces on us.

Learning a lesson from such experiences, we widely discussed tactics when reviewing the Arduous

March at Beidadingzi. I emphasized that dispersed action was a tactic of guerrilla warfare to cope with a large attacking enemy, but that we should not apply it indiscriminately. Other commanding officers, too, asserted that for Headquarters to move alone separately without any support of a larger unit was an adventure that should not be repeated.

Reviewing the Arduous March, I keenly realized the truth that we should not commit dogmatism in applying tactics, even though they might accord with the principles of guerrilla warfare.

Immediately after we started the march in broad daylight, two other defectors appeared in our ranks. One was "Instructor Li", a graduate from Beijing University, introduced by Wang De-lin, and the other was a Chinese soldier. Worse still, there were many wounded men in the unit. For one thing or another, only a small number of men remained. If our unit decreased any more, it would be impossible even to relieve guards.

When I gave the marching order, O Paek Ryong asked, "General, if we start the march, the enemy's gun batteries will open up on us. How can we cross the open country?" I said, "Don't ask how! Keep one machine-gun in front and another in the rear. We must make a forced march. Shoot at the enemy wherever they appear, in our front or in our wake. There is no other choice."

Strangely enough, the enemy did not touch us as we moved out, just looked down at us from their batteries. Their main force had gone to the mountain areas for "punitive" actions and only a small force remained in the village. Moreover, the enemy was overwhelmed by the sheer audacity of our move. We crossed the open country in broad daylight without any disturbance and arrived in the forest. There we cooked and ate our meal and took a brief rest.

Perhaps people might call such experience good luck. After passing through the plain without the slightest trouble, we ourselves thought it somewhat strange. Naturally we had thought the enemy would fire, but they had not as much as sneezed, let alone fired at us, only looked down at us from their batteries. During the guerrilla struggle, we sometimes experienced such peculiar things, though not often.

After passing the plain safely, my men were delighted and said that "God" had helped the revolutionary army again. When in a tight corner, take the plunge and ignore all danger as you fight. If you're unafraid of death, you will be able to break through any difficulty whatsoever. As we were marching after coming out of the forest, I got the report that the enemy had appeared behind us. Apparently, the defectors had revealed our route, no doubt saying, "Kim Il Sung is leading a few dozen men after sending the large units in other directions, so you can beat him easily."

Shortly after, I received another report from the scouts that another enemy force had appeared before us. We were now in a critical situation, with the enemy closing in from both directions. Looking me in the face, O Paek Ryong asked, "General, the enemy probably knows that we are Headquarters. What shall we do?"

I replied, "There is no other alternative but to fight to the death. The enemy before us is totally ignorant of our existence. They are not even aware that they're about to encounter us, so they will be off their guard. But the enemy behind us knows how many we are and how tired we are, so it'll be difficult to fight them off. Let one squad contain them and commit the main force to striking the enemy in our front. That'll open the way out for us. The enemy chasing us was Japanese, and the enemy approaching us in front was a Manchukuo force. We knew the latter would be afraid of confronting us, so the enemy in our front was the weaker one.

"Strike the enemy ahead of us and open the way!" I ordered O Paek Ryong. "If they flinch, hit them without giving them a moment to breathe and chase them to their barracks to teach them a lesson."

O Paek Ryong set a machine-gun at the head of our column and sent off a running stream of fire at the enemy, then charged them, blowing a bugle. Having suffered heavy casualties, the Manchukuo army fled, throwing away their packs. Probably they thought we were a much larger force. We collected the food and shoes from their packs and pursued them to a highway. In this way we also eluded the pursuing enemy and seized the initiative. We now changed our tactics from escaping the enemy to forestalling them through attack. Constant and elusive escaping was no way to survive.

A book on war says that the best way to deal with a strong enemy is to parry his bayonet, harass him and wear him out, and when he wavers, attack him violently. If he retreats, pursue him hard enough to weaken him and turn the tide in your favor. By employing these tactics widely during the Arduous March, we broke through many crises and seized the initiative.

I decided to attack an internment village to obtain food while throwing the enemy on the defensive. With the lunar New Year's Day just around the corner, I was eager to feed my men to their fill, the men who had gone hungry for so many months. Thus the battle of Shisandaowan was organized. Before the battle we tapped the enemy's telephone line. An officer of the puppet Manchukuo army, who had withdrawn to Shierdaogou, was reporting to his superior in Linjiang County. He said, "We encountered Kim Il Sung's unit. They attacked us so violently that we could not resist. We retreated to Shierdaogou. I expect your instruction about our action after this." He also rang up his colleagues in the neighboring internment villages and warned them of our possible raids.

Based on this information, we attacked the closest enemy and another village and captured large amounts of rice and other foodstuffs. The supplies contained meat dumplings the enemy had prepared to eat. The loads were too heavy to be carried away, so we buried some of them in the snow and marked the spot. We feasted ourselves on New Year's Day. The guerrilla struggle was not always one of constant hardships. Hunger and poor clothing were our usual companions, but once in a long while we ate our fill and had a well-heated shelter.

After the battle of Shisandaowan, the enemy concentrated more "punitive" forces on our Headquarters. "Punitive" troops were everywhere. The enemy chased us so tenaciously that we had to pass a couple of nights on a height in temperatures of 40 degrees below zero. Even in such difficulties we maintained the

initiative and attacked another internment village. It was a battle to signal our location to our large units in dispersed action. I cannot remember the name of that village. On hearing the news about our battle, Oh Jung Hup's 7th Regiment, which had been in action around Shanggangqu, Changbai County, judged that Headquarters was in danger and attacked an internment village in order to draw the enemy forces. It also signaled their location to us.

The 7th Regiment came to Beidadingzi first to meet Headquarters and it was followed by the 8th Regiment and the Independent Battalion. The service units, which were in the Qingfeng Secret Camp, came to Beidadingzi as well. I called the roll and found that our strength remained much the same as when we had left Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, in the previous year. Nearly all our fighters survived.

Our deep emotion at that time was beyond description. We experienced many partings and reunions during the anti-Japanese war, but I had never felt greater excitement than at this time. Beidadingzi was a scene of jubilation, as if we were holding a festival. The men, who met after more than one hundred days of hardship in the shadow of death, hugged each other or rolled over on the ground, laughing and talking like children.

The harder our trials, the happier our reunion. Comrades realize how dear they are to each other most when they are reunited after a separation. Partings and reunions between comrades who spill blood in a common cause strengthen their comradeship. Such close friendships do not break even in the strongest tempest.

The Arduous March was not a mere movement of our forces. It was a large-scale military operation that was equal to a campaign. It was the epitome of our anti-Japanese armed struggle, so to speak. During this march we went through every kind of suffering a soldier could go through and experienced every kind of trial a man could experience.

Through the Arduous March we demonstrated once again to the world that the communists who took part in the anti-Japanese armed struggle were the true sons of the fatherland and the people, and that the revolutionary fighters were unfailingly loyal to their nation and to the cause of national liberation. Every anti-Japanese guerrilla that went through the march developed his character to the highest level possible.

The noble image of the Korean communists formed in this event is a model that our people must learn and follow through the coming generations. The Arduous March created typical communists who defeated the enemy because they were rallied rock-solid behind their leader and did not relinquish their faith in any adversity. This was an important success in the Arduous March, as well as one of the great achievements of the anti-Japanese revolution.

All the participants in the Arduous March were heroes, whether they are still alive or dead. There are many factors that led the guerrillas to survive their hardships and emerge victorious, like immortal beings. Let me tell you some of these factors.

First was their indomitable revolutionary spirit, the spirit of self-reliance, fortitude and revolutionary optimism. I can say that this spirit contributed to their triumph over all their difficulties. Going through the most terrible suffering, we never lost heart or became pessimistic, but endured all our miseries by picturing in our minds the day of victory. In short we were absolutely convinced of our eventual victory. If we had lost heart or taken a gloomy view of the revolution, overwhelmed by all the difficulties we faced, we would have sunk into the snow, unable to face our grave trials.

Another factor for the success in the march was our love for our comrades in the revolution. I still remember how I met Oh Jung Hup and his unit towards the end of the march. He wrapped his arms around me and cried. I also shed tears when I saw him. The joy of reunion with my blood relations would not have been so great as the joy I felt at that time. I was so glad that I could not get rid of the lump in my throat. I made up my mind never to part with these priceless comrades-in-arms again, not under any circumstances.

That winter I had worried myself sick after dispersing my comrades - I had never in my life missed my friends and companions as much as I did at that time. As many of you are discharged soldiers, you probably know how warm the love for one's comrades can be. No love in the world is warmer or stronger than love for one's comrades-in-arms and no moral obligation is nobler than the loyalty between them.

Revolutionary comradeship was an important factor in victory. It ran all through the anti-Japanese revolution. However, during the Arduous March the sense of moral obligation of our men was displayed more intensely than ever before. The anecdote of "a cup of parched-rice flour" was only one of many anecdotes about good deeds done in those days. One of my orderlies was carrying a cup of parched-rice flour in his pack as my emergency ration, but I could not eat it alone, so I shared it with my men, and this event has been handed down as a legendary tale to our children. This was not a rare instance.

Our men would have given their very flesh if their comrades had needed it, they were that willing to give their all to their comrades in the revolution.

As I mentioned once before, when Lee Ui Sol saw a recruit shivering with cold after his clothes were burnt while he was sleeping by the campfire, he took off his own padded jacket and gave it to the recruit. He went through a terribly cold winter in an unlined jacket, but he did not freeze to death. That was because his comrades, too, showed their burning love to him. We did not starve to death because we lived and fought in the spirit of sharing a cup of parched-rice flour throughout the Arduous March of over 100 days. Though we went through severe cold in worn-out clothing, our hearts were always warm. This was the secret of why nobody starved or froze to death and why all of us survived like immortal beings. The power of love defeated death.

This experience has convinced me that a community firmly united in comradeship will never perish. Another factor that helped to bring the Arduous March to a successful conclusion was the people's love and support for us. All through the march we received great help from such benevolent people as the owner of the watermill in Jiazaishui. You should not think that only our guerrillas took part in the march.



The people, too, joined in. I would say that the people from Erdaohuawen and Yaogou who brought aid-goods such as rice, salt, shoes and cloth at the risk of their own lives participated in our march.

As we experienced on the Luozigou plateau and at the Tianqiaoling pass, the people saved us, helped us and became our companions whenever we were faced with a crisis. I was able to summon my courage because I was convinced that as long as we had such people, we would emerge victorious in this strenuous journey. Our victory can also be explained by the fact that we applied flexible guerrilla tactics throughout the march to suit different situations.

Today we are still building socialism in a difficult situation. Our revolution continues to follow a rugged path, so we can say that we are even now continuing the Arduous March. In those days hundreds of thousands of the Japanese troops encircled and harassed us, but nowadays atrocious imperialist forces incomparably stronger than the former Japanese troops are trying to crush our country. In fact, we are living in a situation little short of war.

What is the best way for us to survive in this adversity? The only way is to display fully in our lives the same revolutionary spirit of Mt. Paektu that the anti-Japanese revolutionary forerunners displayed during the Arduous March. Not only in the anti-Japanese war, but also later, in the days of building a new country, during the Great Fatherland Liberation War, and in the period of postwar reconstruction, we overcame all hardships and emerged victorious in the revolution by displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, fortitude and optimism.

Nothing is impossible for a people with as great a history as that of the Arduous March. No force can ever conquer the people who have inherited the history of this march.

## 20.2. The Lesson of Qingfeng "Women Spy Incident"

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Before embarking upon our Arduous March, our wounded and sick guerrillas were dispatched to our secret base in Qingfeng for rest and recuperation. We had several secret camps around Mount Baektu and in western regions of Jiandao. Potato plants had been seeded earlier to feed the guerrillas and there were enough potatoes to sustain our comrades for several months. In the battle of Shisandaowan in 1939, we captured enemy food supplies.

At the Qingfeng base, potatoes were aplenty but I wanted them to have some decent food to eat on the lunar New Year's Day and I shipped some of our captured food items to the area with a messenger. This messenger came back with a disturbing report on 'women guerrilla' spies at the camp. This was a shocking news to us. A Japanese spy ring of communist guerrilla in our revolutionary army, if true, would do us great harms.



The messenger brought a letter from Lee Dong Gul, which outlined the "spy" incident, and a bag of "poison" seized from the "spies". Lee stated that that Kim Jong Suk, Kim Hye Sun, Kim Son and So Sun Ok - all female guerrillas - were in fact Japanese spies and that these women tried to poison other guerrillas at the camp. The messenger told us the women guerrillas were bound with ropes and appeared to have been tortured.

*(Photo: Lee Dong Gul)*

I was shocked at this news, more so than the shock I felt when I heard about the "spy" case of Hunter Jang, Han Pong Son and other fighters in the "Minsaengdan" incident. As I mentioned in an earlier section, the "Minsaengdan" incident was settled at the Nanhutou meeting in 1936. From that time on, "Minsaengdan" became a forbidden word amongst us, because we had suffered so much from that incident, in which innocent partisans were falsely accused and executed. And now Lee was claiming that he uncovered a spy ring similar to "Minsaengdan" in Qingfeng?

I did not believe a word of Lee's report; I smelled a rotten egg and decided that the "spy" incident was a fabrication. For one thing, so-called "poison" turned out to be nothing but tooth-powder. I proved it by tasting the "poison" myself, in spite of my comrades' council against it. What I tasted was good, old tooth powder. How could Lee and his officers mistake tooth powder for poison?

The accused women guerrillas were seasoned revolutionaries and totally loyal to our revolution. They dedicated their youth to liberation of Korea. They took up arms in their tender hands instead of marriage and endured long marches wearing snow-shoes, eating grass roots and tree bark; they marched with male guerrillas with no complaints. Accusing them as spies, without any shred of evidence, was insulting to our revolution, ridiculous and criminal.

I will not dwell on what kind of woman guerrilla Kim Jong Suk was. I vouch for her without any hesitation. She came from a working class and had outstanding combat records and she had no reason to spy for the enemy. Japanese killed her parents and brothers and there was no way she would have spied for the Japanese. Kim Hye Sun, Kim Son and So Sun Ok were all highly exemplary revolutionaries. They were reliable as solid rocks and how could anyone accuse them spying was beyond me. The accusers were in the same despicable category as Kim Song Do and Gao Ya-fan who had masterminded and executed so many of our comrades in Jiandao as "Minsaengdan" members.

Not a single female fighter in our ranks would have worked for the enemy. During our guerrilla zone days and days after we had abandoned the zone, not a single female fighter deserted us. Even during our arduous march, not a single female fighter deserted us. The traitor Lim Su San surrendered to the enemy taking a woman guerrilla he was sleeping with, but she did not betray us. It was tougher for women than for men in our guerrilla army. Those people who appreciate the responsibilities women have in their homes today will understand what I mean. Although they work for society on an equal footing with men, women bear most of the heavy burdens of household chores and raising children. We have put forward a number of policies to relieve them of this burden, but our mothers, wives and sisters still carry more loads than men.

In our anti-Japanese revolution, women guerrillas carried more loads than men and they had to work harder than men guerrillas. They fought every battle alongside the men and cooked meals in addition. They carried cooking utensils and provisions. When men guerrillas fell asleep with fatigue around a campfire, women mended torn uniforms of the men; torn pants and coats were stitched up and holes were patched. There were times when we had no cloth to patch up big holes and our women guerrillas cut pieces off their own skirts. For this reason, I made sure the women guerrillas were supplied with two skirts each. The women partisans overcame difficulties as persistently as men guerrillas. In fact, in some aspects, they were even more persistent.



Let me say something about Choe Sun San, married to Song Sung Phil, a renowned worker of our arsenal. She was a veteran party member who had carried out party activities underground in the Yanji area; and she had cooked for our guerrilla army and was a member of the united front with the National Salvation Army. Our fighters from Yanji were unanimous in their opinion of her as a responsible, tough woman. *(Photo: Choe Sun San).*

She worked as a cook in our army for a long time. One day during a break on a march, the tip of a needle got into her palm; she was trying to mend clothes and wash rice for a meal for the men at the same time. The broken tip of the needle was deep into the flesh but she had no time to get it out, for she had to feed the hungry men and go on with the march. Her hand swelled up causing excruciating pains. An average person would have asked to be excused from the kitchen duty, but Choe Sun San kept on working without a complaint. Her cooking was slow because of her infected hand and her unit commander scolded her for her tardiness, but she endured it all in silence. She did not wish to burden others with her work.

After several days, the broken needle tip worked its way to the back of her hand and only then, Choe asked for help; her comrades-in-arms pulled it out with a pair of tweezers. Choe Sun San, who cooked for her comrades-in-arms for a fortnight, silently enduring the pain caused by the broken needle, is typical of the female guerrillas in our units who saw bloody combats against the Japanese.

I thought and thought, but I could not find any cause for branding the four women partisans at the camp 'spies'; I could not understand why anyone would fabricate such a story. Ohm Kwang Ho was in charge of the camp; Ohm had done political work for us several years and how he could suspect them without any grounds and accuse them of being spies? How could he rope up and lock up these patriots as 'spies' without any shred of evidence? If these women were spies, as Ohm claimed, then whom could we trust in this world?

Lee Dong Gul's report did not make any sense at all and I ordered Kim Phyong to go to the camp and investigate the case; I asked him to bring the arrested women guerrillas, Ohm Kwang Ho and Lee Dong Gul; Lee was the political chief of the camp and claimed to have detected this "spy ring". Kim returned with the group and I talked with them one by one. What I found was unbelievable beyond imagination. Ohm Kwang Ho was put in charge of the camp, out of our comradely consideration in order to help him rectify some of his bad habits. He was infected with bad ideology and bad work habits. He had pernicious habit of putting on important airs and looking down upon others; he belittled his comrades down and found fault with them without any just cause. He was a factionalist.

Factionalists are greedy careerists without exception. When they have no chance of promotion, they try their best to get promotion either with the backing of others or by resorting to trickery. That is why they are denounced as being ambitious. Ohm Kwang Ho was a true-blue factionalist. From the first day he joined the revolutionary ranks, he revealed his shady character. Having drifted into the revolutionary movement by the whirlwind of the May 30 revolt in the Yanji area, he worked as the company political commissar of First Independent Division, but from the very start, he earned bad reputation among his men, for he gave excessive prominence to himself and constantly belittled his comrades-in-arms. No one likes a man who is self-opinionated and ignores his comrades and seniors in the revolution.

He attempted to turn the struggle against "Minsaegdan" into a springboard for his own promotion and branded many people as reactionaries. His ultra-party phraseology rang loudest at meetings where "Minsaengdan" members were indicted and condemned. Though he had forsaken many of his comrades deliberately, the revolutionary organization did not abandon him; it pardoned him with magnanimity and gave him a chance to make up for his past sins. When we formed a new division in Maanshan, he promised me that he would rectify his mistakes by working faithfully. I believed him and made him political commissar of a company.

Soon he betrayed my trust. He screamed epithets at his men, and instead of helping out the company commander, he behaved like a bystander finding faults with the commander. Conducting himself as if he were an outsider, he refused to carry his own weight and do the hard work needed to be done. In the battlefield, he did not join in, but instead, stayed behind beyond the range of enemy fire. He was not fit to

be a political commissar, who was supposed to set an example for the masses and steer them. For this reason, we dismissed him from his post and sent him to the service camp, hoping that he would correct himself.

When I put him in charge of our base in Qingfeng, I ordered him to ensure that our wounded fighters recuperating at the base received proper medical care and living conditions; he was ordered to raise food crops with the supply-service men so as to build up food reserves for the unit. But he failed to carry out my orders. He did not build any additional living quarters as he was ordered. Our wounded and sewing-unit guerrillas who had parted with us from Qidaogou arrived at the Qingfeng camp and found inadequate accommodations. They had to live in tents in the severe winter cold. Medicine and food provisions were running short at the camp.

The guerrillas, tempered as they were by hardships, did not utter a word of complaint. They endured all the difficulties, thinking of their comrades-in-arms who would be fighting bloody battles. They also strictly observed the daily routine of the camp and held regular study sessions. As the saying goes, an awl hidden in a sack will pierce its way out in the end. During the study sessions his harmful ways of thinking and his real self as a defeatist finally revealed themselves.

One day a debate was held in the secret camp on the policies adopted at the Nanpaizi meeting. Taking an example of the Russian revolution, Ohm Kwang Ho said, "Any revolution will experience a high tide and a low ebb. A high tide requires a high-tide strategy and a low ebb needs a low-ebb strategy. To meet these requirements, it is necessary to make a correct judgment of the changes in the situation and be frank enough to admit the arrival of a low ebb when its indications are in evidence. If this is true, then which stage does our revolution find itself in at the moment?"

"I would say it is at a low ebb. The Rehe expedition ended in failure and in the 'Hyesan incident', many revolutionary organizations were destroyed, Isn't this a low ebb? In this situation, we should learn from the lessons of 'one step forward and two steps back'. In other words, we must avoid offensive and frontal confrontations and retreat until an advantageous situation presents itself. This is the way to save the revolution."

He attempted to bludgeon all the soldiers in the camp into accepting his position. Since the revolution was going through some twists and turns at the time because of the disastrous expedition to Rehe and the "Hyesan incident", his argument might have sounded logical to casual listeners. However, the women guerrillas in the camp instantly felt that his opinion differed radically from the policy of Headquarters. They disproved his argument then and there. They asserted, "Of course we don't deny the great influence the objective situation exerts on the revolutionary struggle. But we must not consider it absolute. The worse the revolutionary situation gets, the more revolutionaries must react to it and make redoubled efforts to turn a disadvantage into an advantage."

"This is the intention of the Comrade Commander. The Korean communists have continued fighting at all times, whether or not the situation was favorable. If they had gone into hiding when the situation was

unfavorable and operated only in an advantageous situation, could they have formed such a standing armed force as the KPRA (Korean People's Revolutionary Army)? Could they have advanced to the homeland, breaking through the enemy's tight border watch, and carried out such a daring military campaign as attacking Pochonbo? Marxism-Leninism is a communist theory, so it is, of course, a good thing to follow it in our revolutionary activities and practice."

"But as the Comrade Commander always emphasizes, we must apply Marxism-Leninism creatively to suit the actual situation of the Korean revolution, not mechanically. You seem to have misunderstood what 'one step forward and two steps back' means. Don't you know that the Korean revolution has advanced through manifold difficulties? You claim that it is best for us to retreat in the present situation; is there any rear area we can retreat to? If we retreat, who will usher in the period of revolutionary upsurge for us? As the Comrade Commander declared at the Nanpaizi meeting, we must make headway against obstacles in the difficult situation. Thus, we must turn the disadvantageous situation into an advantageous one".

Kim Jong Suk led others in criticizing Ohm for his defeatist tendency. She fought without compromise against wrong ideas that ran counter to Headquarters' lines and strategic policies. She was a dyed-in-the-wool advocate of our ideology. Under this counterattack by the women guerrillas, Ohm tried to rationalize his opinion by every means, even reciting this or that proposition of Marx and Lenin. The more he tried, the more offensive he smelled. His true colors as an ambitious opportunist were bared during the debate. Only now did the women guerrillas realize why he had idled away his time in the camp the whole summer without making preparations for treating patients or for wintering.

However, they did not brand him as a betrayer or a capitulationist. Since the debate was held during a study session, the matter would have been settled without trouble if he had admitted his fallacy and accepted the others' opinion with an open mind. We never made an issue of this or that misconception revealed in debates during study sessions. On account of the difference in their qualifications and level of preparedness, people differed from one another in understanding and grasping things and phenomena. No one can attain ideological perfection overnight.

One overcomes one's ideological immaturity through studying and revolutionary practices, and in this process one is tempered and matures ideologically. That was why we did not denounce or criticize people whose opinions conflicted with revolutionary principles; instead, we convinced them of the errors in their opinions by the method of argument. But instead of accepting the women guerrillas' opinion as a just one and trying to transform his ideology, he started retaliating against them while trying to gloss over his own image as a capitulationist. His true colors were fully revealed in his persecution of them.

The crime he committed against them differed in no way from that committed by those involved in the "purge committees" during the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle in Jiandao. His motive and purpose, however, were even more dastardly and insidious. His attack on them was to cover up his own crimes. In order to gag them, he resorted to the mean method of inventing a crime and making a false charge against them. He thought that if they were labeled criminals, they would not dare to touch him or report the

matter to Headquarters. What a cowardly and dangerous way of thinking!

There was a young recruit at the camp. One day he left his post without Ohm's approval. Making a fuss about him as a deserter, Ohm dispatched a search party. The party found the recruit eating potatoes he had baked near the camp. On their return they reported truthfully that he had left the camp, not to desert, but to bake potatoes and eat them, as he could not endure the hunger. The recruit was not yet used to hunger. Ohm Kwang Ho, who had been looking for a chance to cook up an incident to shake the camp, branded the young recruit a deserter. He went so far as to call him a spy, charging that he had made a fire not to bake potatoes but to signal the enemy.

The recruit protested repeatedly against the charge, but to no avail. Ohm even tortured him, forcing him to confess what orders he had received from the enemy and whom he had turned among guerrillas in the course of carrying out his orders. How appalling it was of Ohm to brand the youth a "deserter" and a "spy" and put him to torture, the comrade he had shared board with, even if the boy's act had not been particularly praiseworthy!

The young recruit Ohm had branded a spy was highly class conscious, though he had not yet been trained fully. He had no reason to desert his comrades or to spy for the enemy. Despite this, Ohm tortured him until he made a false confession that he had coaxed the women guerrillas into performing "acts of sabotage" and attempted to kill his revolutionary comrades in the secret camp with poison. In the end Ohm detained the women guerrillas with this confession as grounds and inflicted violence on them without hesitation.

I could not see why Ohm, who for many years cried for unity in the ranks while conducting work with people, had come to this pass. Only through investigating his crime at a later date did I realize the motive of his sinking to such a degraded state. When he was sent to the service camp, he saw himself as having been demoted. Unhappy with the Headquarters' decision to relieve him of the post of political officer, he did not perform the duty of supply officer but loafed intentionally.

After the debate with the women guerrillas, he made one ultra-revolutionary demand after another in order to cover up his stained reputation as a defeatist. On the pretext of keeping the camp well prepared for action he put it frequently on alert, tormenting the weak and wounded; on the pretext of economizing on provisions, he reduced two meals a day to one, starving them. The secret camp was not really so short of provisions as to be forced to eat only one meal a day. Rice was not available, but a considerable amount of potatoes was stored in a cellar. In the plateau in a forest not far away from the secret camp, there was a fairly large field under cultivation with plenty of potatoes and cabbage. Had Ohm performed his duty faithfully, he could have provided enough food for our whole unit throughout the winter in Qingfeng.

From the moment he judged that the road to his promotion was blocked, he felt weary of the revolution. As the situation at home and abroad grew more complex and difficult, he began to see the future of the revolution as uncertain. This ideological malady was revealed at long last during the debate in the study

session. Lee Dong Gul, political head of the secret camp, was the only man who could have restrained Ohm from acting arbitrarily. As the political commissar of the 7th Regiment, he was Ohm's senior in rank.

When he was wounded in combat, we sent him to Qingfeng on assignment to take charge of political work in the secret camp at the time we were switching over to scattered operations at the end of Qidaogou. But taken in by Ohm's flattery and trickery, Lee failed to see the nature of the incident. Had we not sent a messenger to the camp, Ohm would have carried out his plot to kill the women guerrillas.

While investigating the case, I realized that Ohm was a man more degenerate and wicked than even Lee Jong Rak had been. Lee's crime was committed after he was arrested and forced by the enemy to surrender. But Ohm became degenerate ideologically while he was still in the revolutionary ranks, and in order to cover up his own corruption, he plotted against his comrades and maltreated them. Except for the first half of the 1930s, when the guerrilla zones were in chaos because of the "Minsaengdan", there was no torture or punishment inside our ranks. Errors and defects revealed in the ranks were rectified through explanation, persuasion and criticism. Such an extremist act as an officer torturing his subordinates was inconceivable to us.

As his true nature came to light, Ohm regarded his relationship with his subordinates as irreconcilable - that of one person conquering another - and plotted against them without hesitation. He thought that if he was to survive, he had to kill them. To put his plot into practice, he branded as a deserter and a spy the recruit who had committed a minor violation of discipline and called the women fighters' tooth-powder "poison". He went to the length of charging the women guerrillas, the owners of the tooth-powder, of being spies. Ohm had conducted underground work with Kim Jong Suk, one of the women accused, for some months in Taoquanli, yet he was still vicious enough to stigmatize her as a spy. He knew only too well what type of woman Kim Jong Suk was.

The example of Ohm Kwang Ho shows that a man obsessed with careerism will become a villain who does not care a straw about his organization, comrades or moral obligation and who will betray the revolution. As Ohm confessed, he had planned that if his plot against women guerrillas had failed, he would have run away in order to escape responsibility. As we learned from Ohm's case, ultra-revolutionaries, extremists, double-dealers, those who criticize others in public while scheming with them in secret, capricious, disgruntled or self-opinionated people, fame-seekers and careerists always cause trouble in a revolution. Unless you take measures to deal with such people before it is too late, you will find yourself in a terrible mess.

Ohm's case also teaches the lesson that if a person fails to cultivate himself ideologically in everyday life, he loses confidence in the victory of the revolution and grows discontented and faint-hearted, yielding to even the most ordinary hardships. In the end he becomes a defeatist and does immeasurable harm to the revolutionary struggle.

The spy ring incident fabricated by Ohm was an unusual event that might have played havoc with our



unity based on ideology and will, morality and ethics. This was why we of the Headquarters' Party Committee examined the case very seriously before putting it to the officers and men at a meeting held in Beidadingzi for mass judgment.

When the events at the Qingfeng Secret Camp were made public, all the officers and men unanimously supported the women guerrillas who had kept our line without yielding their faith in adversity. On the other hand, they demanded that Ohm Kwang Ho and Lee Dong Gul, who had failed to view the real nature of the incident with a keen political eye and had overlooked Ohm's crime, be executed in the name of the People's Revolutionary Army. At first Ohm tried in every way possible to defend himself. Only after he was denounced by the masses did he admit his crime. He begged us to spare his life, shedding tears.

In contrast, Lee Dong Gul did not utter a word of excuse from the start; he admitted his mistakes and asked for execution himself. He accepted the criticism of the masses open-mindedly and repented bitterly. Lee was a man of strong will, warm heart and amiable character. He was efficient in both political and underground work. When appointing Oh Jung Hup commander of the 7th Regiment at the Nanpaizi meeting, we appointed Lee political commissar of the same regiment, because we had a high opinion of his qualifications and experience in political work.

He made the mistake of playing into the hands of his subordinate because he was taken in by Ohm's flattery. This happened because he remained in his room and failed to get in touch with his men. As he had been wounded seriously, he must have found it difficult to go out among them, but even though he could not go outside, he should have called them to his room and had frequent talks with them. If he had met even one guerrilla when Ohm was making a fuss about his "spy ring", he would have discovered the truth about the incident. However, he met no one after hearing the report from Ohm and left the latter to do whatever he wanted. When Ohm said he would interrogate a recruit, he told him to go ahead; when Ohm asked if he could detain the women guerrillas, he made no objection.

Lee listened only to Ohm, not to the other guerrillas, so he could not safeguard people's political integrity from the cunning plots of such an ambitious fellow as Ohm. This was the greatest mistake of Lee Dong Gul as a political worker. That was why all the officers and men put him in the same category with Ohm. Whenever a political worker stops breathing the same air with the masses, he will invariably land in this kind of mess.

Officials who deal with people's political integrity must not stop breathing the same air with the masses, not even for a moment. This means that they must pick up a spade when people take up spades, eat millet when people eat millet, and share everything with them. Officials who neglect their work among the masses do not understand people's feelings or mentality, their demands or aspirations. Some of our officials overtly or covertly persecute those who criticize them, and depending on the seriousness of the criticism, toy with the political integrity of innocent people.

Some officials are swayed by the words of a few flatterers and deal thoughtlessly with matters that

decide the people's destiny. If officials abuse their authority and deal with people's political integrity as they please, they incur people's resentment and hatred and thus divorce the Party from the masses.

Our Party carries out benevolent politics, and in our country every one leads a harmonious life in one great family, enjoying the benefits of the benevolent politics. Our kind of politics has assumed the mission of taking care of people's political integrity as well as their physical welfare. Our Party values their political soundness more than anything else.

People with the same ideology and ideals get together and form an organization, a political party, and each of them acquires political uprightness in that collective. For this reason, political purity of the masses numbering in the millions immediately becomes the lifeline of the organization, the party. Therefore, dealing with people's political integrity improperly or tarnishing it reduces the life-span of the party. If the party is to remain strong and sound until it carries out its highest program, it must work among the people efficiently and safeguard their political soundness. This is the lesson we must learn from the incident in Qingfeng. You must bear it in mind at all times.

Though his mistake was serious, Lee Dong Gul was a man deserving mercy. He made a mistake because he had forgotten his duty as a political head and was fooled by Ohm Kwang Ho. He did not mastermind the plot but acted passively - siding with Ohm and overlooking his scheming. Taking this into consideration, we save his life and simply demoted him.

As he was let off with a demotion instead of severe punishment, he called on me and insisted that the punishment was too light. He said, "I want to be given a heavier punishment. Please send me to the most dangerous places so that my mistake might be rectified at the cost of my blood and life. My comrade-in-arms will pardon me only when I shed my blood and sacrifice my life. They will then call me their comrade as before".

Later he faithfully discharged the assignments handed to him by Headquarters. Unfortunately, he was arrested by the enemy and hanged in Sodaemun prison on the eve of the liberation of the country in August 15, 1945. During the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, he went by the assumed name of Kim Jun along with his birth name.

## 20.3. The Salt Incident

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In June 1949 the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung presided over a small meeting of the Cabinet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The topic of discussion was the cancellation of salt rationing and the free marketing of this condiment. Recounting his experiences in the anti-Japanese armed struggle in his concluding speech at that meeting, he said that nothing was more serious than a shortage of salt and that the anti-Japanese guerrillas had done their best never to run short of salt, even though they might go without food.

He said that since salt production had increased sharply and it had become possible to store reserves of it, unrestricted salt sales should be introduced. Having adopted this measure, he told officials about the trouble he and his men had experienced because of a salt shortage during the Arduous March. This had come to be called the salt incident. The following is a selection of his accounts of the incident.

The salt incident I am going to talk about took place in the spring of 1939 - the last days of the Arduous March. I still clearly remember the incident. One cannot live without eating salt. If you do not get enough salt, your hands and feet swell and you become so lethargic, you can't even move. Even grass-eating animals have to eat salt to live. Many fallen antlers are found in the vicinity of brine puddles in the mountains, as deer use these puddles as salt-licks. Guerrillas experienced shortages in four essential consumer goods - food, footwear, matches and salt. If asked what was the most unbearable of the difficulties felt from the shortage of these essentials, the majority of the veterans of the anti-Japanese revolution would say that it was the lack of salt.

Salt was scarce in North and West Jiandao, and to make matters worse, the authorities strictly controlled its sale. This made the seasoning a rare commodity there. Salt was an item sold under a government monopoly in Manchuria. The enemy strictly controlled salt-dealing so as to prevent it from leaking through civilian channels into the hands of the People's Revolutionary Army. Peddlers smuggled salt from Korea and sold it secretly, making the rounds at residential quarters, but they didn't help people much. Many households in the backwoods of Jiandao boiled down wood ashes and drank the water as a salt substitute. In my days in eastern Manchuria I saw a family eating a grain of rock salt for a meal. When I was in Wangqing, I once went to Choe Chun Guk's company and asked Ko Hyon Suk what her greatest difficulty was in her work as a cook.

She replied it was the shortage of salt. She had lived next door to O Paek Ryong before joining the guerrilla army to take revenge on the enemy who had killed her large family during their "punitive" atrocities. In the guerrilla army she was appointed a cook. Whenever I went to her company and had a meal, she was always very sorry not to be able to prepare good dishes for me. When she served food not seasoned with salt, she was ashamed to face me, but stood by the kitchen range with her face flushed. She said that her family had had to get along with only a grain of rock salt for a meal as well. A grain of Chinese rock salt was the size of a kidney bean.

During our second expedition to northern Manchuria we were so short of salt that in some companies the men marched with a small emergency salt pouch attached to their belts. The pouch was as small as a seal case, about the size of a finger. The contents of the pouch was consumed only when salt was unavailable anywhere else. This might sound like a fairy tale to those who have not experienced this kind of shortage. Nevertheless, quite a few guerrillas lost their lives because they went to the enemy-held area to get salt, and many members of underground organizations were killed in the course of obtaining it. The main channel for getting salt was through underground organizations. When we gave them money, they set people in motion to buy it for us. Some of it was also bought and sent to us by people on their own initiative.

The enemy was well aware through which channels we acquired salt and how hard up we were for it. That was why they cooked up a vicious scheme to annihilate the People's Revolutionary Army by means of salt. They calculated that they could capture or kill all the guerrillas without firing a single shot if they hatched a workable plot by means of salt. They learned through experience that they could not defeat our army through military or political confrontation, so they resorted to "surrender hunting", the policy of internment villages and scorched-earth operations. They had also organized the "Minsaengdan" in order to destroy our revolutionary ranks from within through the wider international stratagem of driving a wedge between the peoples of Korea and China.

The Japanese attempted to prevent the news of our activities from spreading by even spreading the rumour of "the death of Kim Il Sung", boasting that Kim Il Sung had been killed at their hands and that with his death the independence struggle had now come to an end. In this way they tried to dampen the soaring anti-Japanese spirit of the Korean nation. Quite a few publications in Korea and Manchuria in those days carried plausible-sounding lies in the form of news flashes that I had been killed in such-and-such a way in such-and-such a battle. The Kyongsong libo reported in November 1937 that the Manchukuo "punitive" force had succeeded in killing me after a fierce five-hour battle and that Kim Il Sung, who had succeeded his father in leading the anti-Japanese, anti-Manchukuo movement, had ended his stormy life at the age of 36 after being driven into a tight corner by the "punitive" force.

Tiexin, a magazine published by the puppet Manchukuo army, also carried an article about my death under the title, Detailed News of the Punitive Operation against Bandits Led by Kim Il Sung. According to the article, I had been surprised by the Manchukuo army in the vicinity of Yangmudingzi, Fusong County, and was killed with eight other guerrillas after a hard battle.

The people from a nearby village had confirmed that the dead commander was Kim Il Sung. For this "exploit", a company commander of the 7th Regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army by name of Li received a special promotion, a certificate of merit and 10,000 yuan in prize money from the commander of the Kwangtung Army and the Public Security Minister of Manchukuo. But as Kim Il Sung made his reappearance later, they said that their plan had hit a snag.

Japanese imperialists even conducted vivisection on Koreans and Chinese. What was their purpose in doing this? They aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the peoples and the revolutionary armies of

Korea and China and the total extermination of all hostile forces that obstructed their domination of the Orient.

However, the enemy found that they could neither put out the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution nor wipe out the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, no matter what they did. As things had turned out this way, the enemy, at their wits' end, attempted to do us harm by poisoning wells and bread, as well as the salt and cereals we bought.

As soon as we went to Changbai, we were nearly caught in by the enemy's trickery. After fighting a battle in Dadeshui and another one in Xiaodeshui in West Jiandao, we went to Mashungou and began making preparations to celebrate the Harvest Moon Day. One day the sergeant of the guard hurried to me and reported that an old man had come to the sentry post and wanted to see the Commander. The sergeant wanted to know what he should do with the old man.

When I met the old fellow, he told me that the salt we had obtained in Changbai had been poisoned by the enemy. To confirm this, we fed the allegedly poisoned salt to an animal. It proved poisonous there and then. If the old man had not told us about it in time, we might all have ended up in big trouble. The more difficult our salt situation was, the more sinister became the enemy's attempts to exterminate us through poisoned supplies.

In the spring of 1939 we experienced great difficulties for lack of salt. At this time the regiments that had been conducting dispersed actions had reassembled and were moving with Headquarters on the last leg of the Arduous March. As the march was nearing its end, the guerrillas were in high spirits. By that time we had obtained food and the weather was warm. With the advent of spring every one was in a happy frame of mind.

But one day I saw a very strange thing: the guerrillas were staggering around as if they were drunk. This would not have been a problem if only a few had been in this state, but it was alarming that there were so many. Their faces were swollen too, some of them so puffed up that they could not open their eyes properly. I decided the reason for this was a lack of salt. The serious swelling was all caused by the same deficiency.

The staff of Headquarters had not had salt for about ten days. I asked Oh Jung Hup when his 7th Regiment had last taken it. He replied that the regiment had gone almost entirely without it after parting with Headquarters. It was clear that salt deficiency lay at the bottom of the trouble. I was horrified to see this sight just at a time when I was planning our advance into the homeland to strike the enemy after the conclusion of the march. We had to get salt, no matter how. Otherwise, the whole unit might be destroyed.

I looked for a man fit enough to go to the enemy-held area for this purpose. O Paek Ryong who was in command of the Guard Company recommended a recruit named Kim Pong Rok. He had carried booty for the guerrillas and had joined our unit instead of returning home. A mere recruit though he was, he

was good at daily routine and fighting. Oh Jung Hup also said that he was a loyal man and that as his parents were living in Xigang, he would get salt without fail if he went there.

I called him and asked him if he could do this for us. He replied that he would try. He further said that his father went to the mountains around this time of year to gather firewood and that if he himself went in plain clothes, he could meet his father unnoticed by enemy agents and ask him to obtain the salt. I gave him the assignment and attached an assistant to him. The two of them went off in search of this vital substance.

His father was delighted to see him. He said he was very proud that his son had become General Kim's soldier and felt relieved that his boy should be in the care of the General. He mentioned that the laps were recently claiming that General Kim had been killed and asked whether this was true. Kim Pong Rok replied that he had just received an order from the General himself at camp before coming to see his father and that the General was perfectly hale and hearty.

His father, wiping away tears of relief, said that he had thought so, but he had nevertheless been terribly worried when he had heard all these ominous rumors about the General. He was so happy to know that General Kim was alive. When his son explained why he had come home, the old man was surprised. Regretting the fact that the revolutionary army should be unable to fight because of a salt deficiency, he promised that he would get it by any possible means to relieve the General of this burden.

Though he reassured his son, the old man found it not so easy to get salt after all. He could buy one or two kilogram's by himself, but he would be suspected by the enemy if he bought more than that. The Manchukuo authorities and police forbade shops to sell salt beyond a prescribed limit. They also spied on shops now and then, investigating in secret the sale of the condiment. Some shopkeepers were enemy agents; they regularly reported their customers' purchase of goods to the enemy.

Although he himself could buy a certain amount, the old man asked his neighbor and a close acquaintance of his to help him as well so as to obtain as much salt as possible, for he had heard from his son that the guerrillas on the march numbered hundreds. The neighbor promised to cooperate. Then the neighbor told one of his friends proudly that General Kim Il Sung had sent a man from the mountains to obtain salt and that he had promised to do his share.

He told his friend to buy as much salt as possible if he was willing to help the guerrillas. Thus the third old man also set out to obtain salt - and this was where the trouble started. Unaware that his son was an enemy agent, the third old man revealed the secret to the young man, a member of the Concordia Association. In those days the Japanese imperialists were bent on "surrender hunting" by forming "pacification squads" and "surrender-hunting teams". The Concordia Association members took part in the operation. The enemy agent reported to his superior what he had heard from his father.

Informed that we were planning to obtain large amounts of salt through the old men, the intelligence service of the Kwangtung Army ordered the police to buy up all the salt from the shops in the area of

Xigang and to replace it with salt transported by air in haste from Changchun. This salt had been poisoned. If one ate this particular salt, one did not die on the spot, but got a headache and became weak in the legs, and lost all combat efficiency. The old men, including Kim Pong Rok's father, who went around making their purchases, were ignorant of this. The enemy had planned the scheme in so strictly confidential and crafty a manner that even the shopkeepers, who were said to be sharp-witted, got no scent of the plot.

The two old men then left with Kim Pong Rok for the guerrilla bivouac. They arrived at around 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I thanked them and instructed that the salt be shared out among the units. In those days Comrade Kim Jong Suk always carried vinegar with her for safety's sake, as she was in charge of cooking for Headquarters. After putting some of the vinegar to the salt that had been allotted to Headquarters, she said that the salt seemed to be poisoned. Vinegar is an instant reagent to food poison.

The staff of Headquarters and the soldiers of the Guard Company did not eat the poisoned salt. They regarded it as their moral duty and discipline not to eat before their Commander. That day they had not eaten either, for they were waiting for me to close a meeting and come to my tent. It was during the meeting that I received the report about the possible poisoning of the salt, so I quickly adjourned the meeting. I threw some salt into a campfire and saw a blue flame spurting out of it. Poisoned salt flares up in blue flames.

I ordered a supply officer to collect all the salt that had been distributed to the units. Some of the guerrillas were embarrassed at the order, for they had already eaten small amounts of it. Some units, though ordered to collect salt, would not return it, doubting that it had really been poisoned. Worse still, some guerrillas hid it in their small pouches. The worst problem was that the 7th and 8th Regiments had already left for a raid after eating it.

We had planned to attack the enemy that evening and obtain food before going in the direction of the Heixiazigou Secret Camp, so I had given the regiments a combat mission. It was obvious that the enemy who had fed us poisoned salt would fall upon us at daybreak, and I was quite worried, as the main combat forces had been committed to battle. Just as I was about to send my orderlies to call them back immediately, the combatants themselves returned, dejected and panting. I had never seen Oh Jung Hup making a report on his arrival in such a sluggish manner. The others were no better than him. Some of them felt so weak, they fell even before reaching the bivouac.

Obviously the enemy intended to pounce on us when we had lost all our combat energy and to capture or destroy us all at one go. The cunning enemy must have calculated when the salt would arrive at our unit, by what time we would eat it and by what time all my men would be lying around, helpless. The situation was serious. The whole unit except Headquarters was going to be exposed to the enemy's attack while they were intoxicated. We found ourselves in a truly critical situation. It was a question of whether the whole unit would be annihilated, or remain alive to continue its resistance against Japan.

I felt far more apprehensive than in Xiaotanghe in the spring of 1937, when we had been surrounded by

thousands of enemy troops. I do not know how I can describe my anxiety at that time. Though surrounded by large enemy forces in Xiaotanghe, I was determined to break through the encirclement by striking the enemy hard because my men were able to fight. But now things were different. It was terrible to be anticipating an enemy attack while my unit was suffering from the effects of poison.

We discussed the threatening situation. Some of the soldiers, furious, suggested executing the old men then and there. They said the old men must be the enemy agents, otherwise they would not have brought the poisoned salt. They were wrong in their judgement. If the old men had been in secret contact with the enemy and had known that the salt was poisoned, they would have handed it over to the guerrillas who had gone to the village in Xigang; they would not have taken the trouble to bring it to us themselves. And a father would certainly not have brought poisoned salt to kill his own son!

I severely criticized those who had suggested killing the old men. I said, "How absurd it is for you to suggest executing these old men, who carried heavy loads of salt at the risk of their lives to support their fighting sons! You should instead be giving them a warm welcome. Apparently you have lost your senses because you ate the poisoned salt. They were obviously as ignorant of the fact that the salt was poisoned as we were. We've been caught by an enemy trick. The enemy is bound to attack us when the poison has taken its effect on us, so all of you who can still move must quickly get ready to fight and take antitoxic measures. There is no other choice. At daybreak the enemy will come. Not many of us can fight now, so it's going to be a do-or-die battle today."

But the soldiers of the regiments, the major units, said they were too weak to move. "However weak you are, you must leave this place before the enemy attacks us," I urged. "As long as you are alive, you have to get to a safe place, even if it means crawling on all fours. Otherwise, we'll all be killed when the enemy planes start dropping bombs on us and when their ground forces surround us and open up with their artillery."

In response to my instructions the regiments crawled on all fours to the safety of the forest. I got the Headquarters guards and the machinegun platoon fully ready for combat. Some hours later the enemy came to attack us, as we had anticipated. We fought the enemy fiercely for two days. As the main force of the regiments were sheltered in a safe place, only the machine-gun platoon and the Headquarters guards fought the enemy. They battled well, unafraid of death.

Judging from their use of the slowly acting poison, the enemy must have planned to take us all prisoner. If they had captured us, they would have advertised to the world that they were "finished with the punitive operations against the communist bandits" in Manchuria. In those days they kept bragging that the "punitive" operations against the guerrillas would end once they had destroyed Kim Il Sung's unit.

After repulsing the enemy, we went to the forest where the regiments had taken shelter. We set up a hospital there and treated the soldiers for about a week, feeding them boiled green beans and pumpkins. Everyone fully recovered.



While the salt incident was a most trying experience for me, it was young Kim Pong Rok who was most upset when he heard that the salt had been poisoned. How humiliated he felt at the thought that the salt he and his father brought had been poisoned! They were both pale and at a loss, unable to utter a word, like guilty persons waiting for punishment.

I eased the old men's minds, insisting that we not only did not suspect them in the least but felt grateful to them for their sincere efforts. Then I told Kim Il, who was familiar with things in West Jiandao, to take them to a safe place, not to their homes for I was afraid that the enraged enemy would commit an atrocity against the innocent old men by blaming them for the failure of their scheme and for the heavy loss of their men. They would kill Kim Pong Rok's father and his neighbor for the simple reason that the two men had bought salt for the guerrillas, being in secret contact with the guerrilla son of one of them.

Kim Il carried out the assignment responsibly. He took the two old men to a safe place first, then took their families there in secret as well. He also found out how it was that the salt had been poisoned in the first place: the son of the third old man was an evil renegade.

During the Korean war, enemy spies who had wormed their way into our health establishments did not hesitate to kill patients by poisoning their food. It was a deliberately harmful act aimed at damping the people's spirit and planting the seed of mistrust and discord among the medical workers. US imperialists also resorted to germ warfare without hesitation to exterminate our people.

Counterrevolution always resorts to every possible means and method in its attack on revolution. As the history of the 20th century shows, imperialists, both Eastern and Western, are skilled butchers of humanity. They constantly practise their skill to wipe out those who want to live independently, unshackled by others. Modern imperialists these days are conducting operations not just to wipe out hundreds of revolutionaries, or tens of thousands of revolutionary army troops, but carrying out mad procedures meant to destroy all socialist countries at one time. Therefore, we must always be vigilant against their maneuvers.

Because I suffered such difficulties from lack of salt in the mountains during the anti-Japanese revolution, I questioned the people from the northern border areas after liberation about their salt situation whenever I met them. I once talked to a man who was vice-chairman of the Huchang County consumers' cooperative and asked him what was most lacking among the goods needed by the people in the county. He said it was salt.

In the summer of 1947 I met in my office a boy from Changsong who had come back from a camping trip in the Kumgang Mountains. At that time the boy told me that the people in the Changsong area were suffering serious salt shortages. After this, I instructed the officials in the commercial sector to take measures to supply sufficient salt to people living in remote mountain areas. As Ryanggang Province is a mountainous region far from the sea, like North and West Jiandao, its inhabitants may experience salt shortages. When I was in Kosanjin during the war I found that salt was in short supply in Jagang Province, too, so I myself ensured that salt was supplied to the people in Kosanjin even though we were

going through the difficult period of our temporary retreat at the time.

Officials must always make sure the people living in inland regions are not suffering from a lack of salt.

Deer farms should also feed salt to the animals on a regular basis.

## 20.4. Battle of Taehongdan

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In May 1939, General Kim Il Sung crossed the Yalu River, again in command of the main force of the KPRA, and destroyed a large number of enemy troops on the Paektu Plateau. At that time the soldiers of the KPRA spent their first night in the homeland in the forest of Cbongbong, which is not far from today's Rimyongsu Workers District, Samjiyon County.

This bivouac site was rediscovered after nearly 20 years and made known to the public. Afterwards, the Musan and Yonsa historical sites were also found. This section compiles the fatherly leader's descriptions of the operation in the Musan area, given on several different occasions. The question of our advance into the homeland, which was brought up at Nanpaizi, came to a final decision at the Beidadingzi meeting.

My men were eager to advance into the homeland as soon as possible. They wanted to fight a larger battle in Korea than those fought at Pochonbo or Jiansanfeng to shake the world. We were afraid of nothing because we were strong, having become as tough as steel through the Arduous March of more than 100 days. Demonstrating this newfound strength, we attacked many county towns and villages along the Yalu River that spring, then slipped into the homeland.

I think I have recounted the purpose of our advance into the homeland more than once. As I mentioned before, the number one priority of the political and military activities of the KIPRA was the advance into the homeland. The final objective of the many large and small military operations we had conducted in northern and eastern Manchuria had always been to advance into the homeland and liberate the country. We had concentrated all our efforts on this goal.

A careful timing of the operations in Korea was important. As June 1937 was the right time, so was May 1939. Why? The prevailing situation, our own strong desire and the hopes of the people back in the homeland made a KPRA push into Korea imperative. We made a decision to expand the armed struggle deep into Korea, based on a detailed analysis of the circumstances at home and abroad. In May 1939 the Sino-Japanese War was raging in the East and World War II was brewing in the West.

The Japanese imperialists were trying to wind up the dragged-out Sino-Japanese War, concentrate on the possibility of invading the Soviet Union and draw up a strategy for advancing towards the south. In order to build up their home front, they stepped up their offensive against the KPRA, while intensifying their economic plunder and fascist repression of Korea. A typical example was the "Hyesan incident". In this incident, revolutionary organizations in West Jiandao and some of those in the northern part of Korea suffered serious damage. Some survived, but most of the important organizations were destroyed. Even those that escaped trouble were cowed.

Following this incident, the enemy continued to spread the lie that the KPRA had perished. In some places they held celebrations for our "destruction" and their "victory". Some revolutionary organization

members who had been deceived by the false propaganda about our supposed demise reasoned this way: "If it is true that something has happened to General Kim Il Sung, the Korean revolution is as good as finished. What's the use of carrying on a hopeless struggle?" They came in person to our political operatives' camp to find out if the rumor about me was true.

In this situation, the best way to bring about a resurgence in the anti-Japanese revolution was for a large KPRA force to advance into the homeland and strike the enemy hard to show that it was still alive to those at home and abroad. Even if some political operatives managed to penetrate into Korea and tell the people that the KPRA was still in operation, that General Kim Il Sung was healthy and that the revolution was advancing, limited propaganda such as this would have little effect on the situation.

Another main objective of our advance into Korea was to resurrect destroyed revolutionary organizations and expand them, and at the same time build Party organizations and develop the united front movement to rouse all the people to a nationwide resistance.

It was immediately after the Battles of Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng that revolutionary organizations in the homeland had suddenly multiplied. The sound of gunshots awakens the people, and the awakened people naturally flow into revolutionary organizations. If we had not fought battles after moving to West Jiandao following the Nanhutou meeting but had idled away our time eating the food supplied by the people, revolutionary organizations would not have expanded in the Changbai area so rapidly and on such a large scale.

Revolutionary organizations had sprung up like bamboo shoots after the rain in West Jiandao, partly because we had conducted our ideological work successfully, but mainly because we had fought many battles, demonstrating the mettle of the KPRA and convincing the people that the anti-Japanese revolution was bound to emerge victorious.

When I selected the Musan area as the theatre of our operations in Korea, some commanding officers were quite bewildered because they knew that after the Battle of Pochonbo the enemy had reinforced its guard troops in this area to several times their former strength, and with the most vicious elements at that. To venture in there with a large force would, in fact, be extremely difficult and dangerous.

Nevertheless, I made a decision to move to this area, precisely because it was most difficult and dangerous. If we destroyed the enemy here, the results would be several times greater than operations in any other part of northern Korea.

In those days there were large numbers of workers in the Musan area, including iron miners, the builders of a hydroelectric power station and lumbermen. The sound of our gunshots would make a strong impact on the workers, and through them the news would rapidly spread all across the country.

Our aim was to use the roar of our gunfire to awaken the workers of Musan, as well as the workers and peasants in North Hamgyong Province, and thus go on to stir up all the people into a revolution against

the Japanese.

Accordingly, in the spring of 1939 the KPRA units advanced into the Musan area. We crossed the Yalu River at Dam No. 5. I carried Lee O Song across the river on my back. Wading through the water, I asked him if he knew the name of the river. He said no. In those days my men had almost no idea of where the national boundary lay. When I said it was the Yalu River, he asked me to lower him into the water: he wanted to drench himself in the waters of a Korean river.

Near the dam were many azalea bushes. When they saw the azaleas of their homeland, the guerrillas shouted for joy.

My most lasting memory of the occasion is that of the women guerrillas kneeling around a thicket of azaleas, laughing and crying at the same time with emotion as they gazed at the flowers. Some of the women threw their arms around the blossoming bushes. Their faces were beaming, but their eyes streamed with tears.

The azaleas we saw that day were not simply flowers. They were part of the homeland, a part of its flesh, so to speak, occupied by the Japanese imperialists. To my mind the azaleas were smiling too, but it was a sad smile. As the guerrillas shed tears at the sight of the azaleas, the flowers themselves seemed to weep. Patriotism is indeed a strong feeling. Can flowers feel sorrow or shed tears? What difference is there between the azaleas of those days and those of today? To us, who were grieving the loss of our national freedom, even the azaleas seemed to lament over the ruin of our country as they flowered and shed their blossoms in a land occupied by the Japanese.

On that day these were no mere flowers to the guerrillas, but the azaleas of the homeland. This flower was a symbol of the ardent desire of the guerrillas who so greatly loved their fatherland and their people, a desire to hurry the spring of national liberation so that a paradise for people could be built in a liberated Korea.

Whenever I see azaleas now, I recall the anti-Japanese armed struggle and feel an urge to quote poetry. The azalea of the homeland, the azalea of Mt. Paektu, light pink azalea that heralds the spring of Korea! How full of meaning this lovely flower is!

Just as we arrived at Choughong, the fog lifted and the sun came out. The weather was perfect. I still remember that we built a campfire and dried our leggings, which were wet with dew. I climbed the hill to see if there was any sign of enemy movement and to get an idea of the terrain. I saw smoke coiling up at a distance and heard the sound of chopping wood, so I warned my officers of possible enemy presence and ordered them to maintain stealth in movement. I chose camp sites for every unit, posted sentries and sent out reconnaissance parties.

When camp had been set up, some of the men stripped the bark off trees and wrote mottoes on the trunks. During the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, the guerrillas wrote mottoes on trees in many of the

places they stopped. Among such writers was Ju Yuan-ai from Xinglongcun, who had studied hard and was good at calligraphy. Yan An-ji, who had been a teacher in a secondary school, was also a good calligrapher. Comrade Kim Jong Suk, too, wrote many mottoes.

We have lost these excellent comrades, but the trees and their mottoes remain, so it seems as if the writers were still alive. Our people have now discovered these priceless treasures. The motto-bearing trees at Chongbong preserve the revolutionary spirit of our comrades-in-arms. When I see these trees I feel as if I saw the fighters themselves. The mottoes written by the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters are not mere phrases, but valuable revolutionary documents. The mottoes glow with the spirit of these fighters. They are lasting treasures for our Party and people to preserve and cherish.

We bivouacked overnight at Chongbong and then moved to Konchang the next day. While we were camping at Konchang, the enemy sent two spies disguised as anglers into the bivouac area. Around Konchang there was hardly any place for fishing, yet these "anglers" were sneaking around our bivouac area in broad daylight. Their demeanor was so suspicious that the sentry tried to arrest them to examine them. One of them ran away, while the other obeyed the sentry. The captured man was even carrying a pistol.

The spy confessed that the enemy had already caught wind of our presence in the homeland and had sent out a large number of garrison and police troops to search the forests thoroughly. As we had anticipated, the enemy forces were concentrated in this area. The best way in this situation was to slip away from their encirclement.

I made a tactical feint against possible enemy actions. I grouped two small forces and sent one detachment to strike the enemy at Phothae-ri and ordered the other to make footprints towards Changbai across the Yalu River, then disappear. I did this to confuse the enemy by giving them the impression that the KPRA was operating at several different places.

At dawn the next day we left Konchang and marched towards Pegae Hill. That day the fog was so dense that we could not see an inch ahead. The scouting party had a trouble trying to find its way, so I joined it and decided the direction we should take by using a military map and a compass. Our march was very risky. If an enemy search party suddenly appeared and encountered us, it would mean trouble. We would have no problem in destroying them, but the sound of gunfire would lay obstacles to our future action. We were therefore very nervous while on the march.

On arriving in Pegae Hill, I ordered the unit to bivouac and sent out reconnaissance parties. They discovered a splendid, newly-built highway that ran through the primeval forest east of Pegae Hill. I confirmed that this was the Kapsan-Musan guard road, which I had already been informed of. It was a road for emergency use, connecting uninhabited areas between Kapsan and Musan. This road was supposed to be for moving the "punitive" forces by mobile means to any spot on short notice in case the KPRA pushed into Korea. I was told that because the project had been finished only recently, the road was kept clear for inspection, and no unauthorized traffic was allowed. The scouts said that "Off Limits"

notices had been put up everywhere.

The Japanese imperialists created such "Off Limits" and "No Admission" zones in different parts of our country and strictly prohibited Koreans access to them. Under Japanese rule, in the heart of Pyongyang were streets where only Japanese lived. When Koreans appeared in these streets the Japanese policemen or merchants scowled at them. Korean children were not allowed to hang around the gates of Japanese schools.

If a Korean boy who was ignorant of such a rule happened to wander through the gate into the playground now and then, he got his ears boxed or was treated as a beggar. However, Japanese children were free to enter Korean school grounds or the Korean sections of town, where they did anything they pleased. One day a group of delinquent Japanese boys from Pyongyang raided a melon field near the Changdok School, trampled all over the field and made off with the melons a poor farmer had carefully cultivated all through the summer. I and my classmates went after them, taught them a lesson and drove them back to the city.

Though the enemy had made even the border area an "Off Limits" zone to Koreans, we would not tolerate this. I thought that in order to challenge the Japanese rule over Korea we should demonstrate the strength of the KPRA by dealing a blow to the enemy who had built the Kapsan-Musan guard road. The road that had been constructed on the frontier and was kept under strict guard was an apparent attempt by the enemy to make up for their ignominious defeats in Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng. I summoned my officers and gave them the following briefing:

"We are now on the march within the enemy lines. The enemy is everywhere, in front and rear and on both sides of us. Suspecting that we are operating in the homeland, the enemy has mobilized large 'punitive' forces from border garrisons and police troops in different parts of North and South Hamgyong Provinces and is preparing a large-scale encirclement and search operation. Because the escaped spy saw us, the enemy may be following us now through Konchang after making a search for us at Chongbong. We must slip away quickly into the Musan area and put into effect the operation plan we drew up in Beidadingzi, but the situation makes our advance difficult. There is danger that we may be caught in the mesh of complete encirclement. How can we advance with speed into Musan?"

The commanding officers made one suggestion after another. Some comrades said that we should dispatch a small unit to lure the enemy in the direction of Changbai before the main force advanced into the Musan area. Other comrades asserted that we should fight a big battle around Pegae Hill, as we did in Jiansanfeng, now that the way to the Musan area was blocked.

All their opinions sounded good, but none of them convinced me of the possibility of moving fast to Musan. I heard all their suggestions and organized a debate before giving my own idea. My plan was to march in broad daylight along the new highway that was waiting for inspection.

The officers were taken aback at my proposal. This was natural, for my plan meant that a large force

would march, not along a back lane, but a special highway the enemy had built solely for the "punitive" operations against us. Their faces showed that they had little confidence in my suggestion. This very fact rather proved that my plan to march boldly in the daytime along the highway was a tactically correct one.

I outlined for them the tactical intention of my plan and the possibility of realizing it. "Your own attitude proves that it is possible to march in broad daylight along the Kapsan-Musan guard road. When I suggested this plan you were stunned.

"The enemy, too, will never be able to imagine that a large KPRA unit would march along their specially-built guard road right in the middle of the day. This very fact makes it amply possible to carry out the march. Doing boldly what the enemy regards as impossible is a tactical guarantee of success in this move."

The commanding officers all left Pegae Hill full of confidence. So many azaleas were in full bloom everywhere, the faces of our guerrillas looked rosy. On Lake Samji, too, there were many azaleas. Masses of them along the shore and their reflection in the water made such a picturesque scene that I felt I would like to build a hut and live here for ever. It was wonderful to see such rare scenic beauty in an alpine region like the Paektu Plateau.

Highland scenery has a peculiar attraction. The scenery around Lake Samji is as majestic as Mt. Paektu and at the same time it looks delicate, as if spangled with jewels. The landscape of Lake Samji in which the scenic beauty of the highland blends in harmony with the serene plain, is worth its weight in gold. That day I felt in the marrow of my bones how lovely was the land that had been taken from us.

I was so fascinated with the picturesque scenery of Lake Samji that I made up my mind to build this place into a holiday centre for our people after driving the Japanese imperialists out of Korea and show it off to the world. This ideal has been realized today. Lake Samji has become a revolutionary battle site that attracts many visitors from different countries. It is also renowned as a health resort for its unique highland charm.

Until 1956, when Comrade Kim Jong Il visited the revolutionary battle sites in Ryanggang Province with the first expedition party in our country, only fallen trees and piles of leaves were seen on the lake, and most of the area remained untouched. There was only a worn-out skiff and an old-style pavilion that the local people had built before the Korean war to enhance the beauty of the lake.

When I returned from my official visits to the Soviet Union and the people's democracies in East Europe, Comrade Kim Jong Il told me about the activities of his expedition. He recounted in excitement what he had learned and felt during the visit to the revolutionary battle sites. He said he regretted that these historical sites, so alive with the spirit of the revolutionary forerunners, had not been laid out properly, but remained in a natural state without guides to explain their history to visitors.

In 1956 a campaign just started to eliminate flunkeyism and dogmatism and establish Juche in ideological



work. Until that time Juche had not been firmly established in the ideological work of our Party. As a result, the materials and relics associated with the revolutionary history of our Party had not been unearthed widely, the revolutionary battle sites were not laid out properly and a full-scale study of revolutionary traditions had not been made.

It was a significant event that in this situation Comrade Kim Jong Il decided to form an expedition to the revolutionary battle sites in the Mt. Paektu area with his fellow students from Pyongyang Secondary School No.1.

After we had left Lake Samji, we marched as fast as we could to the Musan area by the Kapsan-Musan guard road. We called such a march tactic "one thousand miles at a run." During the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we employed this tactic several times, each time with good results. But never before had there been an instance of a large force of hundreds of soldiers moving over a long distance in broad daylight on a highway like the one they called the guard road. It was we ourselves who opened the guard road for the Japanese, so to speak. We marched in fine array along the straight highway in broad daylight, reached Mupho on the Tuman River on that same day and pitched camp there.

I was told that when the enemy found out later that we had marched in the daytime along their guard road, they groaned in despair and called our bold move an "unprecedented oddity". The march made a greater impact than the annihilation of several enemy regiments or divisions.

At Mupho I gave my officers a briefing in which I reviewed our march and set forth the task of pushing into the Taehongdan area. We decided to carry out military and political activities first around Sinsadong and Singaechok.

We left Mupho the next morning and arrived at the Taehongdan tableland. On arrival we had lunch in the vicinity of a mountain shrine and moved our forces in two directions, the 7th Regiment going to Singaechok by way of Tujibawi and the Guard Company and the 8th Regiment under my command to Sinsadong at the foot of Mt. Soroun.

At that time, we conducted political work at Sinsadong. I placed Headquarters on a small rise by a brook and went with several guardsmen and orderlies to the biggest lumbermen's residence in the village. Seeing our sudden appearance in the Musan area, the people exclaimed in great excitement and joy that it was a colossal lie of the enemy that the entire KPRA had frozen to death last winter. They wondered how it was possible for so many soldiers to appear suddenly in their midst from nowhere.

Their barracks was no better than a cowshed or a stable. I noticed a rope stretched low down the center of the room like a wash-line. I asked one of the workers what the rope was for. He replied that they put their feet on it while sleeping. The room was so narrow that the men who were to lie on both sides of the rope could not stretch their legs, so they had to crisscross their feet on the rope. The workers were treated worse than cows or horses. A cow or a horse at least has human protection.

That evening many people gathered in the barracks. Both the room and yard were crowded. I made a speech before the people of Sinsadong and conducted organizational and political work among them. The warm hospitality the villagers gave us that night is still fresh in my mind. There were many slash-and-burn peasants in the village who were unable to do spring sowing for lack of seeds. Nevertheless, the village women prepared a meal of cooked glutinous millet and potato starch noodles for us "to treat the Korean army under the command of General Kim Il Sung," they said.

Our men were so moved by their kindness that they unpacked and shared out all their provisions among the villagers when they left Sinsadong. Comrade Kim Jong Suk cooked all her wheat flour into dough-flake soup for the host's family and applied her face-cream to his daughter's hands. When we left, the villagers saw us off in tears.

I foresaw that the enemy who had been hit at Singaechok would naturally chase us, and made a decision to destroy them in the Taehongdan tableland, where the terrain features were in our favor. After leaving Sinsadong, we lay in ambush on a low hill on the tableland, waiting for Oh Jung Hup's 7th Regiment to return from Singaechok. As I instructed, the 7th Regiment had struck the enemy in Singaechok and were now coming back. But they were somewhat elated at their success in destroying the enemy in Singaechok and in capturing several Japanese foremen, so they were not aware of an alarming fact: an enemy force was trailing close behind them in secret. The force was made up of border garrisons and Changphyong police troops that had come running at the news of the defeat of their colleagues in Singaechok.

At first my men, lying in ambush, took the soldiers coming at the heels of the 7th Regiment for a friendly force. They could not distinguish between friend and foe partly because the fog was so thick, but mainly because the enemy was so close behind the 7th Regiment.

I realized instantly that the helmeted soldiers coming in the wake of our regiment was an enemy force. The situation had developed as I expected, but the 7th Regiment was in a very dangerous position, right in front of the muzzles of enemy guns. Because of this situation, the 8th Regiment and Guard Company were going to have to fire with special care at the open-fire signal, otherwise there was the possibility of their killing their own troops. But we could not wait indefinitely until a wide enough gap was created between friend and foe.

If we delayed, the enemy might attack the 7th Regiment first. In such a case, the supply-service men and the lumbermen who were carrying packs for us, might suffer great losses. As soon as the 7th Regiment had passed by the area of our ambush, I signaled the supply-service men and lumbermen to throw themselves on the ground, then ordered my men to open fire.

Hundreds of rifles opened up with a deafening roar. The guerrillas were in a fever of excitement at the time. They were charged with emotion and energy at the thought that the whole country would hear the sound of this particular gunfire. I, too, was every bit as excited as my men. We mowed down the enemy troops. Those who survived, however, resisted desperately. The army and police troops of the enemy on the border were much more tenacious and ruthless than those in other areas. Their resistance was really

formidable. Apparently the Japanese deployed their elite troops in the border regions.

The supply-service men of the 7th Regiment and workers between us and the enemy could not raise their heads under the blanket of fire. The workers were at a loss as to what to do. Among the supply-carriers there were some Japanese. At that time a somewhat peculiar thing happened on the battlefield. The workers were divided into two sides, with Koreans running towards the KPRA with the supplies on their backs and the Japanese crawling towards the Japanese troops, tossing away their loads. No Korean worker went over to the Japanese.

At this sight, I keenly felt that the heart of the nation was beating as it should. Most of the enemy who encountered us in Taehongdan were killed. One of us was killed and two wounded. Kim Se Ok fell in action. He was the fiancé of Ma Kuk Hwa, younger sister of Ma Tong Hui. He was shot through his chest while guiding the supply-carriers to a safe place with the sergeant-major of the 7th Regiment. Seeing his wound, I knew it was hopeless. Apparently Kim Song Guk carried him on his back. I remember that Kim Song Guk's uniform was soaked with blood.

I intended to send back the lumbermen before crossing the Tuman River. But they followed us, saying that they could not return while Kim Se Ok was in a critical condition after saving their lives. Kim Se Ok was in a coma as we crossed the Tuman River. When he finally died, all of us cried. The supply-carriers who followed us could not keep back their tears either. He was buried at the foot of the Changshan Pass. After liberation we moved his grave to Taehongdan.

On the day when we buried Kim Se Ok we evacuated Nam Tong Su, also seriously wounded, to a nearby secret camp. It turned out that in that camp he lived alone for over one hundred days, like Robinson Crusoe. Some people may not believe that a seriously wounded man who could hardly move stayed alive for one hundred days without a regular supply of food in an isolated situation without any contact with the unit, but it was a fact.

The man who was supposed to nurse him was a Chinese called Old Man Zheng, who had recently come to us from a mountain rebels' unit. Fooled by the Japanese propaganda that the People's Revolutionary Army was a "bandit group", he had joined our unit to earn money. He thought that robbery with the "communist bandits" would give him a better chance at making money than with the mountain rebels. When he realized that the People's Revolutionary Army was an honorable army, not a gang of bandits, he decided our unit was not the place for him, an idler. He made up his mind to kill Nam Tong Su before he returned home, thinking that he would be safer if he killed a communist before going back.

Nam Tong Su guessed his evil design and crawled out of the hut at night. He hid himself for two days, covering his body with fallen leaves. After Old Man Zheng had left, he kept himself alive eating tree leaves, grass sprouts and the meat of squirrels and snakes, waiting to meet our liaison man. But to make matters worse, the liaison man himself was killed in a "punitive" attack. He had to live again in isolation. While wandering about, looking for our unit, he went to Kapsan where his mother was working in an underground organization. Afterwards, he moved to eastern Manchuria to help the Chinese revolution. I

cannot remember clearly when he came to the homeland in response to our call.

When he arrived, he burst into tears and said, "General, I come to you only now. I even lost the blanket you gave me."

Our comrades-in-arms left traces in many parts of the Musan area. Jong Il Gwon, nicknamed "shorty", once worked around Pulgunbawi with Park Song Chol. The Japanese imperialist invaders were astonished at the news that the KPRA had appeared in the Musan area, annihilated a large number of their troops at Taehongdan and crossed back over the Tuman River safely. The mere fact that the KPRA had appeared on Korean soil was enough to drive the enemy mad.

After the Nanhutou meeting the main theatre of operations for the KPRA was the West Jiandao area southwest of Mt. Paektu. Following our advance into the Mt. Paektu area, our guerrilla actions in West Jiandao often hit the headlines of newspapers and news services in Korea and Manchuria. The Japanese army and police, deployed along the Yalu River from Hyesan to Junggangjin via Singalpa, were constantly on the alert and desperate to block a KPRA "border invasion".

The police department of South Hamgyong Province collected information about our actions from every angle under the title of "The Movement of the Bandits on the Other Side of the River" and sent it regularly to the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, the headquarters of the Japanese Korea army, the police departments of North and South Hamgyong, North Phyongan and other provinces along the border area and the headquarters of the Ranam 19th Division.

The intelligence services of the Japanese army and police often predicted where we would appear and what we would do next. However, the fact that we appeared at the foot of Mt. Paektu, especially in the Musan area, which was strictly guarded by their border garrison, and annihilated the "punitive" troops at one blow, then disappeared like a whirlwind - this was completely beyond their powers of imagination. They were left aghast.

The enemy made the mistake of thinking that the KPRA was on the verge of collapse because of its losses in the Arduous March and the failure of the Rehe expedition. They thought that only a trifling remnant of our force was struggling for survival in Changbai, Linjiang and other areas along the Yalu River, or in Mengjiang, Fusong and other northern Dongbiandao areas.

Along with the Battle of Pochonbo, the operation in the Musan area was the largest-scale action of the greatest significance in the military operations we performed in the homeland. The Battle of Pochonbo demonstrated that Korea was not dead, but very much alive, whereas the Battle of Taehongdan was an event of historical significance in that it showed in a concrete way that the KPRA was not only still alive, but also had grown stronger and was dealing a crushing blow to the Japanese imperialists even as the enemy was going around claiming that it had been destroyed.

The gunshots of the KPRA in the Musan area gave hope to the dispirited people in Korea with proof that

our revolution was back on its feet and invigorated the revolution in the homeland, which had suffered a temporary setback because of the "Hyesan incident". Our military triumph in the Musan area exposed to the world the lie of the enemy propaganda that the KPRA was totally destroyed. After this battle our people no longer believed the enemy about anything they said.

Following the battle in the Musan area the workers, peasants and other broad masses from all walks of life in the homeland joined in the current of the anti-Japanese revolution, each more convinced than the other that as long as the KPRA remained alive, the day of national liberation was close at hand.

## 20.5. The Tano Festival at Yushidong

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After the Battle of Taehongdan, the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army shifted the theatre of its activities to the northeastern part of Mt. Paektu and conducted brisk military and political activities along the Tuman River. Typical of its military actions in that period was the battle of Wukoujiang, and its most conspicuous political work among the masses of people was the Tano festival at Yushidong.

Yushidong in Helong County, China, is a mountain village across the Tuman River from Musan County in Korea.

Years later, during an on-the-spot guidance tour of the Taehongdan area, on the Tuman River, the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung recalled with deep emotion the historical events that took place in the course of the KPRA's military and political activities in the northeastern part of Mt. Paektu after the operation in the Musan area.

I remember the football game played at Yushidong on the Tano festival in 1939. Over 30 years have gone by, but I can still recall that particular event. Some people may not believe that we guerrilla fighters took time out to play football; nevertheless, we didn't spend every day of the year shooting and battling. While fighting, we also had a life of culture and leisure suitable to the characteristics of a guerrilla army. In the first half of the 1930s we frequently held sport events in the guerrilla zones. There were quite a few good football players in the Wangqing guerrilla unit.

Later, we had football games in Luozigou before our second expedition to northern Manchuria, as well as at Yushidong; they were quite interesting. The Korean residents in Jiandao were good footballers. The best among them were those living in Longjing. After the Battle of Taehongdan, we moved the theatre of our struggle to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu, as planned, to build a strategic base for our revolution in that area.

At the meeting of military and political cadres, held at Dagou, Antu County, late in May that year, I set out the policy of building another strong bulwark of our revolution in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu through intensive military and political activities in this area.

Our revolutionary bases, which had been newly established after the dissolution of the guerrilla zones, were mostly in West Jiandao and in various parts of the homeland centering around Mt. Paektu. Given the situation, if we set up new revolutionary bases in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu and the northern part of Korea along the Tuman, we would be able to extend the area of KPRA activities and operations, as well as its bases in the rear, over the whole territory of Korea, and while relying on those bases, give a stronger impetus to the Korean revolution as a whole.

Developing the revolution over a wider area is not a special undertaking. It is mainly a matter of building up the ranks of people who can be the motive force of revolution, extending the bases of activities, and obtaining more weapons. In other words, solving the problem of manpower, land and weapons to suit the objective situation and increasing them steadily means developing the revolution in depth. As long as there are people, territory and weapons, we are fully able to defend revolution, expand and develop it.

In order to establish bases, it is necessary above all to overwhelm the enemy through active military operations and to create favorable circumstances for free political work and activities, so that organizations among the local inhabitants of the areas concerned can be built. Only then will the enemy be prevented from hampering the activities of the revolutionary army. Immediately after crossing the Tuman River following the Battle of Taehongdan, we struck the enemy at Dongjingping, Huifengdong, Wukoujiang, and Qingtoucun, and raided the lumber station near Qingshanli. All these battles were aimed at overwhelming the enemy militarily and creating conditions favorable for KPRA activities.

After each battle we conducted political work among the masses and built new organizations. The joint celebration of the Tano festival by both the army and people at Yushidong was a particular example of our political work. Whenever we were in a new area, we stepped up the revolutionary transformation of the masses and strengthened mass foundations for the armed struggle through lively political work among the local inhabitants by applying a variety of forms and methods suited to the area. This was our traditional work method and consistent mode of activities.

At first we had no plans to celebrate the Tano festival at Yushidong, so no preparations were made. The enemy's suppression in the area was so harsh and the situation so grave that no one even thought of holding a celebration. We only decided to celebrate the festival after we had met the residents of Helong, where we moved after our offensive in the Musan area.

As seemed to be the case everywhere we went, the people in Jiandao at that time were full of fear and in low spirits. The first people we met in Helong were two young peasant brothers, both addicted to opium-smoking. In those days the northeastern area in China was infested with opium addicts and opium was even used as money at that time. The more misruled the country is, the more prevalent are drugs like opium. The peasant brothers had drifted to Jiandao on the wind of emigration from Korea. I wondered why these young people of fine appearance took pleasure in opium-smoking. I asked them why they were interested in a terrible habit that sapped their strength in both body and mind, a strength so essential to their work as farmers.

They replied without any compunction: "How can we live in this impossible to die, and opium is the only thing that helps us forget the world. We first tried to console ourselves with drinking, hut drinking needs companions to make it fun. The Japanese ban gatherings of people for pleasure even on holidays, calling it illegal, so we can't drink liquor, can we? That's why we decided to smoke opium."

They continued: "In a few days, it will be the Tano festival, but what's the use of such a holiday when people are not allowed to get together even for a bit of home-brewed liquor? In the past when we were at

our native village, we used to have a good time on this day, wrestling, playing on the village swing and eating rice cakes mixed with mugwort. Now that we are deprived of our country, we can't even think of such a holiday."

Listening to their complaints, I felt my heart ache. A human being without dreams is as good as dead. We live for the sake of meaning in life, not simply to eat and sleep. By life's meaning I mean its worth, the pride one feels in one's life. A worthwhile life means that one lives the life of a worthy person, exercising one's rights as a human being and creating one's own course in life. The lives of the young brothers who were addicted to opium were worth nothing. What life was there for people confined by a wall or a wire fence? That was mere existence, not life. Existence without life is worthless and without meaning.

From my childhood I had not liked opium-smokers, but I felt a certain sympathy for the young peasant brothers. I persuaded them: "It's a crime for you as Korean young people to idle away your time, smoking opium, when the nation's destiny is at stake. Look! These young orderlies and even these women fighters have taken up arms to save the nation. Shame on you! You must give up opium-smoking." The elder of the two scratched his head, saying that he did feel quite ashamed of living without a purpose.

After meeting the peasant brothers, I decided that we should conduct military and political activities more energetically in order to invigorate the people and encourage them to live with more hope in freedom. Political activities through speeches alone would not inspire the people. The people wanted to see and hear about the victorious revolution. Fighting made the revolution tangible for them. The 1930s was a period when a gunshot made a far greater impact than a long-winded speech.

We therefore stepped up our military actions along with our political work. First we attacked the enemy at Huifengdong, where the peasant brothers were living, and a nearby internment village. Our attack was so strong that - the enemy was unable to fire even a single shot, but ran off into the mountains in disarray. At this sight the inhabitants of Huifengdong were beside themselves with joy.

Alarmed at our move to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu and the ensuing battles, in which we killed several hundred enemy troops through successive attacks on more than ten internment villages situated along the Tuman River, the Japanese imperialists made frantic efforts to hold us in check. This was the time when the Kwangtung Army had provoked the brush-fire war in Khalkhin-Gol. When the war broke out, tens of thousands of Japanese troops moved to the front, and the enemy made a great fuss, saying it was really a time of emergency. Right at this time of emergency, the revolutionary army made one attack after another in their rear, thus adding to their confusion.

The Japanese were everywhere in the mountains around Helong. Their forces for the "punitive" operations were so large that one day my chief of staff who had watched the enemy through his field-glasses returned, his face pale with alarm. He told me that we would incur heavy losses if we fought any more battles. He meant that enemy strength was incomparably greater than ours.



I told him: "From the moment it was organized, our army has fought an enemy dozens and even hundreds of times larger than us. It's absurd to give up our planned operations simply because our force is smaller than the enemy. In such a situation we must strike the enemy even harder, without giving them a breathing space and by employing diverse tactics." Around that time our Headquarters obtained reconnaissance information that a Japanese officer, who had been awarded his emperor's commendation for distinguished services at the front in northern China, had arrived in Bairiping to command the "punitive" forces. The officer was said to be on his way to Japan on leave for his military exploits.

Hearing the rumor that the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army had appeared in Antu and Helong, attacking the internment villages there, he bragged; "It is the shame of the Japanese army and nation that we have been suffering one defeat after another, unable to deal with a guerrilla army. I will wipe out this disgrace by annihilating Kim Il Sung's army." It seemed he was rather full of himself.

I was told the Japanese officer liked to pass himself off as a commander of matchless valour. He had even had his chest tattooed with Asura, a Buddhist "demon fighter". Our scouts, who had been to Bairiping, brought, in addition to the story about Asura, the strange piece of news that the Japanese police in Helong County were preparing some Tano festival gifts to us. How comical it was that the "demon fighter" who had been awarded the emperor's commendation and was on his way to his native village on leave should come to Bairiping of his free will to "punish" our army on the one hand, and for the police to be preparing festive gifts for us on the other!

If this was true, the enemy's gift preparation was surely a comedy without a precedent. It was obvious that the gifts would be a fake. I decided that the enemy was so impudent as to prepare gifts because they had simply not been hit hard enough by the revolutionary army. I therefore planned alluring them from Bairiping towards the Wukou river and annihilating them at a blow.

The battleground we had chosen was a reed field not far from Bairiping. The field bordered the Wukou, along one side of which was a motorway. On both sides of the river and the motorway were forests favorable for ambush. The enemy appeared on the shore of the Wukou in the late morning as the fog was beginning to lift. Several hundred heavily-armed troops were marching in high spirits with a number of machine-guns at the head.

Just as the column entered our ambush area, a Japanese officer wearing a long sword at his side suddenly stopped by a ditch and shouted that there were some strange marks. At his shout, the enemy column came to a halt. Some of his subordinate officers ran towards the ditch and looked into it, cocking their heads. One of our comrades might have left footprints there. When the fight was over, our men searched the battlefield, uncovering the chests of the dead bodies of the Japanese officers; they found that the officer who had been wearing the long sword and had first discovered our traces by the ditch was the Asura himself, the commander of the "punitive" force.

The moment the Asura rose from stooping by the ditch, I gave the order to fire. In no time we had killed or captured over 200 enemy troops. The Asura fell right there beside the ditch, without drawing his

sword from its sheath. Our soldiers sneered, saying that if he had gone home and spent his leave in comfort, nothing would have happened to him. He died because of his blind arrogance.

That was the well-known Battle of Wukoujiang or Bairiping. Jo Myong Son wrote his reminiscences about the battle and I read it. After their bitter experience in that battle, the enemy did not dare to reappear in that area. From then on, the people called the villages on the shore of the Wukou the "off-limits villages", closed to the enemy. From then on we could conduct our political work there freely.

The Tano festival that year turned into a festivity celebrating the KPRA units' brilliant victories on the Wukou and in various other battles fought on the Tuman River. The villages on the Tuman were enveloped in a joyful atmosphere, as if on liberation day. The young and middle-aged people prepared swings and wrestling grounds, all set to enjoy the coming Tano festival day to their hearts' content.

On our way back from the Battle of Wukoujiang, an interesting event took place. A peasant called on us, bringing with him a variety of food, cigarettes and wine. At first we thought they were aid goods sent by the people. To our surprise, however, the peasant waved his hands, saying that they were not his own gifts but holiday goods sent to General Kim Il Sung by the chief of police in Helong County. The information brought earlier by our scouts had proved to be true.

The gift package sent by the enemy contained also a sealed letter to O Paek Ryong. The enemy addressed to O Paek Ryong in particular, probably because they knew that I held him in trust. The letter said: "Having fought the Japanese empire for nearly ten years, you have no doubt found out just how strong the empire is. As the Tano festival approaches, what about taking our gift, giving up your fight, and paying an annual tribute to us? If you refuse to listen to this warning, you will be taught a bitter lesson."

Later on we found out that the warning letter had been written by Unami, commander of the police "punitive" troops active in Helong County, on the instructions of the Japanese imperialists. Unami was concurrently holding the office of chief of the police affairs section in Helong County. When he was young, he had come over to Manchuria and worked as a policeman for the Japanese consulate, pledging himself to devote his life to the fight against the communists.

We first met with him in the autumn of 1932. On our return from the expedition to southern Manchuria, we had attacked the Dunhua county town, and he had fired back at us frantically from the police station of the Japanese consulate in the town. Thanks to his survival in that battle, he had been given a commendation from his superiors.

The Japanese army had an institution whereby the dead in battle, either in victory or defeat, was promoted to one rank higher, and received a large sum as a bonus. Even the wounded received a bonus. In a capitalist army controlled by money, there would be no other way of stimulating the fighters except with money. Lee To Son, too, got one more star on his shoulder-strap after his death. Serving in different places in eastern Manchuria, Unami climbed up the police intelligence ladder and around 1939 became commander of a police "punitive" force of several hundred troops.

In his interview with journalists years later, Unami referred to the letter as a "warning note", but to us it was something of a request. Having failed in their military attempt, the enemy tried to placate us in order to achieve their purpose.

To be effective, a warning note needs to be sent at an opportune moment: for instance, when the other side is on the defensive and in confusion, or when it is too exhausted to fight. Unami, however, was mistaken in both his timing and in choosing his object. In those days we were on the offensive rather than on the defensive, and our armed struggle was at a high tide, not at a low ebb. The KPRA was strong in both its forces and tactics. He was obviously afraid of us, yet at the same time he seemed to be regarding us as an army running short of resources.

Unami sent us his warning note at a time when Tsutsui, the chief of the police department of North Hamgyong Province, went down to Samjang Subcounty, Musan County on the instructions of Minami, the Governor-General of Korea, with a lot of comfort goods and journalists. The purpose of the visit was to console the soldiers and policemen who had been hit by us. After the Battle of Pochonbo, too, Minami had dispatched the so-called inspection team, headed by the chief of the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, to the battlefield on a mission to investigate the situation after the battle. Even though Unami had hectored us in his so-called warning note with his talk of a "bitter lesson", his words were nothing but a bluff. I told O Paek Ryong to write in reply to the letter.

O Paek Ryong was not a particularly good writer, but that letter he wrote quite well. He said: "You have gone through all sorts of hardships for seven or eight years to 'punish' us, and where the hell did it get you? You have only supplied us with arms and food. What else did you manage to accomplish? It's you who are wretched, not us. You poor sods, why don't you stop your futile efforts and go back home where your wives and children are waiting for you? In a few days it'll be the Tano festival. I suggest you prepare some cake and wait for me. I'll be your guest and I'll teach you what you need to do." His letter was worded rather strongly.

I instructed that on the Tano festival day all the inhabitants living along the twelve-kilometer Yushidong valley, as well as the people of Huifengdong and its neighboring villages, be invited to the sports event. In Yushidong there's a tableland several hectares wide. We set up goalposts there and held our football game. The news that we had even held a football match, enjoying the holiday in a calm and composed manner right in the heart of Helong at a time when the enemy was massing its "punitive" troops, would have a far greater effect than a few battles or several hundred words of speech. The football match in the enemy-ruled area was another unique example of our political activities.

The football match between the soldiers of the revolutionary army and the young villagers was great fun. Their technique was not worth mentioning and their teamwork was loose, but the players of both teams did their best, kicking at the air now and then, or slipping and falling down on the grassland, drawing bursts of laughter from the onlookers. The old folks said it was the first time since the village had come into being that the villagers of Yushidong were able to laugh and forget their worries.

The match ended in a draw, but its political score was ten out of ten. Both the swinging competition and the wrestling match were enjoyable to watch, and the joint amusement of army and people and art performances recorded a volley of encores, exceeding the scheduled time by far. The villagers expressed their gratitude to the revolutionary army for organizing the festival. On that day scores of young villagers in Yushidong joined our ranks, proof that our political work had hit its mark with the villagers. We must regard sports events and entertainment as one form of political work.

In our country there are thousands of theatres, cinemas and cultural halls. If the assembly halls in institutions and enterprises are all added up, they will number tens of thousands that can serve as nice places for political work and mass cultural activities. Our officials, however, are not using them effectively. These halls have been built with a large investment, yet they are often left vacant, except for times when important events or meetings are taking place. How good it would be if officials were to organize in those nice buildings lectures on scientific developments or the current situation, oratorical contests or poetry recitals, and public meetings with noted scientists, writers, artists, sportsmen, heroes and labor innovators!

As guerrillas we had no microphones, theatres or radio stations, yet in spite of our difficult situation we conducted uninterrupted political activities among the popular masses by doing our best with what we had. In the years that followed, the inhabitants of Yushidong and its vicinity helped our struggle actively. I think the young peasant brothers in Huifengdong must have given up opium and joined the fight as organization members.

The great leader's activities for the revolutionary transformation of the villages on the Tuman River were not confined to Helong. He paid close attention to the revolutionary movement in the homeland as well. Some days before the Tano festival he had come over to Peak Kuksa in Korea and held a meeting of the chiefs of underground revolutionary organizations and political operatives in the homeland. Peak Kuksa is situated on the Sodusu River, a tributary of the Tuman.

The principal architect of the meeting on Peak Kuksa, from preparation to convocation, was Lee Tong Gol, who was the chief of the political operatives team. Whenever this meeting was mentioned, the fatherly leader used to recollect Lee Tong Gol with a feeling of special affection and intimacy, always speaking highly of him as a loyal commander. After the Battle of Taehongdan we moved to Helong, where we immediately held the meeting of the Headquarters' Party Committee and wrote off Comrade Lee Tong Gol's penalty. On the same day we entrusted him with responsibility for political work in the homeland.

The revolution in the homeland had a mountain of work lying ahead of it. The major task was to restore and expand as soon as possible the underground revolutionary organizations, destroyed in the "Hyesan incident". We sent Lee Tong Gol to the Musan area to build a strong network of underground organizations there similar to the ones Lee Je Sun and Park Tal had once built.

I told him that I had plans to hold a meeting of the heads of underground revolutionary organizations and

political operatives in the homeland at a suitable place in the Musan area, and I instructed him to make preparations for the meeting. Lee Tong Gol did a good job of the preparations. He first worked actively with the Korean inhabitants of the Chinese villages on the Tuman River; relying on their help, he then spent time in the homeland, finding out the organizational line and expediting the preparations for the meeting carefully.

Kim Jong Suk helped him greatly in those days, acting as a liaison between Headquarters and Lee. We sent her to the frontier villages on the Tuman River for frequent contacts with Lee Tong Gol. She conveyed our instructions and intentions to him in time. In those days the peasants in Samjang Subcounty, Musan County, did not have enough farmland. They used to go over to China to grow their crops throughout the summer, returning in autumn to Korea with the crops they had harvested. The inhabitants of Musan called this "Jiandao farming". Even among the peasants of Kapsan there were quite a few engaged in "Jiandao farming". Kim Jong Suk worked first with the peasants who came to China for farming and through them got in touch with the homeland.

Lee Tong Gol and Kim Jong Suk played the leading role in converting Musan and Yonsa to a revolutionary line. Less than 20 days after he had been assigned the task, Lee Tong Gol had already finished the preparations for the meeting.

On the day of the meeting, Lee Tong Gol took me across the Tuman River over a dam built by raftsmen, and we climbed up Peak Kuksa, the prearranged meeting place. At the meeting we discussed measures to expand underground revolutionary organizations and to set the Korean revolution on a path of continuous expansion.

After the meeting Lee Tong Gol made two suggestions to me: one was to expand and develop the organization he had set up in Samjang into the Yonsa area, as pointed out at the meeting, thus developing it into a model of Party and ARF organizations; the other was to invite the heads of the homeland organizations and all the other participants at the meeting to the Tano festival at Yushidong so that they could see for themselves our methods of political work. I agreed to his suggestions.

After the meeting Lee Tong Gol accompanied us to Yushidong and celebrated the Tano festival. He then went to a secret rendezvous to pass on the policy set forth at the meeting on Peak Kuksa to ARF organizations. As he was preparing to leave for the Yonsa area in touch with a member of homeland organization, he was surprised by the enemy, wounded and captured.

After his arrest an organization member came to the Wukoujiang Secret Camp, carrying a secret note Lee Tong Gol had entrusted to him. The note contained the ciphered account of the state of the underground organizations in Dagou, Antu County, and in Yushidong, Helong County, as well as in Samjang and Yonsa in Korea, together with his plan of activities in the Yonsa area. Apparently, Lee Tong Gol had made a note of necessary information from time to time and handed it over to the organization member as a precaution.

According to Park Tal, even behind bars Lee Tong Gol encouraged the revolutionary comrades to struggle, communicating with them by knocking at the walls of his cell. He also fought well in court. Whenever he appeared in court, he demonstrated the spirit of a communist by shouting the slogan, "Long live the Korean revolution!"

Lee Tong Gol, like Kim Ju Hyon, had committed a serious mistake in the course of his work, but had corrected his error through revolutionary practice and ended his life honorably. A human being is not a machine, so he may commit errors in his work. How he corrects his errors depends on his ideology and preparedness. Lee Tong Gol had not only criticized himself sincerely for his errors, but had also trained himself ideologically after his dismissal from the post of regimental political commissar. That was why he was trusted again by his comrades before long.

A man's true worth reveals itself most clearly when he has been punished. When punished by his organization, an ill-prepared person usually complains about the punishment, saying it is too severe or undeserved or exaggerated instead of accepting it honestly. And he takes revenge in one way or the other upon those who have criticized him. He also gives a wide berth to his comrades in the revolution. What pleasure is there in such a life? If he keeps his heart shut to his comrades, he will drift away from his collective and end up dreaming of something else.

Enlightened people, however, always accept their comrades' criticism honestly and seriously, no matter how severe it may be. Such people regard criticism as a tonic. Even after they were given the heavy penalty of being dismissed from the post of commander, Kim Ju Hyon and Lee Tong Gol did not lose heart or degenerate, but corrected their errors instead, for they had fully absorbed their comrades' criticism and regarded it as something invigorating. One's ability to accept comrades' criticism is a barometer of one's personality and self-enlightenment. Lee Tong Gol was a communist who can be held up as a model in terms of personality and edification.

Even after his death his painstaking efforts became hundreds of sparks on the Tuman River and in the depth of the homeland. After Lee Tong Gol's arrest, Kim Jong Suk went to the Yonsa area in his place to link the members of the Party and ARF organizationally and to develop these organizations as Lee had intended. The organizations constituted a great force in the all-people resistance.

As you can see, the Tuman River should never be viewed with indifference.

## 20.6. Women Fighters and Revolutionary Honor

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Throughout his life the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung often recollected women guerrillas who had heroically laid down their lives in the battlefield and on the gallows, not seeing the day of national liberation, women who remained loyal to the revolution until death.

This section contains some of the fatherly leader's recollections on women fighters who sacrificed their lives without the slightest hesitation during the most trying period of our struggle for the sake of the revolution and who preserved their honor as communists to the very end. I am greatly satisfied with the newly-built Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery we have just seen. You have worked hard to build it.

How many women fighters are buried here? More than ten, certainly. That is as it should be. They all deserve to have their monuments set up and epitaphs inscribed on these monuments. Lee Sun Hui fought well as a worker of the Young Communist League. She had once been the head of the Wangqing County children's department. I know her well. She was a woman of principle. Showing contempt for this young woman, the enemy attempted to squeeze the secret of our underground organizations out of her, but they failed. She was put to cruel torture, but she refused to divulge the secret. Such fighters as Lee Sun Hui must be held up as models for the coming generations.

Jang Kil Bu was not a guerrilla herself, but she lived a worthy life as the mother of Ma Tong Hui, a revolutionary. She also sent her daughter and daughter-in-law to the guerrilla army and helped other revolutionaries in their work. Her son, daughter and daughter-in-law all fell in the armed struggle. Everyone who fought, arms in hand, against the Japanese. is a hero or heroine. Had there been an official Hero award in those days, Mother Jang's children would have all been awarded the title of Hero.

Therefore, as a mother of one hero and two heroines, she must naturally be enshrined in the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery. Old as she was, Mother Jang also played an active part in socialist construction. All the other women who are buried here fought, arms in hand, shoulder to shoulder with us men for the revolution against the Japanese.

Two women fighters are placed in the same row as Comrades Kim Chaek and Kang Kon. This is evidence of the position and role of our women in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. Some veterans, particularly Kim Il, Lim Chun Chu and Choe Hyon, requested me earnestly to have Kim Jong Suk's bust put up there, saying that this was the unanimous desire of the people and of her comrades-in-arms.

I recommended Choe Hui Suk for that row. She was an honorable fighter who deserves her place in the top row. In view of their friendship during the anti-Japanese revolution, it is also natural that she should be placed in the same row with Kim Jong Suk. When Kim Jong Suk was carrying out her difficult task in the enemy-ruled Taoquanli area, Choe Hui Suk, who was active in Yaofangzi, helped her in secret.

Kim Jong Suk was able to apply herself to the work of building organizations at Sinpha because Choe Hui Suk in Yaofangzi was of such great help to her. Also, in the autumn of 1939, when a large number of uniforms were needed in the Wukoujiang area, Choe Hui Suk did a great job while working hand in hand with Kim Jong Suk. In recognition of her high sense of responsibility and success in completing this job, I made a present of a gold ring and a watch to her.

Choe Hui Suk was a ranking veteran among women fighters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. She joined the army probably in 1932. This was when the anti-Japanese armed forces were being organized throughout the counties of eastern Manchuria, wasn't it? There were many women fighters in the KPRA, but only a few of them had enlisted as early as 1932. A soldier who took up arms in 1932 is worthy of being treated as a veteran. As far as I remember, I met her first in the spring of 1936. In that spring many women who had been fighting in the units active in Yanji and Helong were admitted into our main force. Kim Jong Suk and Choe Hui Suk were among them.

All the women fighters addressed Choe Hui Suk as "elder sister". Many men fighters did too. By age, she was an elder sister to most of us. She was several years older than I. I think among the women soldiers she was one of the elders, next to Kim Myong Hwa and Jang Chol Gu. She was called "elder sister", not just because she was older, but also because she was always so exemplary in her everyday life and in carrying out her duties.

And she took good care of her comrades-in-arms. She had worked for several years in regional organizations, such as the Young Communist League and Women's Association, and among the Chinese anti-Japanese units. In the course of all this she had acquired high political qualifications and leadership ability, so I used to give her a lot of difficult assignments. She continued to work as the head of the sewing unit of the KPRA after the Xiaohaerbaling meeting because she enjoyed our trust.

The commanding officers and soldiers of the main force constantly marveled at her absolute loyalty and revolutionary spirit. Everything she did touched the hearts of her comrades-in-arms. More than once I was moved by her noble sense of morality and by her personality. During the Arduous March I saw her mending the torn uniforms of her comrades by the campfire, warming her frozen fingers now and again, in the dead of night when the others were all asleep. She never rested for a few days before finishing any job, even if it meant having to allay her hunger with water. Whenever we talked about success in her work, she always gave credit to her comrades-in-arms for it.

I can still remember her embarrassment on receiving her gold ring and watch at the awards ceremony for men and women of merit as she stammered out: "Many of us worked hard to make uniforms. If I alone am accorded special treatment in this way...."

After the Xiaohaerbaling meeting, she took part in small-unit opera-dons. On her way to Headquarters to convey some important information one day, she encountered "punitive" enemy troops, who were going over the mountains with a fine-tooth comb in search of us.



Discovering her small unit, the enemy pursued them tenaciously to capture the guerrillas. She was surrounded, got a bullet through her leg and was captured. The enemy put her to torture brutal beyond all description to extract the secret information from her. They even gouged out her eyes. No threats or torture, however, could break her revolutionary spirit.

Just before her death she shouted:

"I have no eyes but, I can still see victory in the revolution!"

Enraged by her shout, the enemy carved out her heart to see what sort of heart a communist had. What difference is there between the heart of a revolutionary and that of others? A heart bears no marks to indicate a revolutionary or a traitor. The heart of a revolutionary beats for his country, nation and comrades-in-arms, whereas the heart of a traitor beats only for himself.

I was told that as soon as they took Choe Hui Suk prisoner, the enemy robbed her of the gold ring that we had awarded her. Nevertheless, they could not take away her cherished trust in us and her loyalty to us. Even after they had torn out her heart, they failed to understand how she could have remained so honorable. Those who do not love their country with a pure heart can never know what revolutionary honor is, nor can they understand the noble and beautiful spiritual world that grows out of a communist outlook on life.

At the news of Choe Hui Suk's death, all of us mourned, bitter with regret that she had died without seeing the day of national liberation for which she had longed so eagerly. The women guerrillas were so overcome with grief that they could no longer eat. I was lost in sorrow for a long time. However, we derived great strength from her words, "I can still see victory in the revolution!" She had shouted this under the worst imaginable circumstances, manacled as she was and with her eyes gouged out by the enemy. What an unbreakable, proud revolutionary spirit shines through these words! Not everyone could shout such words of defiance under similar circumstances. These are famous words, the kind that can be spoken only by those convinced of the validity and truth of their cause, only by fighters with a strong sense of revolutionary honor. The words are the very summary of the life of the woman fighter Choe Hui Suk.

"I can still see victory in the revolution!" - this has now become the maxim of our people, especially our younger generation, which symbolizes revolutionary optimism. This woman fighter's shout still rings in the minds of our people.

I value optimism and love optimistic people. "There will be a way out even if the sky falls in!" is one of my important mottoes. Because I am an optimist myself, I have been able to go through hell and high water without vacillation or deviation and continue to lead the revolution and construction in good health today.

I still remember the words that Choe Hui Suk, robbed of her eyes, shouted at the last moment of her life

because they represent the strong will and unshakeable conviction of all Korean communists.

I repeat that Choe Hui Suk is a woman revolutionary who can take her place proudly in the first line of our revolutionary ranks amongst all the others who overcame trying ordeals. Park Won Chun, Choe Hui Suk's husband, served a prison term in Sodaemun Prison. There were many other women fighters who died with enormous courage, as Choe Hui Suk did. An Sun Hwa also ended her life heroically. It is not easy to die a heroic death.

An Sun Hwa was Lee Pong Su's wife. They fought in the same unit, her husband working as the surgeon and she as the head of the sewing unit. They had had five children. All of them, however, were either killed or separated from their parents during the guerrilla fighting. Their first child, who had all his toes amputated because of frostbite, was sent to the Soviet Union along with other serious cases; the second died of measles, and the third was stabbed to death with a bayonet by the Japanese who attacked the guerrilla base. The fourth starved to death, and the fifth was given to another family. There is no knowing whether he is alive or dead, or where he lives. Since Lee Pong Su's reminiscences have been published on several occasions, the fifth child, if still alive, could be expected to get in touch with his father, but I have not heard of this happening yet.

The fifth child, if given to another family before he was two years old, may well not know about his real parents. His foster parents may not have told him that he had been adopted. An Sun Hwa was captured by the enemy in the spring of 1938. One day when the guerrillas in the secret camp were preparing to leave for southern Manchuria by order of Headquarters, the enemy's "punitive" force suddenly pounced upon the camp.

The secret camp at that time was staffed mainly by medical personnel and members of the sewing unit. An Sun Hwa was captured by the enemy and put through cruel suffering. The enemy tortured her, demanding the whereabouts of the guerrillas, foodstuffs, ammunition and medicine stores. The commander of the "punitive" force also tried enticing her with honeyed words, saying it was pointless for her to shed her blood and waste her precious young life in a hopeless cause.

Had An Sun Hwa answered their questions obediently, afraid of torture, the enemy would not have killed her.

The Japanese in those days used the method of offering "generous treatment" to defectors in order to disintegrate our revolutionary ranks. A defector could escape death by writing down his guarantor's name and putting his thumb mark on the defector's application, even if he had been engaged in armed resistance and had been shouting "Down with Japanese Imperialism" only the day before.

It was really great that An Sun Hwa, a frail woman, should have resisted the enemy's cajoling and endured their torture. The enemy kicked her, stomped on her and pulled out her hair. As she stubbornly resisted, yelling "You, beasts!", "You, fiends!" at them, the enemy drove wooden stakes into her chest and belly, saying they would not waste bullets to kill her.

A man instinctively makes a face if a thorn pierces the palm of his hand. What agony An Sun Hwa must have suffered as the stakes were driven through her body, tearing into her flesh and bones!

Despite the pain, however, An Sun Hwa never gave up her principles as a revolutionary. She said what she wanted to say and remained faithful to her convictions to the end. The moment the stakes penetrated her body, she shouted with all the strength she could muster, "Long live the Korean revolution!" and "Long live the emancipation of women!"

After her death, her comrades-in-arms took everything out of her knapsack to dispose of her few possessions. Among these was a serge skirt that her husband Lee Pong Su had bought her with the money he had earned as a stevedore in Vladivostok towards the end of the 1920s, as well as a desk cloth she had not finished knitting.

She had kept her serge skirt in her knapsack without wearing it for ten years, I was told. Why had she kept it so carefully? She must have wanted to wear it after the country was liberated. This fact alone shows us how firmly convinced she was of the coming victory in the revolution. The desk cloth she knitted at odd moments with thread she had unraveled from a worn-out shirt must also have been intended to be spread over her husband's desk after the liberation of the fatherland.

When covering her dead body with that serge skirt, her husband sobbed bitterly at the sight of the pleats of the skirt, which were still perfectly straight after ten years.

In the anti-Japanese armed units fighting in northern Manchuria also there were many women fighters like Choe Hui Suk and An Sun Hwa.

Han Ju Ae is a good example of how strongly devoted Korean women fighters in northern Manchuria were to their revolutionary principles. In charge of the sewing unit, Han Ju Ae was making padded uniforms of the guerrillas at a service camp. One day, caught in a sudden attack on the camp by the enemy's "punitive" force, she was captured with her little daughter. The Japanese seized her while she was firing back hopelessly at the "punitive" troops, deliberately exposing herself to them in order to give her comrades-in-arms the chance to get away safely.

She was kept behind bars for several months. The enemy put mother and daughter into separate cells, saying it was an "extravagance" to keep mother and daughter in the same cell. In order to bring Han Ju Ae to her knees, they brought her daughter to meet her mother occasionally in an attempt to take advantage of Han Ju Ae's maternal love. No enemy trickery, however, could make her abandon her revolutionary principles.

The enemy finally shot her on the bank of the Ussuri River. The interrogators at the Japanese gendarmerie had told her that they would spare her life if she admitted that she repented of what she had done, but she refused to give in to the last.

Eight members of a sewing unit of the guerrilla army active in northern Manchuria, including An Sun Bok and Lee Pong Son, while fighting against the enemy that was closing in on them, threw themselves into the deep waters of the Mudan River before they could be captured. There was a similar instance also among the women fighters of the guerrilla army in eastern Manchuria. On their way to Neidaoshan, seven young women fighters encircled by the enemy committed suicide by drowning themselves into the Fier River. Their heroic death created yet another legend in the history of the anti-Japanese revolution.

One year when I was visiting China I saw and was deeply moved by a film describing the struggle of the eight women martyrs of Mudanjiang. Not only the women fighters in northern Manchuria, but also Lee Sun Jol, a dear "sister" to the guerrillas in southern Manchuria, kept her honor as a revolutionary.

Another heroine, Kim Su Bok, was arrested and killed while conducting underground activities in Zhujingdong, Changbai County.

A hero or heroine is not a special being. Ordinary women, such as Choe Hui Suk, An Sun Hwa and the seven women martyrs of eastern Manchuria, can also become heroines.

When Jo Ok Hui, chairwoman of the Women's Union of Pyoksong County, was captured and killed by the enemy while fighting as a guerrilla in an enemy-held area during the strategic retreat in the Fatherland Liberation War, we awarded her the title of Hero of the Republic. She also was a woman of strong will, loyal to the revolution just as Choe Hui Suk and An Sun Hwa had been. The enemy pulled out her fingernails and toe nails, gouged out her eyes, cut off her breasts and burned her with a red-hot iron rod. However, she never succumbed, but denounced them and died a heroic death, shouting "Long live the Workers' Party of Korea!".

How many of the enemy might Jo Ok Hui have killed?if any? while waging the guerrilla struggle? We value her high spirit and the revolutionary constancy with which she held her head high and declared the downfall of the enemy on her way to the execution site, rather than the number of enemy she actually killed.

This was why we decided to honor her with the title of Hero. How marvelous it is that an ordinary woman, who had been engaged in farming and the work of Women's Union, should have crowned the last moment of her life with such honor! I wanted to bring her to prominence in the eyes of our own people and to prod the conscience of world community, so I had a film made about her. I also set up her statue and named the cooperative farm in her native village after her.

The respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, while looking around the Korean Revolution Museum, paused for a long while before a braid of hair on display there. It belonged to the anti-Japanese fighter Lee Kye Sun. She had cut the braid off at the age of 16 and sent it to her mother as proof of her strong desire to devote herself to the revolution.

Looking at the braid for a long time that day, the great leader earnestly requested that it be carefully

looked after, for it was a precious piece of history. Later he warmly recollected Lee Kye Sun.

The story of the hair is eloquent proof of what a great and laudable revolutionary Comrade Lee Kye Sun was. Looking at it, I think of the pure-hearted, strong-willed devotion of all Korean mothers, sisters and women revolutionaries to their principles.

Korean women are outwardly gentle, but strong-minded on the inside. They are also strongly faithful to their fundamental beliefs. I keenly felt this in the course of our revolutionary struggle against the Japanese. I must say that Lee Kye Sun's hair symbolizes the faith of all our women revolutionaries.

When I was carrying out the underground struggle in Manchuria, my mother had placed her hair inside my shoes, the cut-off hair she had kept carefully for several years since in her days in Korea. One cold winter day I trudged across an uninhabited region in a raging snowstorm. I walked a long distance, yet my feet were not cold; on the contrary, the longer I walked, the more warmth I felt in the soles of my feet. Reaching my destination, I pulled off my shoes, inspected them and found my mother's hair lining the interior.

I thought at that moment that there is no greater affection than that of a mother. My mother's hair inside my shoes was the truest manifestation of her maternal love. When the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai was set up and Independence Army organizations such as Jon gui-bu, Chamui-bu and Sinmin-bu came into being in Northeast China, imposing taxes on the Korean residents, a considerable number of Korean women sold their hair for independence contributions, I was told. Their hair was a symbol of their patriotism.

I am recounting past events related to hair while talking about Lee Kye Sun because her hair can give us a full picture of her personality.

Comrades Kim Il and Park Yong Sun also know about her because they fought together with her. If you want to collect materials about Lee Kye Sun, you had better interview the First Vice-Premier Kim Il and Comrade Park Yong Sun. Some people claim it's dull talking to Kim Il because he is so taciturn. They don't know him well enough. Though he never boasts of himself, Kim Il is loud and voluble in praise of others.

Lee Kye Sun took the road to revolution in the wake of her brother, Lee Ji Chun. When I was in the Jirin Yuwen Middle School, Lee Ji Chun studied at a normal school in Jirin and was engaged in the revolutionary struggle under our guidance. Later, when he returned to Helong where his parents lived to guide the work of the Young Communist League there, he was arrested and killed by the enemy. The enemy set fire to his dead body, so that he was killed twice, so to speak.

Lee Kye Sun heard of her brother's death in the Yulangcun guerrilla zone, where she had been staying.

At dawn the following day she untied her hair, cut it off and braided it. She sent the braid to her mother

with the following note:

"Mother! What pain you must be feeling at Brother's death in addition to my leaving home! "Please do not grieve over it, though. Do not show your tears to the enemy.

"I am sending you my braid, Mother. I may not come back to see you for a long time. Look on this braid as if it were me. With all my heart I wish you the best of health till the day of victory in the revolution!"

This was her farewell to her mother. There was no doubt that she was determined to devote the rest of her life to the revolution.

According to Park Yong Sun, who did underground work in Helong for several years, since her childhood Lee Kye Sun had been loved by many people for her revolutionary awareness and extraordinary talents.

In the summer of 1933 she was instructed by the party organization to go to Longjing City for underground activities. Her main task was to store the wrecked underground organizations and form new ones where there were none. The Longjing area, one of the Japanese major strongholds, was infested with enemy soldiers, policemen and secret agents. Japanese intelligence agencies there had highly sensitive tentacles.

The fact that the revolutionary organization in the guerrilla zone dispatched Lee Kye Sun, who did not have much experience in underground work, to that place showed how much confidence it placed in her.

In those days the party, the Women's Association, the Children's Vanguard and other mass organizations in Longjing City had been destroyed and most of their members were behind bars.

With strong determination to solve everything on her own, Lee Kye Sun became an odd-job woman in a noodle shop, a popular place frequented by many people. No one would have thought that a countrywoman doing odd jobs in the kitchen of a noodle shop, her face stained with soot, might be an underground operative from the Communist Party. The noodle shop was an ideal base for her activities.

Lee Kye Sun fetched water, washed clothes and the dishes and did whatever her employer told her. Her employer felt lucky to have such a good servant.

In order to restore the destroyed organizations and build new ones, Lee Kye Sun needed a job requiring her to work outdoors all day long. For this purpose, the job of delivering noodles would be perfect. In those days rich and influential families used to order noodles and have them delivered to their door. Sitting cross-legged in their homes, they would order several plates of potato-starch noodles and meat soup, which the delivery men then carried in separate containers on large wooden trays to their homes.

By earning the confidence of the wife of her employer, Lee Kye Sun took the job of delivery woman.

Whenever she went out to deliver noodles she used to meet members of various organizations at odd moments. In the meantime, she set out to restore the Children's Vanguard organizations. Her job, however, was not as easy as one might think, for she had to walk several miles a day, carrying the wooden tray full of noodles on her head. One day, hurrying to a customer's house with the wooden tray on her head, she suddenly noticed a Japanese police van rushing towards her. In trying to dodge it, she dropped the tray and broke all the noodle dishes.

Because of this accident, she was given a dressing down and taken off the delivery service. She did not despair, however; after her daily work in the kitchen was over, she practiced walking with a wooden tray full of stones on her head in the back yard of the noodle shop till late at night, in spite of her fatigue. Her great enthusiasm won her employer's sympathy. Probably she was about 17 years old at that time.

By the time they were 15 or 16 the women fighters had already launched themselves into political activities. In their teens, they would make stirring speeches, do underground work in the enemy-ruled areas and participate in building organizations. At that age they had a good knowledge of the world. As a generation that had grown up through hardships brought on by the loss of their country, they were more developed than young people nowadays.

This does not mean, however, that everyone who experiences hardships will automatically understand the world before anyone else, or commit himself to fighting. What is important is one's ideology. Only when one is prepared ideologically can one make an early revolutionary start and render distinguished service in the revolution. One cannot carry out the revolution unless one is sound ideologically. Lee Kye Sun was loyal to the revolution because she was a woman of sound ideology.

Some people nowadays turn a deaf ear to what 20-year-olds have to say, dismissing them as "babies smelling of their mothers' milk".

Even those dealing with personnel management often consider young people in their twenties to be still ignorant of world affairs. They think that only people in their thirties, forties and fifties are qualified to be cadres. They are grossly mistaken. Young people in their twenties, if entrusted with responsibilities, are perfectly able to discharge them. I keenly experienced this in the struggle to build the Party, the state and the army immediately after liberation.

During the anti-Japanese revolution young people in their twenties worked as county or provincial party secretaries, division commanders and corps commanders. I myself commanded the revolutionary army in my twenties. If young people are not promoted to leadership, the ranks of our cadres may become senile and our advance will lose momentum. The old, middle-aged and young must be properly combined when cadres are being promoted.

Lee Kye Sun came into the limelight in eastern Manchuria when her husband Kim Il Hwan, who was the party secretary of Helong County, was killed by the chauvinists on a false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". At that time the people in the Jiandao area all cursed and hated those who had

masterminded the murder of her husband and sympathized with her. Many people thought that Lee Kye Sun might abandon the revolution or leave the guerrilla zone, disillusioned by the doings of the party leadership in eastern Manchuria. In those days many organization members and guerrillas in Jiandao abhorred the Leftist, reckless acts of the eastern Manchuria party leadership and turned their backs on the guerrilla zone. The ultra-Leftist anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, in fact, tarnished the image of all communists.

An ordinary woman would have left the guerrilla zone, disgusted at the revolution, or might have felt disheartened and idled away her time lamenting over her lot. Lee Kye Sun, on the contrary, braced herself with strong determination and strove to discharge her duty so as to contribute to the revolution and prove that her husband, a man of rectitude and conscience, had done nothing to disgrace the revolution.

A famine in the Chechangzi guerrilla zone left her undernourished in the last month of her pregnancy. In spite of this, she gathered edible herbs and stripped off tree bark almost every day for the starving invalids in the guerrilla zone. She worried more about them than about herself and the new life to come. When the source of this wild food ran short, she caught frogs and gathered spawn for people on the verge of starvation.

When the baby was born, she could not yield milk. To make matters worse, the guerrilla zone was dissolved. After putting her little daughter in the care of her mother-in-law, who was leaving for the enemy-ruled area, Lee Kye Sun joined the guerrilla army. The baby she had handed over to her mother-in-law was the daughter of Kim Il Hwan, born after his death. Her parting with her daughter was a tearful event. The infant was kicking, refusing to be torn from her mother's embrace, her mother-in-law weeping and Lee Kye Sun herself turning back and hugging her daughter again and again, sobbing in pity for her baby. It was a tragic parting indeed!

When relatives, friends and comrades-in-arms had to go in different directions because of the dissolution of the guerrilla zone, everyone bid farewell to each other in tears, just as Lee Kye Sun did.

Lee Kye Sun's mother-in-law is said to have taken great pains to bring up her granddaughter. Suckling on charity could be done once or twice, but not constantly. So her mother-in-law herself had to chew up grains of barley or maize, then put them into the baby's mouth, I was told.

Lee Kye Sun was a fighter who took up arms with unbearable misery and pain in her heart. She joined our unit in Fusong.

Some time after her enlistment we sent her to a field hospital because she was suffering from frostbite and unable to fight in the combat unit. At first she refused to go, begging me in tears to be allowed to remain on the battle front.

However, I did not listen to her entreaties. I told her: "You don't seem to know how dreadful frostbite can



be. You will have many chances to fight later, but you must go to hospital right now. My father also died as a result of cold injuries. How useful will you be if all of your toes rot and you become a cripple, walking on crutches?" At this, she reluctantly agreed to get treatment at the hospital.

She was treated at the field hospital of the Heixiazigou Secret Camp quite near Mt. Paektu. On the Lunar New Year's Day, 1937, I looked around the service camps in the Hengshan area. On that day the members of the weapons repair shop headed by Park Yong Sun made potato-starch noodles for me with a noodle press made of tin.

When we went to the hospital, Lee Kye Sun bustled about, treating us to food. According to Doctor Song, Lee Kye Sun was not content to merely get treatment, but became nurse and cook on her own, overtiring herself.

Leaving the hospital I told Lee Kye Sun to get treatment only and refrain from doing anything else. I warned her in a half threatening tone that otherwise she would never be cured I never saw her again after that. I only sent letters and aid goods to those in the hospital through messengers on several occasions.

While we were away from the Mt. Paektu area for a while, the enemy hurled "punitive" troops at the service camps of our unit. The hospital in charge of Doctor Song was also taken by surprise. Park Sun Il fell in the battle and Lee Kye Sun was captured by the enemy and dragged to Changbai County. Only Lee Tu Su survived.

Unaware of the incident, I sent Kim Jong Phil and Han Cho Nam as messengers to carry food to the comrades in the hospital. I told the messengers that they should bring all the patients back, believing that they would have been cured of their illness. They returned with only Lee Tu Su, however, who had changed beyond recognition and looked like an animal. Only then did we find out about the calamity that had befallen the field hospital.

I sent reconnaissance teams to various places to find out Lee Kye Sun's whereabouts and fate. They all brought me the heart-rending news that she had been killed ten days or so after her capture. Members of the reconnaissance team met some Changbai people who had said they had witnessed Lee Kye Sun's death.

According to them, Lee Kye Sun was shot to death on a market day. The enemy had gathered all the local residents in a school playground, boasting that a "converted" woman of the communist army would make a public "recantation". They had also herded all the peddlers from Hyesan into the playground.

Why had Lee Kye Sun asked the enemy to give her an official opportunity for addressing the local people? I think we can see here the true nature of Lee Kye Sun as a communist. She wanted the people all together in the playground because she intended to bid farewell to them by speaking up for the revolution and against the Japanese. Had she truly recanted, the enemy might have spared her life. Lee Kye Sun, however, had not chosen such a despicable course of action, but was prepared to face death.

Anyone ready to die fears neither guns nor swords and feels free to say whatever he wants.

She addressed the assembled people with the words: "I will die, but the Korean People's Revolutionary Army is strong and its Commander is in good health. No force in the world can defeat the KPRA. The day when Japanese imperialism is destroyed and our fatherland is liberated is very close at hand. All of you must unite in mind and body, rise up against enemy suppression and fight the war of resistance to the Japanese."

Lee Kye Sun did her best to the last moment of her life to discharge her mission and duty as a servant, educator and propagandist faithful to the people.

What a great surprise it must have been to the enemy to hear the woman of the communist army speaking up for revolution against the Japanese, quite contrary to their bragging that she would "recant".

I'm told the old-time inhabitants of Changbai still remember vividly the sight they witnessed that time. This means Lee Kye Sun's speech obviously made a great impact on the inhabitants of the area.

Lee Kye Sun became a famous woman fighter because she illuminated her last moments with such a heroic deed. The crowning glory of her life was her last moment. It can be said that the high point in one's life means the time when a person's mental powers and activities reach their apex. The arrival of this high point varies with people. Some may experience it in their twenties, some in their fifties, and still others in their sixties or seventies. People like Lee Kye Sun and Choe Hui Suk who end their lives brilliantly become a part of history for ever, while those who win fame but meet their last moment with dishonor sink into oblivion.

That is why I still remember Lee Kye Sun. We can be rightly proud of such a woman fighter as Lee Kye Sun in the eyes of the world. Her heroic life can be a good theme for a revolutionary novel or film. She was a true daughter of the Korean nation and the perfect model of a woman revolutionary.

Lee Kye Sun's mother had worried herself sick for a long time because she did not know whether her granddaughter, Lee Kye Sun's daughter, was alive or dead. Only after the Korean War did she find out that her granddaughter was studying at Kim Il Sung University. It was then that she handed over her daughter's braid to her granddaughter. The braid that had been handed back and forth over three generations was a symbol of the valuable life of martyr Lee Kye Sun.

The mother, whose face and voice had faded from the memory of her daughter because of their forced separation when the daughter was still only a baby, coming back to her daughter as a braid of hair - what a tragic meeting it is! The daughter wept and wept, rubbing her cheek against the braid.

Lee Kye Sun's daughter is now faithfully carrying forward the revolution her parents pioneered at the cost of their lives.

There would be no end if we were to enumerate all the examples of women fighters who lived up to their dignity and honor as revolutionaries by sacrificing their lives without the slightest hesitation.

My assertion that women push forward one wheel of the revolution is not an abstract notion. It is based on the history of the bloody revolutionary struggle against the Japanese and on my own actual experiences as a direct participant in the emancipation of Korean women, as well as an eyewitness to their struggle.

# 21.1 A Woman Came to Visit the Secret Camp

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I suppose it was in the summer of 1939 that this happened, for we had just wound up our successful offensive in the Musan area and were conducting military and political activities in the northeastern area of Mt. Paektu. I was giving guidance to the 8th Regiment.

One day Oh Jung Hup, commander of the 7th Regiment, came to see RC with a report about the state of affairs in his unit. Finishing his report, he added that on his way to Headquarters he had met Kang Hung Sok's wife on the upper reaches of the Wukou River and had brought her to the secret camp of the 8th Regiment. This was Ji Sun Ok.

When she suddenly appeared in our secret camp, saying she had come because of her desperate longing to see her husband, we all admired her passion. The mountain areas along the Songhua and Wukou Rivers were dangerous zones of guerrilla activity, crawling with enemy soldiers, policemen and spies. One might easily die from a stray bullet, or be executed on a charge of being "in secret contact with communist bandits". Yet despite such dangers she, a lone woman, had come to see her husband. It was natural that we should admire her courage.

Kang Hung Sok, Ji Sun Ok's husband, was famous not only as a crack shot but also as a devoted husband. His knapsack was rumored to be full of letters addressed to his wife. They had married as teenagers, and soon after the wedding Kang had left home to join the revolution. Since then he had not seen his wife for nearly ten years. Ji Sun Ok also yearned greatly for her husband.

The Japanese imperialists, it was found out later on, had made inquiries into this through intelligence channels and inveigled Ji Sun Ok into espionage activities under threat. Anyhow, it was going to be a happy event for Kang Hung Sok to hold a dramatic reunion with his wife. Kang Hung Sok was not with us just then because he was out on a mission to obtain provisions, so we sent him word to come back to Headquarters immediately.

When I met Ji Sun Ok, I found her neat in appearance and well-mannered. I had lunch with her that day. My men told her that the char on the table had been caught for her by the General himself, and asked her to help herself. Ji Sun Ok seemed to be astonished to hear this, but she took only a few spoonfuls. No matter how we encouraged her to take more, it was of no avail. I made one woman guerrilla keep her company. They seemed to have talked a lot throughout the night, sleeping under the same blanket.

With the couple's reunion approaching, everyone was boisterous, as if personally awaiting a happy event. This was the first reunion of a young married couple in nearly a decade of tough armed struggle. I was eager to congratulate them too. Everyone was waiting with impatience for Kang Hung Sok's return. Having met Ji Sun Ok, however, I was suspicious about one thing: How had she found out her husband's

whereabouts and come to this mountain, a place that was virtually the jaws of death? How had she discovered the exact location of our unit? Others who talked with her also said that she was inconsistent in her statements.

Three or four days after her arrival at the secret camp, Oh Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong came rushing over to me, out of breath. Oh Jung Hup reported that out of his tender heart he had brought a spy of the Japanese imperialists to Headquarters without checking out her identity first. The report was like a bolt from the blue. He begged my pardon. O Paek Ryong said it was an evil thing that the wife of a platoon leader in the revolutionary army should have come as a spy for the Japanese instead of coming to help the guerrillas. His suggestion was that we shoot her there and then.

They told me that the woman guerrilla in whose tent Ji was staying had become suspicious about her because her conduct was so dubious and her statements were so incoherent. So in the middle of the night she had closely examined Ji's lined garment and had discovered a packet of poison stitched into the lining. At that time our comrades were so used to the enemy's poisoning schemes that they could easily discern that sort of thing. When I asked whether Ji Sun Ok knew that the poison packet had been found, they said no, but added that they were keeping a close watch on her.

I was greatly shocked by this incident and could not calm myself down for quite a while. As a matter of fact, there had been other instances of either Japanese spies or saboteurs slipping into our unit and being exposed. And many of the exposed spies were people from the lower classes, who in general should not have been hostile to us. The Japanese imperialists sent even simple-hearted farm servants or workers to us to act as their spies.

However, there was no precedent for training as a spy a woman who had sent her husband to the revolutionary army, the wife of a platoon leader at that, and dispatching her to our military camp. The appearance of such a person on an espionage mission was a new trick indeed. Those working in Japanese intelligence services were really base and cunning. Having received Oh Jung Hup's report, I wondered how Kang Hung Sok would take this astonishing news. There was great danger of his marriage breaking up.

Despite the objections of Oh Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong, I decided to meet Ji Sun Ok again. I had a comparatively long talk with her. I asked her about Kang Hung Sok's family, about the hardships she had undergone on her way to look for the revolutionary army and about her maiden home.

The topic of our conversation naturally changed to Kang Hung Sok. When I said that Kang Hung Sok would be coming back to camp the next day or the day after, Ji Sun Ok suddenly burst into tears, covering her face with her hands. She then tore off the stitched part of her coat and took out the poison packet. Shivering all over, she said, "General, I'm a wretched woman who must be punished by God. I deserve death."

I got her to drink some water and calmed her down somewhat. Then I said: "It's a good thing that you

confessed. The revolutionary army shows leniency to those who frankly confess their crimes. Moreover, you are the wife of platoon leader Kang Hung Sok. Don't be afraid and tell me everything. Tell me in detail how you became a spy, what kind of training they gave you after you became a spy and what tasks you were given before you set out to find the revolutionary army. Ji Sun Ok confessed everything in detail and talked about how she had got to the mountain. O Paek Ryong, who witnessed this scene, said later in recollection:

"At that moment I felt as if my life had been shortened by ten years. A cold shiver down my spine and my whole body broke into a cold sweat. How dared she appear before the General with poison! What would have happened if she had sneaked it into the cooking pot or rice bowls? That little woman was on the verge of spoiling the entire revolution! The mere thought of it still makes me shudder."

For this reason the anti-Japanese fighters are still reluctant to think of Ji Sun Ok even today. The confidential documents prepared by the Japanese consul in Hunchun contain the following information about the aim of sending Ji Sun Ok as a spy, and about other things: The circumstances of sending her

#### 1. The content of order

(1) Disrupt the guerrilla ranks after catching Kang Hung Sok in mesh.

(2) Poison senior officers.

(3) When interrogated by the guerrillas, the agent should state that she has come to the mountains to see her husband under the coercion of her parents.

#### 2. Method of communication

The agent should report about herself and the guerrillas directly to Police Field Officer Katada of the secret service section, or to Police Lieutenant Minami.

#### 3. Date, time and place of entering the mountains

Obtained her parents' approval for this operation, gave her all the necessary information in Yanji for five days, from August 5 to 9, and sent her to the mountains on August 10, accompanied by a man in charge of her. Let her proceed to her destination - Height 1088 southwest of Menghedong, Helong County, and Yilan, west of this, both considered to be guerrilla hide-outs (judging from the fact that at 10 p.m. on August 8, 120 soldiers of Kim Il Sung's main-force unit raided Longzecun, Helong County and fled into the thick forests in the southwest).

#### 4. Estimated date of return

An estimated two to three months are needed. (Secret information of Hunchun consul No. 186, July 26,

Showa 15 (1940), report from Hunchun consul Kiuchi Tadan)

The Japanese imperialist special service agency called Ji Sun Ok a "live agent". A "live agent" is a term used in Sun-tzu's Art of War. It means an agent who must come back alive without fail. Judging from the fact that the enemy chose Ji Sun Ok as a "live agent", it seems they expected a great deal from her. They might have intended to use her as a professional agent later.

The enemy said to Ji Sun Ok: "Your husband as a machine-gunner of the guerrilla army has killed numerous soldiers of the Imperial Army, so you cannot atone for this crime even if we kill three generations of your family. However, if you go to the communist army and persuade your husband to submit to us, and if you carry out the task we assign you, we'll give you a liberal reward and provide you with a life of comfort."

Ji Sun Ok had no choice but to obey the enemy because they had threatened to kill three generations of her family. Having heard her confession, I felt my heart ache with pity for her.

I could not repress my indignation at the vicious cowardice of the Japanese imperialists who did not hesitate to use even a woman's pure love and affection against us. The imperialists resorted to all kinds of methods to stifle the revolution. It was the habit of the Japanese imperialists to abuse the love between a man and his parents, a husband and wife, a man and his children, brothers and sisters, or even the love between a teacher and student, in order to disrupt and undermine the revolutionary ranks from within.

Not satisfied with their scheme to crush the soul of our nation, they attempted to stifle even the beautiful nature of our people. In other words, they tried to turn Koreans into brutes. Our armed struggle was not only a struggle to regain our territory and sovereignty, robbed from us by foreign forces; it was also a showdown against beasts to safeguard man and defend everything human.

The real nature of imperialists is to turn people into brutes and cripples and to deform them. Giving espionage training to a wife, forcing her to interfere with what her husband is doing and to poison her husband's Commander and his comrades-in-arms - this was nothing less than making a brute of her.

The world is talking a lot about environmental pollution these days. It is true that environmental pollution is a great threat to mankind. However, a greater danger than this is the moral collapse and human pollution being perpetrated by the imperialists. In the gutters and refuse heaps of this world, beasts, monsters and defectives in human form are produced every day by the imperialist reactionaries and their henchmen. Human pollution is the greatest brake on the progress of history today.

Placating Ji Sun Ok, who was lying prostrate and sobbing, I said:

"Don't worry. You have realized your crime, although belatedly, so we don't think ill of you in the least. You've been forced to commit the crime to avoid death, so it cannot be helped. Please get up.

Everyone in the secret camp was aghast when they heard that Ji Sun Ok had come there with an espionage mission. I intended to keep Ji Sun Ok's case a secret, but Comrades Oh Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong made it public for the sake of the safety of the unit and to get the soldiers to sustain a sharper vigilance.

Kang Hung Sok, who came to Headquarters at a run, almost lost his mind when he heard the others talking in whispers about his wife. He had a pistol in his hand and was going to finish her off himself. He looked as if he really were about to do something terrible, so I got him to cool down and sent him off to the upper reaches of the Hongqi River, where his regiment was stationed. I felt sorry to have to separate once more this couple, who were supposed to meet again after such a long long time apart.

Even Chen Han-zhang, who held the position of a corps commander, had wanted to behave with disrespect towards his father, who had come to talk him into submission. So it was understandable how Kang Hung Sok must have felt. One year even An Kil, a magnanimous and extremely sympathetic man, was going to personally dispose of a member of his family who had come to urge him to turn traitor. He gave up the idea after he had been persuaded not to do it.

Whenever they reacted violently, I reasoned with my men: "You should not wield your weapons recklessly. Just think: If soldiers fighting in the interests of the people shoot to death their own blood relations for the sake of upholding revolutionary principles, who will support them? The enemy wants our revolutionary army to think exactly as you're thinking right now. It wants father and son, brothers and sisters to become enemies and to carry on a fratricidal war. You must understand this and not act recklessly." However, this kind of reprimand did not have much effect on Kang Hung Sok.

For this reason, the majority of the men in the secret camp did not trust Ji Sun Ok, but guarded against her for some time. They even suggested that she be punished severely. However, I trusted Ji Sun Ok. She had been compelled to accept the espionage mission to save her kinfolk, and she had misunderstood the purpose of the revolutionary army, deceived as she was by the enemy propaganda. One can fall into such a trap if one lacks class awareness. Ji Sun Ok had not received systematic education through any revolutionary organization.

However, once she understood the truth about me and our army, she frankly confessed her crime without delay, resolved to face death if needed be. Had she not abandoned her evil intention, she would have poisoned our food rather than confessing. She had ample chance to do so. However, she had confessed, even though belatedly. Such a woman will inevitably come to our side; she cannot go over to the side of the enemy.

Once I heard from Comrade Kim Chaek about Lee Kye Dong's murder. Lee Kye Dong was a veteran Party member who served his term in prison with Kim Chaek and organized the Zhuhe guerrilla unit. A graduate of the Yunnan Military Training School, he was said to be an efficient commander in battle. A spy named Zhou Guang-ya killed this excellent military and political officer. Following his infiltration into the guerrilla unit, Zhou Guang-ya had wormed his way into the post of chief secretary in a unit.



Taking advantage of the slackened discipline in the unit, he murdered Lee Kye Dong.

With this example in mind, our men naturally guarded against Ji Sun Ok. Nevertheless I forgave Ji Sun Ok. Why? Because I had read her conscience, which had made her confess her crime out of her own mouth. A human being is the most developed being in the world because he has reason, conscience, moral sense and sense of duty. Without a conscience we are worthless. When we disgrace our conscience, we forfeit our value as a social being.

Although Ji Sun Ok had defiled her conscience, she regained it through struggle with herself. She disclosed her mistake because of her good intentions towards us. It is easy to slip into a quagmire, but not easy to get out. However, Ji Sun Ok managed to escape, thanks to our help and through a hard struggle with herself. This showed that she had the strength to turn over a new leaf. Why should we then push back into the quagmire a woman who had candidly reflected on her wrongs and resolved to make a fresh start?

Revolution is a struggle to defend human conscience and preserve it. I wanted to make Ji Sun Ok remain faithful to her conscience. Even if there was just one revolutionary in a family, the Japanese imperialists schemed to isolate and exclude him from his kinsmen. The enemy's consistent scheme was to crush our patriotic forces at random, disintegrating and destroying them one by one. Sometimes they misused the ties of kinship among our nation for their "surrender" schemes. The enemy's ultimate aim was to sever the communists from the masses. The most pernicious method in their scheme was to make blood relations mistrust each other, hate and kill each other.

Nothing would be stupider than for us to continue to be fooled by such an evil design by the enemy once we are aware of it. Therefore, we saw to it that even though she had come on an espionage mission, she was pardoned and encouraged to turn over a new leaf, because she had not committed the unforgivable crime of betraying her country and her fellow countrymen.

Once a spy dispatched by the Government-General came to see us in the guise of a Christian. The spy brought several bags of flour. He said that the flour was a gift he had brought from Korea for the revolutionary army who were experiencing such hardships far away from home, and asked us to make dumplings with it.

I told the cooks to prepare dumplings with the whole lot of the flour. Before long a cook came to me with a dish full of dumplings. The spy declined my offer to have some. When I asked him to help himself to the dumplings again, his face turned pale. Small wonder, since he had mixed poison with the flour.

I said to him: "Why on earth are you trying to kill us when we're having such a hard time living and fighting in the open air to regain our lost country? Being a Korean, you should behave like a Korean. You should not act so contemptibly. You can still mend your ways even now and make a fresh start." I reasoned with him in this way. We treated him well in a hut before sending him back. I heard later that this story was reported in a magazine.

Despite O Paek Ryong's objection, I saw to it that Ji Sun Ok remained in the secret camp and was educated by us. Some time later we sent her to the sewing unit. The sewing unit had been assigned the task of making 600 uniforms for the coming large-unit circling operations, but it was having difficulties because of the shortage of hands.

Kang Wi Ryong, who was working with the sewing unit, did not welcome Ji Sun Ok. Therefore, I gave Choe Hui Suk and some other women Party members the task of treating Ji kindly and of educating her carefully. They took sincere care of her and educated her well.

Leaving for Hualazi after we had celebrated the Harvest Moon Day, I summoned Kang Hung Sok, who was with his unit on the upper reaches of the Hongqi River. This is how the dramatic reunion of the couple finally took place in the thick forest of Hualazi.

Staying there for some time, we conducted military and political studies. Ji Sun Ok studied hard, using the teaching materials we had prepared. She was a fairly learned woman who had received primary school education. Later during the march she managed to keep pace with the unit and cooked meals for the men. She was unaccustomed to the guerrilla life and found it hard, but the smile never disappeared from her face.

However, just as everything was going well for her, she was hit by a tragedy: Kang Hung Sok fell in the Battle of Liukesong. For some time we did not tell Ji Sun Ok about this because we thought she would not be able to bear the great shock.

Whenever the unit was on a march, Ji Sun Ok would gaze at the machine-gun on Kim Un Sin's shoulder. It was the machine-gun Kang Hung Sok had used while still alive. My men told Ji Sun Ok that the machine-gun had been handed over to Kim Un Sin because Kang was out to work in a local area, but this was merely a way to sidetrack her.

After the Battle of Liukesong we organized an art performance in a forest on the Songhua River. At the performance I noticed how melancholy Ji Sun Ok was. Now that her husband was gone, we could not keep her in the unit any longer, so later we sent her back home. Otherwise, there was a danger of her kinfolk being killed by the Japanese.

As she left the secret camp, we gave her a travel allowance and sent a guide to accompany her. I still vividly remember her looking back at me again and again until she disappeared into the forest.

After the armistice I heard that Ji Sun Ok had come to see me, but I could not meet her then because I was so pressed for time. She might have been disappointed by this. After that I had no time to spare with one thing or another. Many people had to go away without meeting me after covering a long distance to come to Pyongyang.

Judging from the fact that Ji Sun Ok proudly came back to see me, it seems that she must have been living without committing any crimes against the country after parting from us. If I had met her at that time, I might have heard in detail how she had lived after leaving the mountains. Fortunately, comrades sent me a book entitled Information of Modern History. I could roughly piece together the outline of her life through the contents of the book. I was able to guess how Ji Sun Ok had behaved back home in front of the enemy who had sent her to the secret camp and how she had described the life of the revolutionary army.

The contents of the report submitted by Kiuchi, consul in Hunchun, to his superiors are as follows: All the cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army have sound ideology and constantly strive for victory in the revolution. It is therefore natural that the fighting men are charmed by this, completely trusting them and obeying their orders without a murmur. This is why they find it so easy to carry out all their operations. The Second Directional Army is fired by a fighting spirit and has a full capacity for united action. This is because Kim Il Sung, Commander of the army, has intense national communist ideology and is strong and healthy. Moreover, he is skilful in controlling his men.

I believe that the real state of things in our unit is comparatively fairly outlined in this report, which means that Ji Sun Ok correctly described the life of our revolutionary army and the psychological state of our men. Her description was free of bias.

If one wants to know how the enemy treated Ji Sun Ok after she returned home, it is sufficient to read the following from the report submitted by consul Kiuchi:

## I. My view of her and disposal

### 1. My view

(1) Her testimony is convincing because it is perfectly logical in view of the prevailing situation. Nevertheless, she was not punished and lived with the communist bandits for over one year; moreover, she was set free despite the fact that the poison she concealed when leaving for the mountains was discovered. From this one may suspect that her return is a sham, fabricated in accordance with the intention of the guerrilla army. Therefore, serious attention needs to be paid to her speech and behavior

(2) We have handed Ji Sun Ok over to section leader Katada in Antu. Watching her in secret, we are trying to appease her under the premise that her coming back home is a sham. At the same time as examining her, we have assigned her to a special task. (Secret information of Hunchun consul No. 186, July 26, Showa 15 (1940), report from Hunchun consul Kiuchi Tadao)

It is said that the Japanese imperialists were very nervous about Ji Sun Ok's safe return. No wonder, for how were they to understand this when they themselves regarded human beings as nothing more than talking animals?

Some claimed that Ji Sun Ok should have been punished. Nevertheless, we pardoned her without prosecuting her for her crime. What would have happened if we had punished her? Her husband's home and all her relatives would have been labeled a reactionary family.

Our revolution is aimed not at ostracizing people but at loving and protecting them, as well as at upholding human nature and allowing it maximum expression. It is easy to ostracize a person, but very difficult to save him. We must, however difficult it might be, give those who have committed mistakes a chance to redeem themselves. We must trust them and help them to lead a true human life. The value and greatness of the revolution lie in the fact that it treats people as human beings and helps them to renew their lives.

## 21.2. Chinese Landlord Liu Tong-shi

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The certificates remind me of Liu Tong-shi. If I tell you his story, you will have a better understanding of what was meant by the "aid-the-army" certificates.

Liu Tong-shi was a wealthy Chinese whom we met in Helong County after we moved to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu. He ended up having as close a relationship with us as was the case with Kim Jong Bu, the patriotic Korean landlord whom we had met in Changbai County. His real name is Liu Yixian. He spoke Korean as fluently as his own mother tongue. When Chinese and Koreans had anything to discuss, he volunteered to act as interpreter. So people called him Lin Tong-shi. Tong-shi means "interpreter".

After the Battle of Wukoujiang in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu, we carried out mobile operations in Helong, in the Samjang area of the homeland, and then in Antu County. Later, staying in the Wukoujiang Secret Camp for a period, we conducted intensive political and military activities.

In those days the main force was fighting elsewhere, and only the machine-gun platoon and the Guard Company were with Headquarters. We were suffering an acute shortage of provisions. All the Koreans living in the neighborhood of the secret camp were poor peasants, so they found it difficult to help us, even though they wanted to.

When we moved into Helong County, our operatives said that the enemy controlling the area had spread a rumor that the revolutionary army would come there and take away all the food, so they had all the food collected and fixed the daily amount of food consumption per capita, allotting only two days' rations at one time to those village representatives who came with ox-carts. The enemy even ordered every household in the county to obtain two bottles of kerosene in order to pour it over even these provisions if the revolutionary army demanded them.

I racked my brains over a solution to this problem. One day we went to a village and talked with the inhabitants there. I happened to meet a man who said he had lived in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone and came to Helong County when the guerrilla zone had been disbanded. In the course of talking to him, I heard in detail about the wealthy Chinese, Liu Tong-shi.

It seemed that if we succeeded in winning over Liu Tong-shi, it would help us both in keeping the anti-Japanese patriotic forces under our control and in obtaining the supplies we needed.

However, my men Ju Jae Il and Kang Wi Ryong, who had lived in Helong before they joined the guerrilla army, said that we should not pin any hopes on Liu. They even suggested that we should punish him because he was a detestable anti-communist who had occupied the post of head of a Self-Defense Corps at one time. They knew Liu Tong-shi relatively well.

According to them, Liu Tong-shi's family lived at the foot of Mt. Niuxin, about twelve kilometers away from the Helong county town. I think that his village was called Longtancun. His house was an imposing one, surrounded by a long earthen wall with gun emplacements at the four corners.

His elder brother was already over seventy and was treated as the elder of the family without doing anything. Liu Tong-shi himself, the second brother, was the mainstay of the family, taking charge of public affairs and courting the government authorities. Liu Yi-qing, the third brother, managed the family property with his clerks.

According to Lee Pong Rok and Park Jong Suk, veterans of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, Liu Tong-shi's family had 100 shang of land alone. One shang amounts to 3,000 phyong, 50 100 shang is equal to 300,000 phyong. In other words, the equivalent of about 100 hectares. They also owned a soybean oil factory, a dried-starch noodle factory, a distillery and many shops. In Helong they had a department store, a restaurant and a shop that had a monopoly on salt, all of which they ran through agents.

Liu Tong-shi's family was famous for its large property, but its members were also notorious for their opposition to communists. Guerrillas from Helong called this family the most wicked of all vicious elements. Liu Tong-shi's son was serving as a policeman for Manchukuo in Helong. The guerrillas considered that this fact alone was enough to point to the true nature of this family. Exercising his authority as a policeman, Liu Tong-shi's son used armed force to prevent coolies and tenants from moving about freely. And Liu himself informed his son's police station against those whom he suspected of having connections with the Communist Party, thus setting them up for an interrogation, or destroyed their way to earn a living by depriving them of tenant rights.

Nevertheless, I did not agree to the proposal of some people, that we should punish Liu Tong-shi's family immediately and dispossess them. This was partly because I had learned a lesson in my relations with Kim Jong Bu, and partly because some people saw Liu Tong-shi in a different light. We could not dispose of him rashly and carelessly without studying him in greater detail.

I thought we should give Liu Tong-shi the benefit of the doubt because he spoke Korean well and also because he mixed unreservedly with the ordinary people.

Furthermore, some people said that when the question of Korean tenants was raised at the government office, he had volunteered to be the interpreter and sided with the tenants. This was also a good factor; there was nothing bad in this.

Others said that he pitied the Korean tenants, who were deprived of their own country and were leading a hard life in a foreign land, and that he took special care of them. Moreover, it was said that Liu Tong-shi's concubine in Niufudong was a Korean. This was also an interesting bit of news.

He sympathized with Korean peasants living in a strange land, he kept a Korean woman as a concubine,

and he was fond of the Korean language and Korean customs. Then why was he regarded as a vicious landlord by some people? Why had this man, known to be kind-hearted, tormented Ju Jae Il's and Kang Wi Ryong's families by having them dragged off to the police station?

To solve this mystery, I sent my comrades to Longtancun. They returned with a lot of information about Liu Tong-shi. Their inquiry revealed that Liu Tong-shi had become the enemy of those engaged in the communist movement because of the May 30 Uprising.

As you well know, the Left adventurers ran amok in the May 30 Uprising. They tarred with the same brush all those who owned land, regardless of whether the owners were pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese. Egged on by the Leftists, the rioters committed all sorts of violent acts, such as breaking through the front gates of landlords' houses and setting fire to the granaries. Such ultra-Leftist behavior disgraced the image of the entire Communist Party.

Since then Liu Tong-shi had regarded the Communist Party as his sworn enemy and mercilessly persecuted those families that supposedly had communist fighters among their members. At the same time he was on very intimate terms with the warlords who shielded the landlords. Liu Tong-shi became still more opposed to the Communist Party when he heard that, with the formation of the guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area following the September 18 incident, the party had divided the residential areas into "Red territories" and "White territories" and was hostile to everyone who lived in the "White territories". He hated both the Japanese, who acted as the masters in Manchuria, and the communists.

Liu Tong-shi would often say, "The Communist Party is my sworn enemy."

I believed that he was against communists because of a temporary misunderstanding, and that if we exerted a positive influence on him we would be able to persuade him to stop opposing communists, become our ally and love his country. Liu Tong-shi was also displeased with the Japanese because after their occupation of Manchuria they disarmed and disbanded his private army. I paid particular attention to his anti-Japanese sentiments.

Instead of punishing Lin Tong-shi or confiscating his property, we resolved to urge him to cast aside his anti-communism and to develop his anti-Japanese and patriotic spirit. In this way we hoped to turn him into a supporter and patron of our revolution. For this reason we sent an operative group, with O Il Nam from the 7th Regiment as its head, to pay him a visit.

On meeting Liu, O Il Nam told him that General Kim Il Sung had sent the group to hold talks with him, and asked him whether he was willing to comply with the request.

Hearing this, Liu Tong-shi smiled bitterly and said in fluent Korean:

"If you want to arrest me, arrest me without going into details. Why do you veil your intentions with the word 'talks'? You're probably saying that the Commander of the communist army requests an interview

with me, a landlord, simply because you can't come right out and say you're going to arrest me. When I heard the rumour that you were going around in Helong County, I, Liu Yi-xian, already knew that I would not be able to escape the fate of a fish on the chopping board. Now that I'm all ready and prepared for death, don't beat about the bush with a word like 'talks', but do as you please?kill me, take me away, or confiscate my property.", He was spiteful because he thought O Il Nam's operative group had come to kidnap him. They told me the old man spoke with great disdain.

Liu Tong-shi treated O Il Nam and his party so coldly that the latter thought at first that their operation was a failure. The more obstinate Liu Tong-shi became, the more firmly O Il Nam resolved to try every possible means to get the old man to come to Headquarters. He explained that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was a group of genuine communists entirely different from those who during the May 30 Uprising knocked down at random all rich people, regardless of whether they were pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese, or whether they were patriots or traitors. He also explained that the noble mission of this army was to achieve the liberation of both Korean and Chinese people and to protect their lives and property. Then he added that if Liu Tongshi really declined the request of our Headquarters, he would have his party quietly withdraw.

Hearing this, Liu Tong-shi, his mouth tightly shut, lost himself in thought for a good while. Then with a change in attitude he told O Il Nam that he had better stay there for a little longer and tell him more about the current situation. He asked O Il Nam why he had bothered to come so far if all he was going to do was to leave suddenly. He then said that if Commander Kim had really invited him for talks, he would take the Commander's request into consideration.

Perhaps he had been afraid of evil consequences of his refusal. Moreover, O Il Nam had behaved like a gentleman and outlined the situation with calm good humor, so probably Liu Tong-shi became curious and his anger left him.

"I've heard that Commander Kim's unit fights well. However, Commander Kim is also said to be a communist, so he must despise rich people. To tell the truth, I have heard something about your army; judging from your speech and behavior, you are somewhat different from other armies.... Anyway, I'll go, since General Kim has asked me."

Then he said: "If you want to take me, bind me with a rope as if escorting a criminal. If the Japanese become aware of the fact that I have obediently followed you of my own accord in compliance with Commander Kim's request, they will dispatch their 'punitive' force and behead me. And my family will never be safe again. So take me as if you were kidnapping me. Although O Il Nam thought Liu Tong-shi's idea a good one, he hesitated because my order was to bring Liu Tong-shi in a decent way, not as a captive. O Il Nam thought that if he were to take Liu Tong-shi by binding him with a rope without approval from Headquarters, the same thing would happen as had happened when Kim Ju Hyon's group acted violently towards Kim Jong Bu in Changbai County. It was fortunate that O Il Nam made this judgment.

Hearing O Il Nam's report, I also thought that the scheme proposed by Liu Tong-shi was an ingenious



one. I was about to support it, but some of the commanding officers cautioned that if we followed this idea, Liu's son, the policeman, might create a commotion and even the garrison would make a great fuss. If gunshots were heard in Longtancun, the enemy in Helong county town would immediately send reinforcements.

If we were to put Liu Tong-shi's idea into effect, we had to operate over a wide area and carry out large-scale military activities. Having decided to attack simultaneously the enemy in the three villages centering on Longtancun, where Liu Tong-shi's house was located, we took with us the 7th and 8th Regiments as well as the Guard Company.

I commanded the operations, having established Headquarters at the village next to Longtancun, the village in which the house of Liu Tongshi's in-laws was situated. Before launching the operation we changed our original plan and decided to make Lin Tong-shi, who had to manage all the affairs of his family, stay at home for the time being. Instead we would take Liu Yiqing, his younger brother, because we thought that by so doing we would achieve the same result as by taking Liu Tong-shi without provoking his son and the army and police too much. Liu Yi-qing had no children. From olden times the Chinese had a peculiar custom of loving, among all brothers, most dearly the one who had no children.

Therefore, if Liu's family established contacts with us under the pretext of negotiating the safe return of Liu Yi-qing, the enemy and their neighbors would not suspect too much. Our operations were successfully conducted as planned, and our units withdrew from the three villages simultaneously. When the unit of the revolutionary army was leaving his village, Liu Tong-shi called out his elder brother's third son and made him accompany Liu Yi-qing, his uncle, to take care of the latter. I suppose he sent his elder brother's son to the mountains to reduce Liu Yi-qing's loneliness.

My men told me they had had a great deal of trouble on their way back to the secret camp because of Liu Yi-qing. He could not walk too well because he was overweight. On top of that, he was an opium addict and apparently the effects of the opium he had been smoking were wearing off. So we carried him on a stretcher. The revolutionary army, walking many miles, carrying an overweight opium fiend on a stretcher! Can you imagine it? Such an instance must be pretty rare. Indeed, in those days we went through all sorts of strange experiences.

I told O Paek Ryong, commander of the Guard Company, to take good care of Liu Tong-shi's younger brother and nephew. The men of the Guard Company pitched a tent for the guests and looked after them well. Although we had difficulties with provisions in those days, we managed to give them good meals of rice and meat soup.

However, Liu Yi-qing did not eat very much. We thought it was because the meals did not appeal to him since he was a wealthy man, used to eating all sorts of delicacies at every meal. However, this turned out not to be the reason. He had no appetite because of his craving for opium. Every day Liu Yi-qing pestered the men of the Guard Company for opium, saying he could go without meals but not without opium. He said he would pay them as much as they wanted, if only they would give him some.

My men could not comply with his request. At that time we had only a small amount of opium for emergency use at the medical center as a substitute for anesthetic. Finally losing his reason because of his crying, Liu Yi-qing started hurling all sorts of abuse and insults at the men of the Guard Company. It was an absurd situation - the son of a landlord screaming for opium from the revolutionary army at their secret camp!

I told my men to bring the guests to the tent of Headquarters. Liu Yiqing was in a terrible state. When an opium addict stops smoking opium, his vision becomes blurred and he cannot keep proper balance. I told the men at the medical center to supply a small amount of opium to Liu Yi-qing every day, even if they had to use up all the emergency supply of opium. As soon as he lit up his pipe, Liu Yi-qing became animated and walked on air with a broad smile.

It seemed he had never in his life done any physical work. He did not even know how to put away his bedding, so his nephew did it for him. Indeed, he had idled his time away living in clover, never lifting a finger for anything.

One day, as I was winding up my talk with him, I told that a man could feel the meaning of life and have a good appetite only if he worked as hard as his physical strength allowed him. I went on to say that in olden times a certain princess had made others do everything for her, so she was finally unable even to peel an apple. I pointed out that if one depended only on others, one would eventually become this kind of fool. Liu Yi-qing said that he differed little from that princess. He added, nevertheless, that he was good at one thing: making dumplings. I was glad to hear that. It was fortunate that the man I had judged to be nearly an invalid at least had the skill of making dumplings, even though it was not an extraordinary skill.

I told one of the cooks at Headquarters to bring the stuff for making dumplings. Liu Yi-qing made the dough thin and smooth, put in the stuffing and made the dumplings with astonishing skill. He not only shaped them nicely, but made them as fast as lightning. Eating his dumplings with my men, I praised his extraordinary skill.

From the following day on, whenever we were about to make dumplings, Liu Yi-qing rolled up his sleeves and helped the cooks. On such days he became talkative and even cracked jokes with me. One day, when he returned after making dumplings, he said that he felt joy in living now that he was working, as I had suggested. He said this sincerely.

However, we did not make dumplings every day. When there was no job for him to do, Liu Yi-qing was bored to death and smoked more opium than on other days. I told him a lot of instructive stories, starting with the story about the Opium War and telling him about Confucius and Mencius. I even talked about certain patriotic men of property who had made their names in Chinese history. The names of Zhang Weihua and Chen Han-zhang, revolutionaries from wealthy families, naturally became the topic of our conversation. Liu Yi-qing listened to me with great interest. One day he asked for a writing brush and some paper. He wrote a letter to Liu Yi-xian, saying that he wanted to help Commander Kim with money

and property, although he was not quite ready to commit suicide for the sake of the revolution, as Zhang Wei-hua had done. He even showed me the letter.

Reading it, I could see it was not in vain that we had treated him humanely. Liu Yi-qing started the letter by writing about how he and his nephew were getting along. He specially emphasized that he shared the same tent with me, that he was making dumplings with me and that the men of the revolutionary army were kindly looking after him like their own brother. Then he wrote that since he had been treated hospitably and kindly, he had to return the favor. He went on to say that if his elder brother sent such things as rice, cloth, shoes and the like, they would be a great help in the operations of the revolutionary army, and in that case he and his nephew would be able to return home soon. Our education and enlightenment of him had proved fruitful.

Liu Tong-shi, who was anxious about the safety of his younger brother and nephew after sending them off to the mountains, was extremely pleased to receive this letter. He sent us notice of the date by which he would prepare the goods we needed, and asked me to send some people to carry these things. We dispatched Lee Pong Rok with men numbering the strength of about one platoon to carry the goods. They brought back cotton cloth sufficient to make hundreds of uniforms, workmen's shoes, rice, flour, pancakes, pork and soybean oil. Liu Tong-shi sent such goods to our secret camp on three occasions.

As dealings with our comrades became more frequent, he requested a formal interview with me and asked to be brought to our secret camp. He wanted to meet me, the Commander of the revolutionary army, to exchange greetings with me now that he was helping this army. I saw to it that he was brought to our secret camp.

When Liu Tong-shi was about to leave for his meeting with me, his policeman son came to oppose the trip. He said: "It seems that you, father, have decided to go to the secret camp of the revolutionary army after receiving Uncle's letter. You'd better give this matter some thought. Uncle wrote that he and cousin were living with General Kim Il Sung in the same tent and making dumplings with him, I can't believe that. How can the Commander of the revolutionary army share bed and board with civilians? Moreover, Uncle is a landlord's son. The Communist Party says all landlords must be overthrown. It's obviously a whopping lie that the Commander of the revolutionary army shares bed and board with a member of the hostile class and that they make dumplings like housewives together. One of Commander Kim's men must have forced him to write this."

Liu Tong-shi answered: "Don't talk nonsense. I've met Commander Kim's men several times. All of them are polite and warm-hearted young men, so I think Commander Kim has good men under him. Their behavior towards me alone is enough to show me Commander Kim's personality and the discipline of the unit. Now that I'm in touch with the revolutionary army, I would like to go to the mountains to meet Commander Kim and personally confirm the truth of your uncle's letter."

When Liu Tong-shi came to see me, he brought with him a uniform and a coat made of plain but good-quality woolen cloth, a pair of boots and a cap. These were all gifts for me. After exchanging a few words with him, I found him to be no ordinary man and not to be compared with his younger brother, either in

personality or knowledge. He was gentlemanly, and his speech and conduct were noble and dignified.

Liu Tong-shi spoke to me in Korean, saying that we must have gone through many hardships in the mountains. Then he expressed his gratitude to me for the good care we had taken of his younger brother and nephew. On my part, I thanked him for the large amount of goods he had sent to help our army, and for visiting us despite his advanced age.

We pitched a separate tent for Liu Tong-shi and had him meet his younger brother and nephew there.

Liu Yi-qing said to his elder brother: "What do they mean by saying the soldiers of the communist army are red devils? That's nonsense. No one in the world is as good-natured as these people. Commander Kim's army is a gentlemanly army." He thus praised the revolutionary army to the skies, even adding that he had been enlightened, thanks to Commander Kim.

Liu Yi-qing spoke so highly of us that after meeting his younger brother, Liu Tong-shi called on me again and repeatedly thanked me. On meeting Liu Tong-shi I was most surprised by the fact that he had excellent knowledge of not only the Korean language and customs, but also of its history and culture. He and I understood each other very easily.

I was most impressed when he said he could not help but sympathize with Koreans when he saw them leading a hard life in a foreign land, deprived of their country. Just as I liked Chinese and was attached to them, so did Liu Tong-shi love Koreans. He asked me suddenly: "Commander Kim, people call your army communist bandits'. Is it true that you are a communist?"

"Calling our army 'communist bandits' is a fabrication of the Japanese, but it's true I'm a communist."

"Then, Commander Kim, what do you think of me, a man who has been against all communists up to now?"

Probably one of the reasons he had come to our secret camp was to get a reply to this question, so I had to give him a prudent answer.

From the first days of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, I had held a lot of negotiations with people who were against communism. Commander Yu was opposed to communism, as was Wu Yi-cheng at first. Yang Se Bong, a Korean, was also hostile to communists although he was a patriot. It was only in his last years that he allied with communists. In each of my negotiations with Commander Yu, Commander Wu, and Commander Yang, I was in a position to speak in defense of communism and to convince them of the need to ally with communists for the sake of a united front. The choice between alliance with communists and opposition to them was up to them. Therefore, even though I always led the negotiations and took the initiative, I had to wait for their answer anxiously.

The situation was different, however, in my talk with Liu Tong-shi. I was in a position to denounce his

anti-communist acts, but he had to listen to my judgment. It was very gratifying that he wanted to find out our attitude to his anti-communist acts of his own accord. Anyhow, he was candid and broad-minded.

According to my experience, there were two categories of anti-communism. One was deliberate and active anti-communism, pursued by those who wanted to destroy communism because they thought they would meet their end if communists gained the upper hand. The other was blind anti-communism, pursued by those who either loathed communism at the sight of the wrongdoings perpetrated by pseudo-communists, or by those who automatically rejected and gave communism a wide berth, deceived by the pernicious propaganda of the imperialists. It could be said that Liu Tong-shi belonged to the second category.

If we were to lead him from opposing communists into allying with them, we had to be candid with him about our attitude. I had to refrain from currying favor with him just to receive aid goods from him; at the same time I could not denounce him to his face as a wicked man simply because he was a landlord and anti-communist. It was important to tell him clearly the good and bad points in his deeds, thus inducing him to ally with us and love his country, instead of opposing us.

"I feel extremely sorry that you are against communists. However, we do not intend to punish you in the least, since you oppose communism because you do not understand it. Moreover, you love China and the Chinese people despite your opposition to communists. You do not want to see your country ruined, and you want to be a Chinese in your own country, even though you are a landlord and against communists. I attach great importance to this. A man who loves his country can easily ally with communists."

As I said this, Liu Tong-shi took my hand, full of emotion.

"Thank you, Commander Kim. Although there are many people and many mouths in Helong, you are the only person who has recognized that I am a patriot. That's enough to help me sleep in peace."

He confessed that he had been against communists because of narrow-mindedness, and asked what he should do to cooperate with us.

I said: "It is not hard to understand what alliance with communists means. Opposing Manchukuo, resisting Japan and helping our revolutionary army all mean alliance with the communists. You already started cooperating with us the day you sent your younger brother and nephew to us. Those who truly love their country and nation will eventually understand communism and reconcile with the communists, because the communists and opposition to Japan is the most important patriotic deed for both Korean and Chinese landlords."

Liu Tong-shi said that he was fortunate to discover his own worth, although belatedly, thanks to Commander Kim. The following day, however, he was strangely reticent. When I asked him if there was anything wrong, he simply replied no. I summoned O Paek Ryong and asked him whether anything undesirable had happened while the Guard Company had been looking after Liu Tong-shi.

O Paek Ryong said there was nothing particularly wrong. He added, however, that because Liu Tong-shi had asked to be allowed to inspect the secret camp, O had taken him around, showing him the training of the soldiers and inviting him to a recreation party. When Liu Tong-shi was inspecting the cooking area, he was rather displeased at the sight of a pot in which gruel, a half-and-half mixture of sorghum and edible grass, was boiling.

Liu Tong-shi asked: "Why are you preparing this sort of meal instead of rice, now that I have sent you dozens of sacks of rice? Of course, it's understandable if you cook gruel in order to spare your rice, but it's unreasonable to serve even the Commander with gruel because of the shortage of provisions." Probably he was shocked by the fact that the Commander ate the same meals as his men. He was still more deeply moved, while inspecting the medical center, to learn that the center had given his younger brother all the opium it had been saving to treat patients in an emergency.

Having heard all this from O Paek Ryong, I thought I'd better send Liu Tong-shi and his party back home.

Liu Tong-shi, however, said that he would return home alone, and requested me to allow his younger brother and nephew to stay a little longer in our secret camp for the time being. He said he wanted to send more goods to our unit, but there had to be an excuse for him to do this. He said that if his younger brother and nephew remained in our secret camp, this would be a good pretext in front of the Japanese, even if they found out about the delivery of the goods.

It was extremely gratifying that Liu Tong-shi volunteered to give us more help. It seems to be human nature for a person to try to prove himself worthy if complete confidence is placed in him.

Prior to Liu Tong-shi's departure I gave him a modest farewell party. At the party he apologized to me for having been hostile to communists and for having mistaken our revolutionary army for "bandits". He said that he would be sparing with neither money nor goods to help the revolutionary army.

Before parting from us, he asked me to write a certificate for him, so that when the 8th Route Army liberated Northeast China, he could show them that he had given material assistance to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. I wrote on a piece of silk in Chinese: "Liu Tong-shi is a fine patriot. He has given moral and material assistance to the Anti-Japanese Allied Army." Under that I wrote "Commander Kim Il Sung" and then affixed my seal to it. The certificate Peng Zhen saw was probably this kind of document.

In those days many Chinese landlords in Manchuria pretended to cooperate with the Japanese, but secretly helped anti-Japanese fighters. They believed that the day would come when the Japanese imperialists were destroyed and the puppet state of Manchukuo was returned to China.

Whenever they helped the People's Revolutionary Army, Chinese landlords asked us to write a certificate with the words, Zhu Shi Kang. I wrote such documents for landlords in Changbai County and for others in Emu and Dunhua Counties.

Zhu Shi Kang are Chinese words, Zhu meaning "pig", Shi, "eat" and Kang, "bran". Thus they mean that a pig eats bran. If we use the ideographs for "red", "eat" and "peace", they are also pronounced Zhu Shi Kang. but in this case these ideographs mean that Zhu De conquers Kang De. In those days the 8th Route Army was called Zhu-Mao Army, with the ideographs standing for the surnames of Zhu De and Mao Zedong. Kang De was the reign-title of Pu Yi, Emperor of Manchukuo, set up by Japanese. When the Chinese said, Zhu Shi Kang, it was a secret code, meaning that the 8th Route Army would liberate Northeast China.

After Liu Tong-shi had returned, many more goods than before arrived at the Wukoujiang Secret Camp. He sent all kinds of supplies by truck, which helped us greatly in our preparations for winter that year. He also sent us a lump of opium as large as a wooden pillow in return for the opium our medical center had given his brother.

With the Harvest Moon Day of that year near at hand, we sent Liu Tong-shi's younger brother and nephew back home. Bidding farewell to us, Liu Yi-qing shed a lot of tears. He said that once he was back home he would give up smoking opium and live like a decent human being. Not long after we had sent them back, we also left the Wukoujiang Secret Camp. Since then, we never had any more contact with Liu Tong-shi or his brother. However, I always remember Liu Tong-shi and believe that he lived conscientiously.

Among Liu Tong-shi's relatives there is a man named Liu Zhen-guo, one of his nephews. This man sent a letter to the Party History Institute. According to this letter, Liu Tong-shi also recalled us frequently until his death. It seems that back home from our secret camp, he clearly expressed his intention to oppose Japanese imperialists and gave wide publicity to us.

It is said that Liu Tong-shi kept the certificate we had written at the Wukoujiang Secret Camp to the end of his life as a family treasure. I have been told that after his death, his younger brother's family kept the document. I was very touched to hear that. The heart-to-heart talks I had with Liu Tong-shi at the secret camp made us lifelong friends who never forgot each other. We remained on friendly terms with each other, although we were separated across a long distance.

What does this mean? It means that while those capitalists who seek only their own interests and pleasure, caring nothing for their country, nation or kinsmen, will never share our ideas, the conscientious capitalists who love their country, nation and fellow citizens can become our companions, irrespective of their nationality, party affiliations or political views. Differences in ideas or property status cannot be an absolute criterion for judging people. The broadest criterion for judging people is how much or how little they love their country, love their nation and love their fellow human beings. It is a rule that one who values human beings also loves one's nation, and one who loves one's nation also loves one's country. This is an indisputable truth.

Anyone who disregards this truth will make Right or Left mistakes in one's work with people. For some time, several articles dealing with the history of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle defined Liu

Tong-shi as a vicious anti-communist landlord. We cannot regard this estimation to be correct. If one indiscriminately judges people only by their class origin and past records, or deals imprudently with them, one will commit a colossal blunder in one's work with them. One will take a patriot for a traitor and vice versa, or denounce a supporter of the revolution as a counterrevolutionary element.



## 21.3. Confronted by Hundreds of Thousands of "Punitive" Troops

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The period from the late 1930s to the early 1940s was the most difficult in our armed struggle. Both the Arduous March and the large-scale "punitive" operations conducted by the Japanese imperialists in the three provinces in southeastern Manchuria in the name of a "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace" were a tremendous trial for us. Jirin, Tonghua and Jiandao were the three southeastern provinces. The struggle at every stage was both stressful and complicated, and I cannot forget the tribulations we experienced at that time.

It was by pure chance that we found out the enemy was planning to launch long-term, large-scale "punitive" operations from the autumn of 1939 on.

A company commander of the Chinese "Fengtian unit", who had been captured by us at the Battle of Wukoujiang in June that year, revealed the secret to us. In that battle we captured many enemy officers and men. They wondered why the revolutionary army released all the prisoners of war and even gave them travel money. Before releasing them, we selected a number of intelligent men from among the POWs who wanted to join the guerrillas and gave them an assignment to help us while serving in the enemy forces.

One of the officers who returned to the puppet Manchukuo army after being educated by us was a company commander. He informed us that a "Jiandao area punitive force" had been organized, that his company had been attached to the force, that the "punitive" operations would be launched in early October on an unprecedented large scale, and that if the revolutionary army did not take countermeasures promptly, it might suffer heavy losses.

Thanks to his information, we were able to take time to prepare against the enemy attack. This scheme of a "special clean-up campaign" was quite extraordinary. In the first place, it involved all the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo army and police in an unprecedented "punitive" offensive.

It was, in fact, a large-scale war that was to mobilize as many as 200,000 army and police troops from Japan and Manchukuo, including even paramilitary organizations of all types, under the direct supervision and command of Umez, chief of the Kwangtung Army, and the Public Security Minister for the puppet state of Manchukuo.

After we declared war against Japan, the Japanese imperialists launched annual "punitive" operations against us, enlarging the scope of these operations year after year. Their siege operations in the years after 1934 and the "punitive" campaign in northern Dongbiandao from the autumn of 1936 on were large in scale. The new "punitive" campaign being prepared in the name of the "special clean-up campaign",

however, surpassed all previous campaigns not only in the number of men used but also in the size of the area in which it would be carried out.

During the "operations for public peace in northern Dongbia.ndao" in 1936 the theatre of operations of the "Tonghua Punitive Command", headed by Sasaki, was confined to one province, but the theatre of operations of the "Nozoe Punitive Command" in 1939 covered the three provinces of Jirin, Tonghua and Jiandao, as well as Ningan County in Mudanjiang Province - four provinces in effect. An article in Manchukuo Army describes part of the preparations for the "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern areas" as follows:

"The Kwangtung Army budgeted three million yen for the campaign and says no more can be earmarked on any account. On October 1, the first day of the punitive campaign. Limura, chief of staff of the Headquarters of the Kwangtung Army, Hoshino Naoki, Minister of General Affairs of Manchukuo, Susukida Yoshitomo, Deputy Public Security Minister, and Kitabe, staff officer representing Major-General Nozoe, held a meeting. Kitabe explained the plan of the campaign, pointing out on a map the roads to be constructed or repaired, the location of communications and internment villages, and requested 30 million yen for the punitive campaign.

"Minister Hoshino promised that he would do his best to secure the fund. Paymaster-General Iizawa expressed his hope for the success in the campaign in the three provinces, adding that he would squeeze out the fund. Thus the thoroughgoing campaign for public peace was finally set in motion." (Manchukuo Army, p. 400, Lanxinghui). The new campaign carried out by the "Nozoe Punitive Command" covered an area three to four times greater than the campaign carried out by the "Tonghua Punitive Command", with a commitment of 12.5 times the troop strength and 13 times the expenditures of the former. From these figures one can guess how much the Japanese military authorities expected from this "punitive" campaign.

The top hierarchy of the Japanese and Manchukuo army and police did not confine their campaign to military operations alone, but combined it with their "surrender-hunting operation", "ideological operation" and "operation to eradicate the basic roots". As a result, the campaign surpassed by far all previous campaigns of this sort in scope and depth and in the elaborateness of the means and methods used.

Launching the "punitive" campaign, the Japanese imperialists described it as a "sacred war" and "sacred punishment". We thought it quite ludicrous that they should "beautify" their campaign in that manner. The Japanese had provoked a number of aggressive wars but they had never declared actual war, nor had they described their activities as a war. It had been their habit to rationalize and validate their acts of war by describing them as "events" or "incidents".

Their designation of the new "special clean-up campaign" as a "sacred war" and "sacred punishment" was therefore quite meaningful. It showed that the Japanese military authorities had abandoned their previous view of their confrontation with the People's Revolutionary Army as a one-sided "punitive"

campaign or a "clean-up of bandits" and began to see it as a genuine bilateral conflict.

Owing to the successive failures of the Japanese in the Sino-Japanese War and in the Battle of Kihalkhin-Gol, the Japanese military was suffering from inner turmoil. The Sino-Japanese War, which they had bragged would be finished in three months or half a year at the most, was dragging on for two years without any hope of victory. The main force of the Japanese army had been drawn deep into the quagmire of war.

Certain sections of the Japanese military ascribed their failure in China's mainland and in Khalkhin-Gol to the factional strife among themselves, or to the backwardness of their military and technical equipment; at the same time, quite a few military bureaucrats and experts pointed the finger at the harassment of the People's Revolutionary Army in the rear, which brought about instability of their rear, disconnection of supply routes and confused war psychology. It is true that the enemy suffered great losses because of repeated attacks by the People's Revolutionary Army in the rear.

Apparently this made the Japanese come to their senses. They realized that they could carry out neither the war against China nor operations against the Soviet Union with the People's Revolutionary Army constantly plaguing them from behind. They had to change their view of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

As you see, the inevitable result of their assessment of the fight against the People's Revolutionary Army was that they drew up the new plan of a "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern areas" and went on to implement this plan through all-out war. This campaign was aimed at wiping out the People's Revolutionary Army once and for all.

Nozoe's orders took the form of the boast that he would annihilate our army. He declared that as the guerrilla army had not decreased, despite repeated "punitive" operations over several years in the three provinces of Jirin, Jiandao and Tonghua, he was taking up a high mission?to ride his horse to Mt. Paektu and root out the evil bandits with a single stroke of his sword. He ordered his men to wipe out the People's Revolutionary Army to the last man.

From his statement that he would finish off "the evil bandits" on Mt. Paektu with a quick stroke of his sword, one can see that the enemy's main target was the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. We closely examined the strategy and tactics to be used by the enemy in the large-scale campaign of a total war and discovered that the Japanese military authorities, on the basis of their long study and review of our own guerrilla tactics, were going to adopt a new fighting method - that of countering guerrilla tactics with guerrilla tactics.

We were able to confirm this insidious plan after reading their reference book for operations against "bandits", which we had managed to obtain. In those days the enemy distributed to each unit of the "punitive" force a printed collection of their experiences in the "punitive" operations against us. It was a sort of anti-guerrilla warfare manual. The Japanese military authorities dressed the soldiers of their

special units for anti-guerrilla warfare in uniforms like ours and demanded that they drill and behave like guerrillas. All this shows how hard they now studied and worked on their tactics to wipe out the KPRA.

I knew that the showdown with Nozoe would be a fierce fight, and that if we wanted to emerge victorious in this fight, we ourselves would have to work out and employ new tactics we had never used before.

In order to frustrate the offensive of hundreds of thousands of enemy troops and ensure the continuous upsurge of the revolution, we had to invent ingenious tactics that would render our operations more elaborate and energetic than ever before. We adopted large-unit circling operations for this purpose. In brief, this meant long-term mobile operations by large forces moving around in a vast area over a number of secret routes. These operations would not be mere manoeuvres, but mobile actions combined with attacks on the enemy by various methods. Without such mobile operations it would be impossible to emerge victorious in the fight against a 200,000-strong enemy force.

The net of "district punitive forces" and "subdistrict punitive forces", cast out by the "Nozoe Punitive Command", spread not only over the three provinces of Jirin, Jiandao and Tonghua, but also over Ningnan, Dongning and Muling in Mudanjiang Province in northern Manchuria. One slip and we might be caught in the mesh of this vast network.

While studying the network carefully, we found it tight in some places and loose in others. In certain areas the net had already been cast and in others it was in the process of being cast. The mesh size was diverse. The "punitive" forces had been deployed in all counties in Jiandao, the main theatre of our operations.

We planned to direct our movement first towards the area west of Dunhua and Emu. These two counties had many of our underground organizations, and the people there had gone through revolutionary training. We could easily find our foothold in this area. If we attacked the enemy there, we could draw the enemy's attention to this location. We would then move to Mengjiang, Fusong and Changbai, where we would make a sharp turn to create havoc there. When the enemy came running to Mengjiang, Fusong and Changbai, following our traces, we would once again do an about-face and return to our original place through the southern tip of Jiandao Province. This was my plan. I estimated that this round movement would take us about one year.

It was my opinion that these circling operations should be conducted by a large force. The aim of the operations was not to avoid the enemy, but to attack him at points favorable to us. When attacking the enemy, we had to annihilate him so that he could have no chance to recover, and for this we had to perform our circling operation with a large force.

I attached special importance to the secrecy of these circling routes. If the routes were revealed, we might be caught by the enemy's "tick tactics" or in his mesh and fall into enormous difficulties. But there was one serious problem with these operations: the difficulty of obtaining provisions. In the case where the

guerrillas operated in a fixed area, they could obtain provisions in advance and keep them in storage in the secret camps. But in the case of a large force constantly moving around throughout the entire winter, things would be far different.

Unless the food problem was resolved, our large-unit circling operations would be impossible. This was why I held back the plan of operations for some time, not making it public even after I had drawn it up.

As I set out the routes of our activities, I planned to order the 7th and 8th Regiments and the Guard Company to store provisions in advance at certain key points we would be passing through - first in the northern area of Antu County, then in Huadian and Dunhua Counties. As crops were yet to be harvested, it was very difficult to obtain food at that time. We would be able to buy provisions after crops had been harvested and threshed, but in the present situation we could do nothing. Nor could we buy food from grain dealers in town.

I told the commanding officers who were just leaving on their mission to obtain provisions that they should buy unharvested crops. To obtain food, we would have to harvest the crops in the fields after purchasing them and do the threshing ourselves. It was an enormous, labor-consuming task beyond the capability of the whole unit, but there was no other choice.

In early October of that year, when the problem of provisions had been solved in the main, I convened a meeting of military and political cadres at Liangjiangkou, Antu County, where I formally declared my plan to conduct large-unit circling operations in the vast region northeast of Mt. Paektu.

One of the events I still remember from the days at Liangjiangkou and its vicinity is that a peasant brought to us his 14- or 15-year-old son and asked us to admit him into the KPRA. Frankly speaking, recruiting a boy when we were about to start the trying, large-unit circling operations was a matter that required deep thought. I explained to the boy that we were an army that walked day and night, and that some days we had to walk 40 kilometers or even 80 kilo-meters. I asked him if he could keep up with us. The boy, pointing to Lee O Song, replied that if that guerrilla brother walked, he would, too.

I asked the peasant if he would not be worried about his son in the guerrilla army. He asked me in turn how I thought he could send his son into the army without doing some deep thinking first, then added that he believed in me and that it would set his mind at ease to think of his boy doing his bit. As the old saying has it, he concluded, mugwort grows straight in a hemp field. The boy was clever and his father was also an excellent man. I decided to admit the boy into the army.

Some people told me they thought I was taking a burden on myself, but the majority of officers and men were delighted, saying that when they saw the Commander recruiting such a young boy, they felt pretty sure that the forthcoming operations would succeed. They judged that otherwise the Commander would not volunteer to take on this "burden".

I took him along with me with my orderlies. Quick-eyed and agile, he matured fast. When I went to

Liangjiangkou for the meeting, I took him with me. Soon after the meeting we started on our way back. We knew the way would not be smooth, for Nozoe's first stage of "punitive" operations had started, and the circumstances were very strained. We had to move in great stealth, with a scout party ahead.

In the vicinity of Jiguanlazi we were surprised by the enemy. The name of the place originated from a peak there, which resembled the comb of a cock. The peak soared to the left of the way we were taking. The terrain of Jiguanlazi was such that it was highly favorable for the enemy to waylay us and very unfavorable for us to defend ourselves. I was fairly sure that the enemy, if he were in this vicinity at all, would not miss this terrain feature. He would be lying in ambush, since he was attempting to wipe out the anti-Japanese guerrillas through guerrilla tactics. However, we could not change the march route and take a long, roundabout way. I gave the order to pass through the danger zone quickly, with a machine-gun in the van of the column.

When we reached the area, loud shots rang out all of a sudden from the direction of the peak. The enemy had opened up fire as our column was marching through the narrow, unforked lane.

This attack inflicted fatal wounds on a veteran nicknamed "Shorty" and on Kim Jong Dok. I was worried over the boy who had joined the guerrillas in Liangjiangkou, so I called to him. He was firing back at the enemy on the height. It was surprising to think that he had gathered such courage in this critical situation. The boy even tried to take care of me, shouting, "Don't move, Comrade Commander."

"No, I must move. Keep changing your position as you fire," I shouted back.

Then I drew him to a hollow behind a mound of earth nearby. Meanwhile, the enemy bullets were flying around us ceaselessly. It was quite a predicament. I saw a ditch about 100 meters away in the field and rushed to it, ordering my men to follow me. They rushed to the ditch after me, helping the wounded. But the ditch proved not to be safe either.

We ran down to a river and rushed along its bank for a few minutes, then advanced towards the cliff occupied by the enemy. I had no time to explain to my men why we were heading that way. As I ran towards the enemy position without explanation, the men might have been skeptical. They would have wondered what I had in mind, since it was impossible to charge against so many enemy soldiers with our tiny force of fewer than ten men. Nevertheless, they rushed after me without hesitation. Just as I trusted them fully, they trusted me absolutely.

We reached the bottom of the cliff, while the enemy bullets continued to fly over our heads. I think it was at this point the men saw what I was trying to do. Thinking that we had escaped across the field, the enemy fired towards it aimlessly. Then the enemy soldiers ran down from the height and encircled the field, raising a great roar. In the meantime, we climbed the adjacent height. Having surrounded the field on three sides, they continued firing at each other for a good while.

The Battle at Jiguanlazi can be called our first encounter with the Nozoe "punitive" force. This battle was

clear proof that the enemy had studied our guerrilla tactics in depth before the new campaign. At the same time, I was convinced that my plan of large-unit circling operations was a right tactical choice. The battle had been a microcosm of the military circumstances we would find ourselves in during that winter.

By the time I returned from the meeting at Liangjiangkou, my men had finished preparing the provisions. The sewing-unit had also made almost all the uniforms I had ordered. We called the first stage of our operations the expedition to Dunhua. You can understand the course to be from Hualazi straight to Dunhua and then Mengjiang and Fusong. We intended to march from Hualazi towards Mt. Paektu, then turn to the north to fight various big battles in the backwoods of Dunhua before moving into dense forests of Dongpaizi in Mengjiang County, or in Baishitan in Fusong County, then finally take a rest and conduct military and political training during the coldest season in one of our secret camps. While making preparations for the first stage of the operations, I sent the Independent Battalion and a platoon of the Guard Company to Dongpaizi under the command of Lim Su San, as well as a small unit to Baishitan. Their mission was to prepare secret camps, provisions and uniforms for the main force.

After these preparations we set out on the expedition to Dunhua. You can have a better understanding of the expedition if you remind yourselves of the Battles of Liukesong and Jiaxinzi. These two battles were fought on the expedition to Dunhua. In order to disguise the expedition route we first marched to the upper reaches of the Erdao River as if we were moving towards Samjang.

Day was breaking when we were about a dozen kilometers from Hualazi. We got away from the river, erased our footprints and went into a nearby forest to take a rest. Refreshing ourselves with breakfast, we marched towards Mt. Paektu, leaving a single line of footprints. In the vicinity of Mt. Neidao we changed our course by 180 degrees to make our way to the north along the frozen Sandaobai River. This was all aimed at confusing the enemy once more.

Reversing the course of a march in that way made as strong an impact on the enemy as did several battles. The confused enemy would roam about here and there, either freezing to death in the unmapped areas, or losing combat efficiency from exhaustion. In this way we set afloat misleading rumours and left false trails in order to drag enemy troops on our tail as long as possible, wearing them out and leaving them incapable of moving any further from cold and fatigue.

When crossing over the Mudan Pass, we ourselves were also greatly troubled by the snow, which fell in large flakes, turning all the rocks on the pass slippery with a coat of ice. We had to move very slowly.

Our main force crossed over Mudan Pass safely and disappeared into the forest of Dunhua. The large-unit circling operations were beset with hardships and difficulties like this from the outset. But it was a thrilling start. On the first leg of our expedition to Dunhua we did not fight large battles. We struck the enemy only when it was necessary to keep our routes secret. Nevertheless, the enemy suffered heavy casualties.

On the Dunhua expedition we held a meeting of the Anti-Japanese Youth League. The AJYL was a

youth organization that developed from the Young Communist League, which had been dissolved according to the decision adopted at the Nanhutou meeting. The league meeting had to be held for an unavoidable reason.

There is a place named Sidaohuanggou in Dunhua where some years ago I had recuperated for a while after being released from the Jirin Prison and where I had reorganized destroyed organizations. It was in the vicinity of this place that we arrived first after crossing over the Mudan Pass. One of my men, who had been to the village to find out how things were there, brought news of the reaction of the secret organization there to the Park Tuk Pom incident.

Briefly, the incident involved Park Tuk Pom, a commanding officer of the People's Revolutionary Army, who had blackened the honour of the revolutionary army merely to get his hands on some supplies.

His unit was very short of provisions and clothing at one point. When supplies were running short, the People's Revolutionary Army used to strike the enemy to capture their supplies, or obtained them with the help of revolutionary organizations. Those were the proper ways to obtain supplies. However, Park neither thought of fighting a battle, nor did he try to appeal to underground organizations. He was afraid of fighting, so he tried to cover the shortage of provisions and clothing through quite a cowardly method. One feels ashamed to even talk about his method in public.

Park told an enemy agent, "I'm going to surrender to your side with my division. But right now that's difficult, because our clothes are all torn and we lack provisions. Prepare such-and-such amounts of provisions and cloth, then bring them to a place we'll fix up. I will ensure that my men change their uniforms and recover a little before bringing them to you. But I don't feel safe only with your assurance since you're only an agent. When you bring the provisions and clothing, send along your representatives, who can guarantee our safety after we surrender."

The enemy agent agreed and reported all this to his special operation squad. The enemy was greatly interested in this bargain. The enemy bosses in Jirin Province and Dunhua County gathered together soon after they received the report and discussed the measures to be taken. Then they sent their representatives to the rendezvous.

Park greeted them and held his negotiations with them. When his subordinate officer entered the conference room during the negotiations and reported that the promised materials had all arrived, Park suddenly pulled out his gun and shot to death all the enemy representatives on the spot. He was severely criticized by us for this and was transferred to the Guard Brigade. In 1940, when he was taken prisoner, he did, in fact, betray the organization and surrender to the enemy. His false surrender had become real surrender. After this betrayal, Park formed a "Park special corps" and ran around, trying to induce his former comrades-in-arms to surrender as well.

The lesson taught by the Park Tuk Pom incident was very serious. When I heard that he had surrendered, I thought that his false surrender farce had not been entirely accidental. Such a thing can be conceived



only by one who is liable to surrender in fact as well as in fancy. His example shows that a man who fabricates a false surrender can commit true surrender any time.

What I found more serious, however, was that quite a few people looked upon Park's shabby, deceitful method of obtaining supply materials as a great act. Worse still, the guerrilla who had been to Sidaohuanggou to reconnoitre was of the opinion that Park, who had carried out a "laudable" deed, had been punished too severely and should have been shown the appreciation due to him. When he was making his report on the outlook of the people there, he was ill-disposed towards them, as they had said that Park was an officer who had played havoc with the prestige of the guerrilla army. The guerrilla reporting to me was a member of the AJYL.

The fact that a member of the AJYL was favourably disposed towards Park's deed was an extremely dangerous thing. I talked to the Officer in charge of youth work. He told me that quite a large number of the AJYL members in the directional army were speaking of the incident in the same way as the scout had done. I realized that there were obviously problems with the ideological outlook of the AJYL members, and so I told the commanding officer to convene a meeting of the league members immediately. He replied that they had all fallen asleep the moment they arrived at the camp.

This kind of thing had never happened before. On arrival at a camping site, everyone usually got busy cleaning their weapons, patching their torn clothing, shaving and cutting firewood. They had always lived in such a well-disciplined manner?but not that night. Of course, it was true that they were extremely tired after the march; nevertheless, it was quite disgraceful that they had fallen fast asleep without even setting up camp. With this kind of mental state, we would never be able to carry out the mobile operations full steam. That night I made Oh Jung Hup vacate the tent of a company and called a meeting of the AJYL. I was also at the meeting.

The tendency towards hazy ideology revealed among the league members, their lack of the spirit to surmount difficulties, even their neglect of simple hygiene and the half-hearted participation in cultural recreation work among the young guerrillas were criticized. Measures to rectify these shortcomings were discussed.

At the meeting I also pointed out to them the dangerous nature of the Park Tuk Pom incident. I emphasized especially that each and every guerrilla should maintain sharp vigilance at all times against deviations that could damage the authority and honour of the People's Revolutionary Army, that they all had to wage a strong struggle against such deviations and keep good relations with the people at all times.

This meeting awakened the commanding personnel to their duty. Some officers had tacitly consented to their men falling asleep without making preparations for camping; they had done nothing about it, as they had felt sympathy for them. After the meeting they realized that they had been wrong.

The meeting was a form of ideological mobilization for attacking Liukesong and Jiaxinzi. This

ideological mobilization proved effective, for when we attacked Liukesong after the meeting, all the men fought bravely. They also fought with great success in the Battle of Jiaxinzi. After these two battles the guerrillas understood why their Commander had convoked the AJYL meeting all of a sudden.

The more difficult our work and the graver our situation, the more efficiently must we conduct ideological work. I insist on the importance of ideology. I maintain that ideology must come first and I value ideology far more than any wealth. When we had to fight do-or-die battles with a 200,000-strong enemy force, we drew up a great plan for large-unit circling operations and carried it out forcefully. What did we have to rely on at that time? We relied on the perfect unity of all the guerrillas and their steadfast conviction of the revolutionary idea. Did we have planes or tanks? We had people, soldiers, light weapons, and that was all. So we fought our battles after ideological mobilization, and this proved highly effective.

The respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung also recollected that the original plan of operations had to be changed during the expedition. This was due to Lim Su San's neglect of his duty.

Just before the AJYL meeting Kim Jong Suk and Lee Tu Ik came to Headquarters and reported a disturbing state of affairs at the secret camp in Dongpaizi. When embarking on the expedition to Dunhua, I intended to spend the coldest one or two months in Dongpaizi, make a circle through Fusong and Changbai Counties, proceed to the homeland, and then by way of Helong return to Antu, the place we had started the expedition. This all had to be changed because Lim Su San, who had been dispatched to Dongpaizi, had not made any preparations for receiving the main force. On the excuse that the situation was too difficult and strained, he neglected to make the strenuous efforts needed to carry out the tasks I had given him. Worried over this neglect, Kim Jong Suk and Lee Tu Ik tried to perform the task in place of Lim, but the provisions they had obtained were barely enough as winter supplies for the men already at the secret camp in Dongpaizi.

Because of this, I concluded that we could not use the route we had planned at the outset. It was impossible for the main force to depend on a secret camp where proper provisions had not been stored.

Lim Su San was, in fact, already at that time seriously degenerate. Later he was to run away to the enemy camp, which shows that treachery does not take place in just one day or two. It results from slow corruption, or from ideological fermentation. Ideological corruption will go through a certain process. Although Lim Su San shouted revolution whenever he spoke, he had already degenerated by the time of the "Hyesan incident". We had only failed to discover it because we trusted him.

Baishitan, Fusong County, which we had planned as an alternate destination, was far away from villages, though its terrain features were favorable. A few villages could be found about half a dozen miles away from the secret camp in Baishitan, but there were not many of our underground organizations in the area.

Provisions would also pose a problem. There was a certain amount of grain, which a small unit and O Paek Ryong had obtained and stored up by the Songhua River. But the store was far away from the

camp, and the food had been intended to be consumed in later days. We had sent an advance party to Baishitan, but most of it consisted of women and infirm people. In this situation it was inconceivable for a large force to go straight to Baishitan by the alternate route. We found ourselves in a quandary. A cold snap was approaching, but the planned route had not been prepared for use, there was no spare time to prepare a new route and the enemy was at our heels; under these conditions we could not hang about at the foot of Mudan Pass for much longer. We were faced with a real dilemma.

If only food were available, we could endure whatever difficulties faced us. At that time, some sympathetic people appeared to help us, and with their aid we were able to buy a whole field of unharvested beans. In this way we were able to ride over the crisis. Then we attacked the lumber mills in Liukesong and Jiaxinzi and captured various materials, including grain. We immediately changed the course of our march by 180 degrees to the south and went to the secret camp at Baishitan. We can say that this was the terminal of the first stage of the large-unit circling operations.

The battles at Liukesong and Jiaxinzi were the high points of the first stage of the operations. It was a surprising success that we were able to slip away from the Helong and Antu areas, where the enemy's "punitive" forces had cast tight nets. The enemy was left aghast when we attacked all their strategic points in Dunhua in succession at lightning speed. Receiving the urgent message that Liukesong and Jiaxinzi had been raided and their troops annihilated, the enemy threw their forces into the Dunhua area in great haste, but by that time we had already slipped to the south and reached the area along the Songhua. I consider one of our greatest successes in the first stage of the operations to be the fact that we expanded our armed ranks with 200 recruits from the lumber mills in Liukesong and Jiaxinzi.

After the battles we staged a performance in the forest on the Songhua, and after the performance many young people volunteered to join the guerrillas from among the workers who had followed us, carrying our supplies. Admitting into our ranks so many young people of working-class origin was an auspicious event, the first of its kind in the history of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. As we could not supply them with weapons and uniforms, we gave each recruit an armband with a red star sewn on it as soon as we admitted him. I still remember that the women guerrillas worked through the whole night to make those armbands. The military and political training conducted at the secret camp in Baishitan was the start of the second stage of the large-unit circling operations, as well as a review of the first stage of the operations.

After making full preparations at Baishitan, we started off on the second stage. The plan of the second stage was to march from Baishitan through Frdaobaihe, Sandaobaihe and Sidaobaihe, (the no man's land northeast of Mt. Paektu), advance to the homeland and then go back to Antu County via Helong County. While we were giving military and political training at Baishitan, the secret camp was suddenly exposed to the enemy. The soybeans that one food-securing party had brought in sacks were the cause of the trouble, a simple thing that developed into quite a perplexing situation. Our men did not spot a hole in a sack, so the beans escaped through the hole, bean by bean, and this was spotted by an enemy agent.

On receiving information that the enemy, having discovered the whereabouts of the secret camp, was

making preparations for a full-scale surrounding and attacking operation, we planned a move that would cope with the situation. First, I ordered a commanding officer to take with him a company and raid Liangjiangkou in the enemy area, then slip away to Xiaweizi. Next, I ordered a platoon from the Guard Company to strike the enemy at posts situated on the height at the back of Baishitan, then withdraw to the Lushui River. In command of the main force, I left the secret camp 30 minutes before the start of the enemy attack and moved to the Lushui. In order to lure the enemy into the trap, we had to feign to be staying in the secret camp.

As soon as we evacuated the camp, the enemy surrounded it. Seeing a quiet camp that offered no resistance, they thought that the place was as good as occupied. They charged the camp at a rush. For all that, the sharpshooters in our Guard Company did not fire a shot; they only watched the enemy in action. As day broke, enemy planes appeared over the secret camp and dropped bombs on the heads of their own soldiers, who were waving joyfully up at them. The others who were in the barracks rushed Out at the sound of explosions. At that moment our machine-guns opened fire.

The simultaneous air-ground attack the enemy had planned turned out to be a joint operation by the People's Revolutionary Army and the Japanese air force, together annihilating the Japanese and Manchukuo infantry. While the enemy forces were in the midst of their uproar in Baishitan, we calmly marched down towards Mt. Paektu, struck the enemy at our heels in Lushuihe, crossed the Erdaobai River and disappeared into a forest east of Mt. Neidao. Then I reassembled the company that had advanced to Liangjiangkou after raiding a lumber mill near Hualazi, and the Guard Company that had been left in Baishitan. It is probably at that time that I dispatched a reconnaissance team to Samsuphyong in Musan, Korea.

Because of the tight watch by the border guard, the reconnaissance team was chased by the enemy from the moment they crossed the Tuman River. They returned without being able to carry out a proper reconnaissance, narrowly escaping death. In this situation it would be a risky adventure for a large force to march into the homeland.

I decided to postpone the plan of advancing into the homeland for the time being. Instead, we raided a large lumber mill, just to obtain provisions and also to feel out the reaction of the enemy in Korea across the Tuman. We attacked a mill near the river in Damalugou, and the enemy's reaction on the other side of the river was quite explosive. Having received the report that the enemy was strengthening its border watch, I moved the unit to a forest south of Hualazi after fighting for a few days with the enemy troops at our heels. After this we fought a big battle with Maeda's unit at Hongqihe, and thus concluded the large-unit circling operations.

Our series of confrontations with the Nozoe "punitive" force should not be viewed as a mere regional skirmish with an enemy commander and his troops. This was actual war against the military authorities of Japan and the Japanese Empire. The enemy did not succeed in any of its three-way operations - military, ideological and "rooting up basic evils" - to which they had given so much publicity through the so-called "outline plan for cleaning up bandits". Their plans all ended in failure, and in the long run it

was we who emerged as the victors in this war.

Nozoe lived out the rest of his life in retirement in a rural village of Kyushu following the defeat of Japan. He wrote an article about the events of those days, which reads in part:

"Kim Il Sung's army operated in several detachments, each claiming itself to be Kim Il Sung's army. Its tactics were to give the impression that this army was everywhere. There must have been one man named Kim Il Sung, but several people went under the name of Kim Il Sung, so it was difficult to pinpoint just who the real Kim Il Sung was.

According to the recollections of Nagashima, who took part in the special operations of the Nozoe "punitive" force after winning the trust of his superior for suppressing the Jiandao revolt, we can see that he also had to swallow a bitter pill because of the elusive tactics of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. He remembered it this way:

"When I was placed in charge of special operations in the Nozoe unit, I was told about the existence of Kim Il Sung's army. I discovered that the tactics employed by this army were very curious. When it was reported that this army had appeared in a certain place, we would rush there, but almost immediately there would be a report that it had appeared in yet another place. This army seemed to appear and disappear with preternatural swiftness, but in fact the same unit did not appear here and there simultaneously; he divided his army into several detachments and then had them appear in different places at once and claim to be Kim Il Sung's army."

Recollecting the hard battles fought with the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, Nagashima continued, "All the high-ranking cadres of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army were either killed, captured or surrendered, but only Kim Il Sung managed to ... survive and return to north Korea at the end of the war. He is now Premier."

## 21.4. Oh Jung Hup and His 7th Regiment

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We lost Oh Jung Hup in the Battle of Liukesong. In that battle we also lost company commander Choe Il Hyon and machine-gun platoon leader Kang Hung Sok. I treasured and loved these three officers dearly, and I lost them all at the same time. I was bereaved of many of my comrades-in-arms during the war against Japan, but the loss of Oh Jung Hup was the most heartbreaking tragedy of all.

To sketch Oh Jung Hup in brief: he was a man who cast a large shadow, though he was not an extrovert. When I say he cast a large shadow, I mean that he was a man of great exploits who made his mark wherever he appeared. No officers in our unit were probably as quiet as Choe Chun Guk and Oh Jung Hup. A quiet manner may be construed as unobtrusive or discreet or unassuming. Oh Jung Hup was unusually quiet and modest for a military officer, and though not boisterous socially, performed great deeds as a fighter. He was so unpretentious and simple that he did not think to push himself forward.

The others compared Choe Chun Guk to a bride, but O was even more modest than Choe. O was the sort of man it was hard to find fault with. Quiet and reserved as he was in his everyday life, O was a man of strong determination in the revolution, a tiger-like man charging forward through thick and thin once he made a decision. He always finished what he started, brushing aside all difficulties. He would not sleep or rest until he had carried out his assignment. He had a strong sense of fair play and never compromised with injustice. I think because of this quality he became class-conscious earlier than most others.

One year his family had a crop failure because of drought. His father explained the problem to the landlord and pleaded with him for leniency. The miserly, cruel landlord, however, showed no sympathy and accused O's father of being a thief. He even raised his walking stick to hit the old man. Oh Jung Hup, who was watching this scene nearby, could not bear it and whipped the landlord with his flail. He was 14 or 15 years old at the time. One can see from this how strong was his sense of justice even in his adolescence. A man with a strong sense of justice awakens to class-consciousness and participates in the revolution early. He then grows into a stalwart fighter who risks his life in the van of the revolution.

According to his uncle, O Thae Hui, Oh Jung Hup was fond of playing at being a soldier of the Independence Army in his childhood. Kim Jwa Jin used to come to their village, riding his horse with its bluish mane. This drew the boy towards the Independence Army. He came to communism later under the influence of his cousin, Oh Jung Hwa. He acquired revolutionary awareness early in life because he felt strong hatred and resistance against the enemy who had robbed him of his country.

Recalling him now, I can't think of another officer as audacious and courageous as Oh Jung Hup. It has been said from olden days that renowned generals, when training their soldiers in the art of war, always attached the most importance to audacity, courage, intelligence and virtue and strove to cultivate these characteristics in their men. Why does a tigress roll her cub over a cliff? Quite simply, to teach it

courage.

Although he had never attended military school nor been the disciple of a master in the martial arts, he cultivated his own revolutionary audacity and courage in the flames of the anti-Japanese struggle. During the raid on a gold mine near Sandaogou, Helong County, fought on the eve of the Harvest Moon Day in 1939, he left a trail of anecdotes behind him.

When he was commanding the raid, an enemy bullet hit him in the forehead. But he was not killed because the bullet apparently did not penetrate the bone. By a miracle he survived and continued commanding the battle, even though a bullet had hit him in the forehead. It was quite incredible that the thin skull of a man could resist a bullet, but it was true. I saw the wound after it had been dressed by his orderly. When his comrades told him that he had been quite fortunate and God had blessed him, he scoffed, saying that the stray bullets of the Japanese might pierce a coward's skull, but never a communist's.

While he was continuing to command the battle, a hand grenade the enemy had thrown flew over the wall of the fortress and fell just beside the feet of the guerrillas. It was a hair-raising moment. Oh Jung Hup calmly picked it up and tossed it back over the wall. As their own grenade flew back at them, the enemy soldiers scattered in terror in all directions. Oh lost no time and ordered his men to charge after them. Isn't this another miracle?

A hand grenade is a lethal weapon effective for use over short distances with two or three seconds' time from the moment of throwing to the moment of explosion. Picking up a hand grenade on the brink of explosion was an appalling risk, but Oh Jung Hup took the risk without turning a hair.

Just from these two anecdotes you can see what type of a man Oh Jung Hup was. He was incredibly adroit in battle. His greatest merits as a commanding officer were, first, the speed with which he judged a situation and made a decision, and second, the precision with which he organized a battle. Once his decision was made, he had a special talent for carrying it out resolutely and without a moment's hesitation: like a skilled wrestler who outmaneuvers his powerful opponent by employing excellent moves, he never failed to defeat an enemy, however strong, by using appropriate tactics. He was, in fact, a fighter no less efficient than Choe Hyon or Choe Chun Guk, but since he always worked together with Headquarters, he was not as well known as they were.

I have been engaged in the revolution for several decades, but I have seen few people who had as strong a sense of organization and discipline as Oh Jung Hup. These characteristics manifested themselves, first, in his regarding the orders of his superiors as absolute and in accepting them without reserve. When he was given an assignment he accepted it without question, saying simply, "Yes, I will do it." He never made excuses to get out of any undertaking.

He would carry out my orders thoroughly and within the set time. If I gave him a command to carry out a mission in a certain place and arrive at a certain rendezvous by a certain date, he would get there at the

set time after carrying out the mission without fail. If something unexpected came up in the course of carrying out the mission, he would leave a small unit to finish the job and he himself would return by the appointed time with his main force. He would use the opportunity to educate and encourage his men, saying that the Comrade Commander would worry if they failed to return by the fixed time.

He was an exemplary officer also in always following my instructions in managing his regiment and educating and training his men. In the cramped and awkward circumstances of guerrilla life, he managed his regiment in as assiduous and meticulous a fashion as if he were in a regular army. In his 7th Regiment no soldier was allowed to wear worn-out shoes or torn trousers. If he saw his men wearing torn uniforms on the march, he would make sure they all patched them up during the next break. Since he managed his unit efficiently, none of his men had accidents or ran into any kind of trouble. He even accepted whatever I might say to myself in passing as an order or demand of the Commander.

One day in 1939, with the Harvest Moon Day just around the corner, I took a stroll with O Paek Ryong in the secret camp at Wukoujiang. As we walked, I happened to mumble to myself that the Harvest Moon Day was approaching. Somehow, Oh Jung Hup heard what I said. He did not overlook it, for he was more responsive than anybody to my intentions and wishes. He construed it thus in his own way: Why did the Comrade Commander say that the Harvest Moon Day was approaching? Did he mention it because he was worried over preparations for the festival, knowing that the young recruits would be homesick on the day of the festival?

A few days later he organized a battle just to prepare for the festival, returning with a large quantity of provisions and foods, including moon-shaped rice-cakes. At the request of Oh Jung Hup on the festival day I explained the origin of moon-shaped cakes to the soldiers of the 7th Regiment and to my Headquarters staff.

Oh Jung Hup was so faithful to me that he even recognized my gunshots. On the Arduous March we switched over from a large-unit movement to dispersed small-unit actions, which continued for some time. Parting with Oh Jung Hup at that time, I told him to meet me at Samsugol next spring. In those days Koreans called the valley of Shisandaogou, Samsugol.

Early in March 1939 I organized a raid on a village in Samsugol. As he heard the gunshots, O said, "That's Comrade Commander's gunfire. Headquarters, with its strength of only one company, might possibly have been exposed and surrounded by the enemy. Comrades, we must rush to its defense." He then came running to us with his regiment at his heels.

Oh Jung Hup was a true man. I will tell you what happened when he first joined the guerrillas after conducting underground activities in Wenjiadian, Wangqing County. In those days the guerrillas in Wangqing were hopelessly short of weapons. There were many guerrillas and many more were volunteering to join, so the problem was that guns were in extremely short supply. The guerrillas who had no rifles had to arm themselves with swords or spears, as you can see in the film, Five Guerrilla Brothers.



Oh Jung Hup, too, wore a sword made in a smithy when he started out. The Wangqing guerrilla unit kept the recruits without rifles at the rear of the column. When standing guard, Oh Jung Hup had to borrow another soldier's rifle. Nevertheless, he felt no shame in this. Because he had been wearing a sword for several months, his comrades would tease him whenever they met him. One day I asked him seriously, "Jung Hup, don't you hate to tail after others, wearing just a sword?"

"I think this sword is a good enough weapon when there aren't enough rifles to go round. I'm sure I can capture a rifle in a battle some day."

Though he said this, he must still have felt awkward to be bringing up the rear, wearing only a sword and a grenade when others were carrying rifles. But he carried his sword calmly, without showing his feelings. In order to capture guns for the recruits, we organized a battle. Actual combat was the only way for us to obtain arms. We therefore raided the construction site of a railway that runs from Tumen to Mudanjiang via Sanchakou.

In this raid O captured several rifles and a pistol from an enemy officer. Who was to keep a captured weapon was decided at the meeting to review the battle. We made it a principle to award rifles preferentially to those who had fought courageously and observed discipline in an exemplary manner. I attended the meeting that reviewed the raid on the railway construction site. Only at this meeting was O finally awarded a rifle.

Later he was promoted to squad leader, platoon leader, company commander and then regimental commander. One might call him the model officer of a revolutionary army. He had many other merits in addition. Though gentle, he was lively and optimistic in everyday life, sociable in his quiet way, and zealous to learn. Talking no nonsense, he conducted himself well, listened carefully to any criticisms handed out by his comrades and rectified his mistakes immediately. He managed his unit with utmost care and had a stronger spirit of self-reliance and fortitude than others.

It would not be too much to say that the growth of Oh Jung Hup as a soldier of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army exactly paralleled the growth of the army's 7th Regiment. The predecessor of the 7th Regiment was the Independent Regiment. The Independent Regiment had been composed of the companies each from Wangqing, Yanji, Helong and other counties in eastern Manchuria.

From Wangqing County it was the 7th Company that came to the regiment. The 7th Company had grown from a detachment of the Wangqing 1st Company and had become the 2nd Company of the Independent Regiment. O had been the youth instructor of the 2nd Company of the Independent Regiment. The Independent Regiment then became the 2nd Regiment of the Independent 1st Division in 1935, and when the main-force division of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was being formed after the Nanhutou meeting, it became the 7th Regiment of the division. The regiment was the nucleus of the new division. Oh Jung Hup, O Paek Ryong and Kang Jung Ryong all developed systematically, along with the development of the 7th Regiment, and became either regimental commander, company commander or platoon leader.

The majority of the soldiers of the 7th Regiment were Koreans. As I had trained Oh Jung Hup methodically from his days in Wangqing, I made sure our efforts were concentrated on his regiment. More intensive guidance was given to it than any other unit to make it a model regiment with the strongest combat efficiency in the new division. In the first place I made sure that the commanding personnel of the regiment, including platoon leaders, political instructors and company commanders, were promoted from among elite soldiers and that they were trained politically, ideologically and militarily under a far-sighted plan. We taught them everything - various types of manuals for guerrilla warfare, how to set up camp, cook meals, march, find directions, set up makeshift stages, draw up programmes for art performances and write introductory speeches for the performances.

In order to turn the regiment into a model unit, Headquarters and the cadres of the division worked extra hard. They visited the regiment frequently, teaching the officers political and military affairs and helping them to solve problems quickly and efficiently. In the course of this, the 7th Regiment became the model regiment and pride of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

We sent many soldiers who had been trained in this regiment to other units as commanding officers. When he requested military and political cadres from us, Wei Zheng-min asked for the officers of the 7th Regiment in most cases. The commanding officers who had been trained in the 7th Regiment and had transferred to other units went on to train many other officers and model combatants. The 7th Regiment played the role of a seed-bed for future political and military cadres. The Guard Company commanded by Lee Tong Hak or Park Su Man subsequently also became a model company for a large number of its members hailed from the 7th Regiment.

Because there were no regular training establishments for the revolutionary army, we had to meet the demand for cadres by continually appointing military and political personnel trained in the 7th Regiment to other units. This proved to be good practice for later, for the work method of our Party of today - that of creating a model and generalizing it across the country - is based on the experience we gained during the anti-Japanese revolution.

Many of the military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army were produced by the 7th Regiment, among them Oh Jung Hup, Kim Ju Hyon, Lee Tong Hak, Lee Tong Gol, O Paek Ryong, Kim Thae Hwan, Choe Il Hyon, O Il Nam, Son Thae Chun, Kang Hung Sok and Kang Jung Ryong. The political instructor of a company of the 7th Regiment was a man nicknamed "Wet Eyes". I think I remember his surname was Choe, but I cannot remember his full name. He had this nickname because his eyes always looked as if they were brimming with moisture. He fought bravely but fell in action along with Kim San Ho in the Battle of Xiaotanghe. Choe Il Hyon was a man I intended to appoint as the commander of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, to be organized in northern Korea. Kim Thae Hwan, company commander, was also an intelligent man.

It seems to me that a strong commander is emulated by his subordinates - a regimental commander by his company commanders, a company commander by his platoon leaders, and a platoon leader or a squad leader by his men. People will resemble their leaders in personality and character in spite of themselves. I

should say that the 7th Regiment became a steel-like unit because it totally resembled Oh Jung Hup. The commanders and men of other units quite envied O's 7th Regiment.

Cao Guo-an, a division commander of the Chinese 1st Corps, while living with our unit for some time in the Paektusan Base, asked me for a clever man, an efficient machine-gunner. Cao was coveting Kang Jung Ryong, a machine-gunner and a renowned platoon leader in the 7th Regiment. Kang was Park Rok Gum's husband. I asked him if he wanted to go to the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps, but he flatly refused. At first I thought he refused to go because he hated parting from his wife, but I found this was not the reason after hearing his explanation. He said that he could bear the thought of parting from his wife, but he hated leaving me and Oh Jung Hup's 7th Regiment. He was quite attached to Oh Jung Hup. The two men were childhood friends in Wangqing and fought shoulder to shoulder from their days with the Wangqing 1st Company.

O Paek Ryong, too, said that he would not leave the 7th Regiment led by Oh Jung Hup when he was appointed to the 8th Regiment as a machine-gunner. You can guess from these two facts the degree of popularity Oh Jung Hup enjoyed. The men of the 7th Regiment had a strong attachment for their unit and a strong esprit de corps. We sent those who made mistakes or who lacked political and military qualifications to the 7th Regiment for training.

At the secret camp near Xintaizi, Linjiang County, the leader of a machine-gun platoon committed a mistake in 1938. He also had poor qualifications. We attached him temporarily to the 4th Company of the 7th Regiment. When sending him to Oh Jung Hup's regiment, I said to him, "A leader who does not know how to take responsibility for his men is not qualified for his post. He can perform his duties properly only when he really feels the suffering his mistakes bring down upon his men. You'd better learn and train yourself more in the 7th Regiment."

When he returned to his original post after his stint with the 7th Regiment, he had become a different man, thanks to the help of Oh Jung Hup. The 7th Regiment was the most efficient combat unit in the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. That was why Headquarters always assigned to this regiment the most urgent and responsible tasks. The regiment bore the brunt of all attacks launched by the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

Both on the march and in bivouac I would assign the duty of acting as rear guard to the regiment with the highest combat efficiency and strongest sense of responsibility. The rear guard was extremely important to the life of the guerrilla army, which was always threatened with pursuit and surprise attack by the enemy.

When bivouacking, we used to post the most efficient unit as rear guard about 300 to 500 meters away from Headquarters, or sometimes at a distance of one or two kilometers. Sentries or watches were posted at regular intervals between Headquarters and the rear guard. According to our experience, the enemy's "punitive" forces preferred the tactic of pursuit rather than the method of ambush or frontal attack. This was why we posted the unit with the highest combat efficiency to bring up the rear.

When bivouacking at Chongbong on our way to the Musan area in the spring of 1939 we kept the 7th Regiment in the rear. The men of the regiment did not make a campfire at night so as not to expose itself to the enemy. Nevertheless, they never complained about their hardship or fatigue.

I have stressed since the early days of the Korean People's Army that it should regard Oh Jung Hup as its model. This means emulating him. Already in the early 1960s Comrade Kim Jong Il emphasized that the KPA should study and imitate the 7th Regiment. In his childhood he had heard a great deal about Oh Jung Hup and his 7th Regiment. What, then, should cadres, Party members and the soldiers of the KPA learn from Oh Jung Hup and his 7th Regiment?

His merits can be analyzed in various ways, but the most important of all his merits was his unfailing loyalty to the revolution. How was his loyalty to the revolution expressed? It found its strongest expression in his loyalty to his Commander. First of all he was faithful to all my ideas and policies, accepting all I said about the communist movement and national liberation movement of Korea as absolutely correct and studying my words in depth. He defended my ideas without reserve anywhere, under any circumstances, and fought staunchly against any practices that ran counter to these ideas. He regarded my ideas and policies on military operations as supreme laws. No divergent ideas could find room in his mind, they made no sense to him. A man sound in ideology does not become corrupt even in unhealthy surroundings.

As the regimental commander himself was sound, his soldiers also all breathed the same air with me. His faithfulness to the revolution found its expression in his spirit of implementing his Commander's orders and instructions without question and with a high sense of responsibility. He carried them out accurately, perfectly and without fail. However onerous they might be, he did not utter a word of discontent or complaint. Having carried out my orders, he reported the results to me without fail and reviewed the defects revealed during their implementation, hiding nothing.

Another of his traits that our officials today should study in his attitude towards the Commander's orders and instructions was that immediately after carrying out one task, he used to ask for another. He hated hanging around and would find something else to do as soon as he'd finished one thing. To use our present-day parlance, he was a man of continuous innovation and continuous advance. Another reason why the 7th Regiment undertook harder tasks than other regiments was that Oh Jung Hup, the regimental commander, was such a willing worker.

He was a commanding officer of unusual character in that he was happier when given a difficult task than when carrying out an easy assignment. His loyalty to the revolution and his Commander also found expression in his fearless defense of his Commander, not only politically and ideologically but also with his life. For my safety he plunged himself and his regiment into combat as if they were human bullets, and he did not hesitate to commit himself, no matter how hard-fought the battle. When I was leading a tough battle in command of Lee Tu Su's company against hundreds of enemy troops in Hongtoushan, Oh Jung Hup, who was on a combat mission far away, raided the enemy camp like lightning, saying that he was worried about my safety. With their rear under fire, the remaining enemy were forced to flee. I was

much obliged to Oh Jung Hup at that time.

When fighting near Manjiang it was Oh Jung Hup and his 7th Regiment that shielded me with their bodies as I commanded the withdrawal of my unit. They did the same during the Battle of Duantoushan. While Headquarters withdrew with hundreds of enemy troops at its heels, the 7th Regiment brought up the rear to cover the withdrawal.

His exceptional loyalty to his Commander manifested itself most intensely in the period of the Arduous March. During the first days of the march he defended Headquarters by using our zigzag tactic for an entire fortnight, withstanding the immense pressure of fighting a nonstop rear-guard action.

As I mentioned on a previous occasion, at the far end of Qidaogou during the march I judged that a large-unit movement was disadvantageous, so we switched over to dispersed actions. Oh Jung Hup, taking leave of me at that time, volunteered to act as a decoy Headquarters and lure away the enemy by trekking the steep Longjiang and Changbai mountains for two months or so. The 7th Regiment went through a lot of trouble, but thanks to this ploy, Headquarters was less harassed by the enemy for quite some time.

When parting with Headquarters at the end of Qidaogou, his regiment didn't have as much as a grain of rice. In order to obtain provisions, they needed to be close to inhabited areas. Nevertheless, Oh Jung Hup set his march route through Jiayuhe, the plateau in Sidengfang, the western fringe of Hongtoushan and the northern Shuangchatou to Deshuigou. This route traverses through unmapped areas no better than a desert. The only signs of habitation were huts used by charcoal burners. One wrong step in these areas and a man would end up in a labyrinth of ice and snow and never get out alive.

Nevertheless, Oh Jung Hup chose this immensely dangerous route while devoid of provisions in order to lure away the enemy who was tailing Headquarters. At first they raided a lumber yard, captured some cattle and horses and ate the meat. But after entering the deep mountains they could no longer obtain food. The only thing edible was snow, I was told.

One day, realizing that the enemy was no longer pursuing his regiment, he appealed to his men, saying, "I'm afraid the enemy may have realized that we are not Headquarters. If that's true, we have been suffering in vain. We must find out the enemy at all costs and get them back on our tail. Follow me." With his Mauser in his hand he went several kilometers back the way they had traversed, going through all sorts of hardships and raiding the enemy camp. This brought the enemy back on the tail of the regiment.

From then on the regiment would backtrack and harass the enemy whenever it did not follow. After this, the enemy would trail after the regiment just like a bull calf led by its nose ring. Having run out of food again at one point, the regiment boiled down the hide of a cow the Japanese soldiers had thrown away after eating its meat. The regiment continued its march and celebrated the lunar New Year's Day of that year, eating frozen potatoes. While eating them, Oh Jung Hup still worried about us, saying, "We are eating here on the mountain, even though it's only this kind of food, but I wonder what kind of food

Headquarters has managed to find?"

He encouraged his hungry, exhausted men by saying, "We've seen nothing but hardship day in, day out, for ten years, but good times will come after the hard times. Imagine the day we return to our liberated motherland in triumph after defeating the Japanese imperialists. What can be more worthwhile and glorious than that for Koreans? We must not forget that this trying march is directly linked to the liberated motherland. That's what Commander Kim Il Sung said. We've all got to keep going for the safety of Headquarters."

Oh Jung Hup was a man of this type. He fought with a large fireball in his heart. The fireball was his burning enthusiasm for the revolution, and the core of his enthusiasm was none other than loyalty to his Commander.

I emphasize again that the 7th Regiment had this one characteristic: that every one of its men and officers thought first of the safety of Headquarters, no matter where they were or what the situation was. Its most militant traits both in life and in combat were to treasure the Commander's orders as they would do their own lives and to carry them out with the greatest efficiency. Not only were they more sensitive to the intentions of Headquarters than others, but they also carried out these intentions more perseveringly and with greater devotion once they had understood the aim of Headquarters.

Lee Kwon Haeng, who died while shielding me from enemy bullets with his body, was a member of the 7th Regiment, as were O Il Nam, Son Thae Chun and Kim Hyok Chol, who laid down their lives while implementing the orders of Headquarters.

Oh Jung Hup, Choe Il Hyon and Kang Hung Sok dedicated their lives to the defense of Headquarters and to my great regret fell in the Battle of Liukesong. This is why my heart is heavy whenever I look back upon the Battle of Liukesong. Of course, we fought the battle with good tactics, but we lost three precious commanding officers there.

At 10 o'clock that night Oh Jung Hup led the attack on the enemy barracks at Liukesong at the head of his 7th Regiment and Hwang Jong Hae's unit. They were the main force of attack. I don't know why, but I did not tell him that day to take care of himself. He was not the sort of man to listen to such words of precaution anyway. He was always at the forefront of the most difficult attacks. Immediately after committing his 7th Regiment and Hwang Jong Hae's unit to action, I ordered the 8th Regiment to push into the lumber mill to conduct political work among the workers and to capture provisions and other supplies from the enemy's munitions store.

Leading the penetration party, Oh Jung Hup climbed over the wooden fence, cut through the barbed wire entanglements and ordered his men to charge. The regiment occupied the forts and barracks at lightning speed without giving the enemy time to collect its forces. The hard-pressed enemy soldiers hid themselves in a passage dug under the barracks. Oh Jung Hup immediately gave the order to make a fire at the entrances of the underground passage. As smoke began to blow into the entrance, the enemy

soldiers crawled outside on all fours, unable to bear it any longer.

Just as victory was in sight, we were dealt a tragic blow. As Oh Jung Hup led the search, the enemy still hiding in the underground passage shot him. His orderly, Kim Chol Man, was also wounded. The remaining enemy soldiers put up a desperate resistance, and Choe IL Hyon and Kang Hung Sok, two highly efficient officers of the 7th Regiment, then lost their lives. Oh Jung Hup, fatally wounded, also died that day to our deep sorrow. The man who had fought so devotedly for the revolution, treading a rocky road all through his life, died in this way.

All through the anti-Japanese armed struggle I had constantly stressed to my men that they should take particular care at the concluding stage of a battle. Accidents frequently happened at the last moment. We lost three precious comrades-in-arms in this battle in the last five minutes. Apparently Oh Jung Hup was somewhat off his guard on this occasion. He seems to have been too confident, as the battle situation was favorable to us and the enemy soldiers were surrendering, unable to endure the smoke of the burning cotton.

By nature, Oh Jung Hup was a careful man. He lived a flawless life and fought with good strategy. He was more vigilant than any other officer. I don't know why he did not foresee the fact that some of the enemy might still be under his feet. In the first place the scouts had not reconnoitered the interior of the enemy barracks closely enough. If they had scouted it carefully, such an accident would not have taken place. It was a great pity. When the wounded Kim Chol Man came to me and reported, crying bitterly, the news of Oh Jung Hup's death. I could not believe my ears at first. As I ascertained the brutal fact, I almost lost my mind and rushed to the enemy barracks, shouting, "Who killed Oh Jung Hup? I can't forgive him!"

I was accustomed to suppressing my feelings in front of my men, no matter how excruciating the pain, but that day I could not endure it. How dearly had I loved him! Even to think of it now, I still tremble. That day we killed a large number of enemy soldiers and captured lots of booty, but it meant nothing to me. Never had my men felt such acute heartache as they did at the time.

At the order to withdraw, we left Liukesong carrying the bodies of our dead comrades-in-arms. Hundreds were marching, shedding tears; I could not hear a single word being spoken. We held a memorial service in bitter grief. I stepped forward to deliver a memorial address, but I could not see or speak properly, as tears blurred my vision and I felt a heavy oppression in my chest. I never shed tears in the face of difficulties, but I can shed more tears than anybody in the face of grief.

The Battle of Liukesong was of great importance. It threw the enemy's second-stage "punitive" operations into confusion, and our unit laid a basis for winning victory in the first stage of the large-unit circling operations. As we shot off our guns in the backwoods of Dunhua, while the enemy was concentrating his forces, looking for us in the areas along the Tuman River northeast of Mt. Paektu, they could not but be dumbfounded.

At the Battle of Liukesong the 7th Regiment, the backbone of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, again fought well. It was an invincible unit that could be called steel-like for its toughness. Its growth to be a match-for-a-hundred unit should be attributed to Oh Jung Hup, the commander of the regiment. Because he was a loyal man and a famous officer, the 7th Regiment became a strong force. I cannot forget Oh Jung Hup any more than I can forget Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su. Oh Jung Hup was my revolutionary comrade-in-arms and at the same time the man who many times saved my life. His regiment was a bullet-proof wall, an impregnable fortress, in that it could be absolutely relied upon to defend the Headquarters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army from the incessant attacks and provocations of the enemy.

After Oh Jung Hup was killed in action, I treasured and loved my men even more dearly. And I trained them to broaden their vision to the maximum and to behave prudently in battle to prevent as much loss as possible. Nevertheless, nothing I did could make up for the loss of Oh Jung Hup. People say that it was I who transformed him into an excellent revolutionary, but they should not think this was the only reason. We need to give deeper thought to transforming entire families along revolutionary lines, keeping Oh Jung Hup in mind as an example.

The family of O Thae Hui was considered to be first in the whole region of Jiandao, including Wangqing, as a patriotic and revolutionary family. Almost every member of this family took part in the anti-Japanese revolution. About 20 of them were killed while operating as underground workers or as soldiers of the People's Revolutionary Army. This figure alone shows how patriotic the members of the O family were. Oh Jung Hup became such a stalwart fighter for the revolution mainly because in his boyhood he had received proper education from the senior members of his family.

Many young men from this family would grow to be tough revolutionaries, thanks to the painstaking efforts taken by their four seniors to steer them to the correct course in their life's journey. The four seniors - O Thae Hui, O Song Hui, O Chang Hui and O Jong Hui - were brothers. The Os paid deep attention to the education of their offspring. They gave them effective moral education, which then served as a solid basis for the education in patriotism and the anti-Japanese revolutionary education they were to get later. Though living in poverty, the family attached great importance to the education of its children and made special effort to send them all to school.

Ten men from the family finished middle school, but none of them took to careerism or officialdom; they all became revolutionaries. Here Oh Jung Hwa played the greatest role, transforming the family into a revolutionary group with great efficiency. When we went to Wangqing after the expeditions to southern and northern Manchuria, all the young and middle-aged men and women of the O family were already enlisted in revolutionary organizations.

Oh Jung Hup's family was the poorest of the Os, so they were revolutionized sooner. Oh Jung Hup was the first to transform himself into a revolutionary, and then his younger brothers and the rest of the family followed. Oh Jung Hup and his two younger brothers all fought as military or political cadres of regiments and battalions, and they all fell in battle.



When conducting small-unit operations in the area of Luozigou in the summer of 1941, I was in touch with O Chang Hui, Oh Jung Hup's father, and Park Tok Sim, Park Kil Song's father. In those days the Os were living in Luozigou. When I looked down at the Os' house from the mountain through binoculars, I could see them coming into the yard through the brushwood gate, carrying piles of firewood on A-frames. Even in Luozigou they lived like a family that had sent its children to the revolutionary army. At that time I had Kim Il form a secret organization of the guerrillas' families in Luozigou, with O Chang Hui and Park Tok Sim at the center.

When I advanced to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu during the days of small-unit operations, I received much help from O Chang Hui. With the old man's help I crossed the border and went to Kyongwon (the present-day Saeppyo) to form revolutionary organizations there.

The Os were truly a revolutionary family, one that should be recorded in the history books. I often think how good it would be if Oh Jung Hup were still alive. If he had been here, many 7th Regiment-type units would have been produced in our country.

## 21.5. The Man from Pyongahn Province

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As I am reminded of the man from Pyongan Province, whom I met at Liukesong, I shall talk about him a little. When we were on our way to camp after the memorial service for Oh Jung Hup, my orderly came to me and told me that a stranger had followed the unit from Liukesong, asking to see me.

During the anti-Japanese armed struggle I never sent away people who had come to see me without meeting them. However busy I was, I made time for them all. Meeting people from the enemy area or from the homeland was a delightful event in our life of guerrilla warfare. Nevertheless, I did not feel like meeting any visitors that night because I was too full of grief and anger over the loss of Oh Jung Hup in the Battle of Liukesong. Worse still, I had also lost Choe Il Hyon and Kang Hung Sok. I did not feel like eating or talking. Oh Jung Hup was my right-hand man and his death left me in great mental shock.

Saying that I did not feel like meeting any one that night, I told my orderly to obtain the visitor's understanding and send him back. The orderly was quite embarrassed. He said that although he had tried to reason with him several times, the visitor had insisted that he was a close acquaintance of General Kim Il Sung's and that he would like to see the General, even if it was for a minute to say hello. Listening to the orderly, I felt it quite strange. I had no acquaintances in Liukesong, I was a stranger there.

My orderly took me to the visitor, a middle-aged man with a knapsack on his back. Though he had said he knew me well, I could not remember where I might have met him. But as soon as he saw me, the man seized me by the hand and said, "It's me. The man from Pyongahn Province." Now I remembered. One year, as my unit was marching through a forest, we came across a burned-down house in a remote valley. At the site of the house, still smoking, a middle-aged man carrying a boy on his back was sobbing bitterly. After calming him down, I asked him what had happened.

The man explained that while he had been away cutting wood for fuel on the mountain a few hours ago, the enemy's "punitive" force had set fire to his house and shot his wife and children. He added that the boy on his back had escaped death only because he had climbed the mountain in search of his father. When I heard his story I could not suppress my fury. I made up my mind to take revenge, and asked him how many enemy soldiers there had been and how long it was since they had left. He replied that they numbered about 40 and that it was only half an hour since they left. I said to my men, "Look at what monsters the Japanese are! An innocent family murdered like this."

I asked them what they thought we should do. They answered that we should go after the Japanese to avenge the family. They then argued with each other as to who should have the chance to go. I selected 50 agile men from the volunteers and sent them after the enemy. Our group annihilated the enemy just as they were setting up camp.

Before we left the burned-down house, I offered the man 50 yuan, saying, "To help you out we would

like to build a new house for you, but I have only this money to give you. Go to some other place with this money and make a new life. Let's meet again when our motherland is liberated." Fifty yuan was not a small sum. One could buy an ox with it. At that time one *nal* (7.5 kg) of millet cost only 30 yen.

The man said, "I lived in Pyongan Province in Korea in the past and came to West Jiandao, China, because I heard it was a good place to live. And now I'm faced with this disaster. I won't forget what I owe you, even in my grave. Will you please let me know your name before parting?"

He wanted to know my name so earnestly that my men told him. As I heard that he hailed from Pyongahn Province, I felt even greater sympathy with him, for we were from the same province. A considerable number of Koreans living in Manchuria came from Pyongahn Province, but the majority lived in southern Manchuria. In Jiandao there were not many people from the province.

I once called on a family in West Jiandao who were from Pyongahn Province. They offered me some tiny, pickled shrimps. I asked them where they had obtained pickled shrimps in Manchuria. The host replied that his daughter-in-law had been to her maiden home. That day I ate green maize with pickled shrimps with great relish. As I had spent my childhood in western Korea, I specially loved pickled shrimps.

After witnessing the tragedy of the man from Pyongahn Province, who had lost the three members of his family in a single day, I could not repress my rage at the enemy. Though I had given him some money before parting from him, I did not feel light-hearted, and I left the place reluctantly as I thought about the grief and pain he was going through. I was worried about how he would live now, with a young son who would be pining for his mother. Though our hearts ached for him, we had to take leave of him. The world seems wide, but it can also be small. I would never have expected to see the man from Pyongahn Province in the backwoods of Dunhua, a man I had met for only a few minutes in a nameless valley.

But for the loss of Oh Jung Hup. I would have been delighted by the encounter. As I was in bitter grief over the loss of my comrades-in-arms, however, I was not in a mood to greet the welcome visitor with joy. Repressing my grief, I asked him how come he had appeared in Liukesong and why he wanted to see me at night. He gave an account of his life after he had parted from us: he came to Liukesong with his son, got a job and took a second wife. He had managed to get along so far.

He continued, "It's thanks to you, General, that my son and I were able to remain alive. But for your 50 yuan, we might have become beggars and died of hunger. While working in the mountains, felling trees, I bought one *mal* of rice and have been looking forward earnestly to seeing you again. And I have prayed to God that you would visit this place." The man was obviously fully aware of his obligations to his fellow man and never forgot what he owed others.

From the one *mal* of rice I could sense people's warm love for our revolutionary army and the purity of their devotion and obligation. I also resolved to pull myself together and face up to my grief with courage. For the sake of people like this man, I would take revenge on the enemy a hundredfold, even a

thousand fold. That night I could not talk with him for very long. We were in a hurry, and the man also told me he was not in a position to hang around. He left us, shedding tears, and I, too, saw him off with a heavy heart.

I did not hear from him again until after the country was liberated. Immediately after liberation, I met him in Sinuiju. This would probably be in November 1945, since it was at a time when a student unrest had taken place in Sinuiju. The student unrest broke out in Tong Middle School. The students, spurred on by reactionaries, raided the building of the Provincial Party Committee. There was no knowing how the incident would develop unless it was brought under control in time. Local authorities said only Kim Il Sung could save the situation, so I went to Sinuiju by plane. Tong Middle School had produced many patriots. The Rev. Hong Tong Gun had probably studied in this school. But the students here had been mostly under the influence of nationalist ideology in the days before liberation. Filled with anti-communist ideas against a background of wrongdoings by sham communists, these students flared up and raided the building of the Provincial Party Committee.

In Sinuiju I gathered the people and students in the playground of the middle school and made a speech. Listening to my speech, the students realized that they had foolishly played into the hands of the reactionaries and that to oppose the Communist Party would harm both the building of a new country and the unity of the nation. After this, they never again caused an unrest.

When I was about to go back to my quarters after the speech, the man from Pyongahn Province whom I had taken leave of in Liukesong came up to me suddenly. He told me he had attended the mass rally that day. We hugged each other delightedly like old friends in front of many people. I introduced him to the cadres who accompanied me, explaining that I had seen him after the Battle of Liukesong and how I had got acquainted with him. A man who does good things makes friends with good people, and after parting from them, he is bound to see them again.

The ancient people often talked of "three beneficial friends" and "three harmful friends". By the former they meant honest, reliable and learned friends whose company is highly beneficial. By the latter they meant eccentric, talkative, good-natured but fainthearted people who should be avoided.

As this is a saying of the ancient, we cannot say it is perfectly right, but it does define helpful friends and harmful friends with relative accuracy. I am afraid if you might think I'm going too far in defining a man I met only for a short while on a march according to one of these two categories.

Nevertheless, the man was without doubt a good and reliable man. This kind of person always does good. You can easily see that he is an honest and trustworthy man from the mere fact that he came to see me, bringing rice, when he heard that I was in Liukesong. I don't know how learned he was. Since he lived in the remote mountains, how much knowledge would he have had, if any?

Anyhow he was a good man who could be placed in the category of the "three beneficial friends". People who value obligation, who do not forget even small debts and who return human feeling with human

feeling are all good people.

I told the man that now the country was liberated we could see each other as we pleased. I asked him to come to see me any time and to consider me his old friend. Strangely enough, we again had to part in haste. I was busy, and the man did not try to take up my time. I met the man three times in unusual circumstances and parted in haste each time, so I failed to ask him for his name and home town.

In the last few months of 1945 every Korean was elated by the country's liberation and as busy as never before in his life. I was also very busy with the work of nation-building. This being the situation, I failed to have a long talk with him, the man with whom I had formed such an extraordinary relationship. Looking back on it now, I feel Sorry.

The little boy who had been on his back when he was weeping over the loss of his wife and children and home - if he is still alive, he must be over 60 by now. How good it would have been if I had found out his name!

I don't know why the man did not come to see me since parting with me in Sinuiju. There were many casualties in Sinuiju during the war, because of the US air raids. If he continued to live there, he might have been killed by the bombing. How many people submitted their recollections to you about the Battle of Liukesong? Isn't there a man among them who might be the man from Pyongahn Province? I truly regret that I did not meet him again before the war. There is no knowing how long he lived, but he must have done many things helpful to the country in his lifetime.

As I said before, meeting people from the rubble and take it to hospital. After hearing this, I thought that I had to see him however busy I was. I couldn't get to sleep thinking about how sorry he would be if he failed to meet me. I had been told that the group was going to Mangyongdae next day, so I arranged time to go there myself just to greet the man together with my grandfather. Since my grandfather and Kim Chi Bom were both peasants, they could have a good understanding of each other, I thought.

Next morning I went to Mangyongdae with a gift for Kim. Laying aside everything, I waited for him in my old home with my grandfather. But on that day, too, Kim failed to appear at the appointed time. I asked my grandfather to welcome the man in my place, then returned to my office in Cabinet. He failed to arrive on time that morning because, as luck would have it, his group had been caught in an enemy air raid near Phaltong Bridge.

As I had requested, my grandfather met him and handed my gift over to him. After sightseeing in Pyongyang, Kim returned to Seoul and supported our battle front with great enthusiasm. All his family carried goods and ammunition to the front for us. They also nursed the wounded soldiers of the Korean People's Army. I don't know what happened to him later on. He was around 60 years old when he was in Pyongyang as a member of the visiting group, so if he is still alive he must be well over 100 by now.

Had it not been for the urgent matters that demanded my attention at that time, I could have met him. The

fact that I didn't still rankles my mind. It was fortunate that my grandfather met him in my place. Otherwise, it would really have been disappointing. "A man who does good things makes friends with good people" - one must do many good things oneself. A man who fails to do good for his country and collective, for his comrades and neighbors, will fail to have good friends.

The man from Pyongahn Province is a friend I made in the course of fighting for the freedom and happiness of the people. I definitely consider him a friend. Still vivid before my mind's eye are my images of him, weeping in despair in the yard of his destroyed home with his son on his back, and later in Liukesong, when he came to see me, carrying a knapsack full of rice on his back.

## 21.6. "Let Us Defend the Soviet Union with Arms!"

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The Soviet Union, which had established a people's government for workers and peasants, the first of its kind in the world, and had eradicated the exploitation of man by man, was an ideal society for humanity heading for socialism and social progress. In the past, communists and revolutionary people throughout the world gave their selfless support to the struggle to defend these ideals and this land. The red flag of the Soviet Union bearing the emblem of the hammer and sickle was permeated with the warm blood of the heroic Soviet people and that of internationalist fighters everywhere.

Each time the Soviet Union was faced with a military threat, the soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army dealt hard blows at the Japanese imperialists from behind the lines under the slogan of "Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!" Quite a few of our men fell in battle to check the Japanese advance on the Soviet Union.

Communists must have a correct understanding of the relationship between national revolution and world revolution. In the past some people argued that for communists to be concerned with their national revolution was contrary to the principles of Marxism, while others contended that for Korean patriots to talk of the Soviet revolution or world revolution before achieving Korean independence was a form of treachery. Such Leftist and Rightist interpretations of the relationship between national revolution and world revolution caused a fair amount of ideological confusion and antagonism at one time in the revolutionary movement in our country.

When we created the slogan "Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!" during our armed struggle against the Japanese, a number of people did not welcome it. They said that it would give the nationalists an excuse to speak ill of the communists. Propaganda by Japanese imperialists and their lackeys often warned Koreans against falling "victim to the Soviet Union" or becoming "Stalin's scapegoats".

When we suggested fighting in support of the Soviet Union, people who had no true idea of internationalism considered it to be a futile sacrifice.

We fought in support of the Soviet people at the cost of our blood and in spite of our own arduous revolution under the slogan of "Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!" simply because the situation at the time required it. In those days the Soviet Union was in complete isolation, encircled as it was by the imperialists on all sides.

For all communists to defend the Soviet Union was under the circumstances essential to the interests of the revolution, as well as a moral necessity. From the outset of our armed struggle against the Japanese, therefore, we strongly supported and defended the Soviet Union under the banner of proletarian internationalism.

It was not only the 1930s that witnessed the Korean struggle to support and defend the Soviet Union; the support was there even in the 1920s.

Hong Bom Do was not a communist in his early years, but he did not reject the communist movement. Even though he had started his patriotic activities with the nationalist movement in Korea, he did not confine his activities to this movement alone, nor did he consider the nationalist movement as absolute.

After the March First Popular Uprising in 1919, many of the Korean independence campaigners crossed into Soviet Russia, took up arms and fought there. In the Russian civil war they fought in the Red Army and the Far East guerrilla army, shedding their blood to safeguard the Soviet government. Hong Bom Do was one of these fighters. He distinguished himself in the war and even met Lenin.

In the early 1920s the Japanese imperialists carried out ceaseless armed intervention in the Russian Far East in support of the White army. At that time a Communist Party organization in the Russian Far East requested support from Hong Bom Do, who was active in Russia's Maritime Territory. On hearing this, some high-ranking officers of the Independence Army declared that it was foolish for Koreans to shed blood for others when they were unable to solve their own problems. Hong Bom Do, however, was willing to help the Red Army even if it meant shedding Korean blood; he said that any army fighting against the Japanese was his friend.

Of all the battles Hong Bom Do fought, the most famous was the Battle of Irnan on the Ussuri River. His Independence Army fought so courageously in that battle that after it was over, the Japanese and the White armies were said to have trembled and run away at the mere sound of Korean words of command.



*Photo: Hong Bom Do's grave in a former Soviet Republic.*

A long time ago the Soviet people set up a monument to the soldiers who fell in the Battle of Irnan. This fact alone shows the long history of the ties between the Korean and Soviet peoples in their joint struggle.

Hong Bom Do said to his men: "The Soviet Union is the first proletarian republic in the world, so we must both help her and be helped by her. Fighting single-handed, she must be plagued with a host of difficulties. Let us help her sincerely." How thoughtful he was, compared to those who boasted of their knowledge about the world.

Judging from the movements of the Kwangtung Army, which was standing face to face with the Red Army on the Soviet-Manchurian border, we could see clearly how frantic the imperialists were in their attempts to stifle the Soviet Union in those



days. From 1932 to 1939 the Japanese imperialists provoked nearly 1,000 border clashes, big and small, including the well-known incident of Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol. This meant that they provoked an armed conflict every few days. Not a single day passed without gun-smoke rising somewhere on the Soviet-Manchurian border.

The hostile relations between the Soviet Union and Japan had historical roots. As is widely known, Russia and Japan had a war between 1904 and 1905, with the result that Russia lost many concessions and a wide territory to Japan.

After the October Revolution the imperialist powers, particularly Japan, launched armed interventions against the new Soviet Republic. Japan sent its army to Siberia for overt armed intervention in support of the Whites.

I have been told that the most vicious and atrocious among the imperialist armies to invade Soviet Russia was the Japanese army. The Japanese aggressors soaked the Maritime Territory in blood. It was around that time that the Japanese army captured Lazo, commander of a guerrilla army, and killed him by throwing him into the furnace of a locomotive. Even after the armies of the United States, Britain and France had been driven out by the Red Army, the Japanese army continued its atrocities, bringing in reinforcements. Since their triumph over Russia and the Chinese Qing Dynasty in previous wars, the Japanese imperialists had become infected with megalomania. So elated were they with their success, they convinced themselves that there was no country and no army equal to theirs. Whenever a major international dispute broke out, the Japanese imperialists came sniffing around to bite off what they could.

Antagonism between the Soviet Union and Japan came to the surface with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. When Japan provoked the July 7 incident, the Soviet Union supported China, and from that moment on the Soviet-Japanese relations went downhill. In August 1937, the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with China. It then closed some offices of its consulate in the area under the jurisdiction of Japan and demanded that Japan do the same. With the passage of time tensions between the Soviet Union and Japan mounted.

To make matters worse, in January 1938 the Japanese authorities detained a Soviet plane that had made an emergency landing in Manchuria, and this incident strained the Soviet-Japanese relations even further. It was easy to see that the antagonism and tension between them could lead to a local conflict, or even all-out war.

At their "five ministers' meeting" in August 1936, the Japanese adopted a state policy of aggression against the Soviet Union. The meeting confirmed their plan for war against the Soviet Union, in which they would reinforce their armies in Manchuria and Korea so as to annihilate the Soviet armed forces in the Far East at the very outset of the conflict. On the eve of the Second World War Nazi Germany planned what they called their "Barbarossa" operation against the Soviet Union, whereas the Japanese military actually anticipated Germany by planning their "Otsu" operation first. Japan was one step ahead of Germany in wanting to get its hands on the Soviet Union, so to speak.

In Japan's Programme for the Settlement of Border Disputes Between Manchuria and the Soviet Union, Ueda, the commander of the Kwangtung Army, instructed that in areas where the line marking the boundary

was not clear, the field commander should define the boundary line on his own, and that if clashes occurred, he should ensure unconditional victory regardless of troop strength or existing boundaries. The Soviet Union was in imminent danger of being forced into an all-out war by Japan's reckless armed provocations on the border.

Such brigandage on the part of the Japanese against the USSR infuriated us. Our determination to support the Soviet Union by force of arms was a manifestation of comradeship quite natural to the Korean communists, who had been fighting bloody battles almost daily against the Kwangtung army.

To us, who were fighting for socialism, the Soviet Union with its worker-peasant government was literally a paradise. We found it a marvel that a society existed in which parasitic oppressors and exploiters had been overthrown. We therefore resolved to help protect the Soviet Union even if it meant shedding our own blood.

Just as they had sown discord between the Korean and Chinese people, the Japanese imperialists now pursued the policy of driving a wedge between the Korean and Soviet people. At one point they formed a border-guard company, made up mainly of young pro-Japanese Koreans from Hunchun, and posted it in the border area between the Soviet Union and Manchuria as a way of pitting it against the Soviet people. They even saw to it that a bonus in the name of the Manchukuo military governor was given to the soldiers of that company.

Meanwhile, the Japanese imperialists unleashed a rumor that they had trained many secret agents from among the Korean residents in Jiandao and smuggled them into the Soviet Union. This had a very poisonous effect in that it made the Soviet people hate Koreans and give a wide berth to them.

When we were operating in the guerrilla zone at Xiaowangqing, some comrades from the Hunchun regiment told me that such wedge-driving moves by the Japanese imperialists greatly aggravated the relations between their regiment and the Soviet border guard. They said that one company commander, unaware of the change in the attitude of the Soviet people towards Koreans, had tried to contact the Soviets according to the former procedure, only to be nearly arrested by them.

In the summer of 1938, rumor had it that a high-ranking official in the Soviet Far East Home Affairs Commissariat had defected to Japan, via Hunchun.

In the middle of the 1930s measures were taken to move the Korean residents in the Soviet Far East to Central Asia en masse. The Soviets explained that the collective emigration of Koreans from the eastern areas to either Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan was a measure that was necessary for their own safety and defense, but the Korean people did not welcome it. At the news, I also felt our ruined nation's sorrow to the very marrow of my bones. Nevertheless, we continued to hold high the banner of defense of the Soviet Union for the sake of the greater cause.

All the battles we fought in the Soviet-Manchurian border areas were carried out on our own initiative to assist the Soviet Union, even though we knew that these battles were tactically disadvantageous to us.

In those days we had neither signed a treaty of military cooperation with the Soviet Union, nor had we been

requested by the Soviet Union for assistance, as Hong Bom Do's unit had been. All those military actions were decided by us on our own, motivated by our comradely feeling for the Soviet Union and our hatred for the common enemy, Japanese imperialism. A good illustration of our soldiers' enthusiasm for defending the Soviet Union can be seen in their efforts in the winter of 1934 to rescue a Soviet pilot whose aircraft had been swept away in a gale during training and had crash-landed in Hulin, Manchuria.

Park Kwang Son played a leading role in the rescue operation. Right at that time he was working not far from Hulin with Yu Yang's Chinese anti-Japanese army unit as an operative from the liaison office of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. The day the Soviet plane crashed on the shore of the Ussuri River, more than 50 stout young Koreans had just joined Yu Yang's unit. It was an eventful day, I was As soon as he witnessed the crash, Park Kwang Son dashed into the liaison office and appealed to his comrades-in-arms to rescue the Soviet pilot. In the meantime the Japanese were swarming to capture the pilot as well.

The small force of guerrillas fought a life-and-death battle against 100-odd enemy troops who were firing machine-guns and even small-caliber artillery pieces. The soldiers of Yu Yang's unit, who had been on their way to attack an enemy convoy, joined the guerrillas in the battle.

The Soviet pilot was standing by his plane helplessly, unable to distinguish friend from foe. Park Kwang Son shouted at him in Korean to come on over quickly and not be afraid, but the pilot, not comprehending, fired his pistol at the guerrillas instead, taking them for the enemy.

To Park Kwang Son's relief the perplexing situation was straightened out by a Korean who had been working with the Chinese soldiers of Yu Yang's anti-Japanese unit. The man shouted to the pilot in fluent Russian to come towards them, saying they were the revolutionary army. Only then did the Soviet pilot begin to crawl towards them to be rescued.

The efforts of the guerrillas to ensure the safety of the Soviet pilot and to bring him back to health were valiant indeed. In those days they themselves were nearly starving for want of even maize gruel. However, for the Soviet pilot they attacked the enemy's convoy and obtained flour, with which they made bread for him, and hunted wild boar to provide him with meat. And in the midst of the cold winter they went fishing in the Ussuri, breaking the ice.

The pilot, badly bruised and having narrowly escaped the disgrace of being taken captive, returned safely to his country under the escort of our guerrillas.

The rescue operation was later used frequently in the education of People's Revolutionary Army units as a good example of internationalism.



*Lee Wha Rang: Where is Khasan?* [Source: Multimap](#)

In the summer of 1938 the Japanese imperialists provoked an incident at Lake Khasan. That incident, which was also called the Zhanggufeng incident, was one of the largest and most shameless of the border disputes started by the Japanese imperialists up to that time. Zhanggufeng is a low Soviet hill on the opposite side of the Tuman River across the then Sahoe-ri, Unggi County in Korea. The Soviets called it a nameless height. In its vicinity is Lake Khasan. Terms such as the Lake Khasan incident or the Zhanggufeng incident are all derived from geographical names.

At first the Japanese imperialists claimed that Lake Khasan belonged in their territory, but as their claim did not get by, they attacked the Soviet border guard post on Zhanggufeng. Their aim was to occupy Zhanggufeng and then reinforce their troops to control the area of the Maritime Territory south of Vladivostok.

After seizing the Soviet guard post, the Japanese army massed a large force, mainly from the 19th Division in Ranam, in that area. The Soviet side, mobilizing huge forces, beat back the Japanese invaders and drove them out.

At the time of the Lake Khasan incident, we struck the enemy from behind in Linjiang. The Japanese military were very nervous about the People's Revolutionary Army, which attacked them in the rear each time they carried out armed provocations against the Soviet Union and China. Their failure to wipe out the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, which they called a cancer in their rule, was an acute headache for Japanese politicians and military. It was in Linjiang County that we held a meeting of military and political cadres and adopted the policy on attacking the enemy from behind to help defend the Soviet Union. All the officers and

men of the People's Revolutionary Army actively supported and carried out this policy. The people also supported the struggle of the revolutionary army.

While the KPRA set off military operations against the Japanese in defense of the Soviet Union, patriotic people in the homeland also launched a vigorous resistance struggle. This is confirmed by the following fact:

"According to The Current Situation of Public Peace and Order in Korea, published by the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, over 150 stevedores at Chongjin Port went on strike on the night of August 2 in protest against the Japanese imperialist aggression on Khasan, and many of the strikers joined the guerrilla army." (The Korean People in the Struggle for Independence and Democracy, the Soviet Academy of Sciences Publishing House)

Subsequent to the Lake Khasan incident, the Soviet Union and Japan signed an armistice agreement. The attitude the Soviet Union took towards Japan in dealing with the incident was very hard.

The Japanese military was scared at the tough stand of the Soviet Union. The USSR was no longer the incompetent Russia of the Russo-Japanese War, but a formidable major power. The Japanese imperialists had to regard the Soviet Union in a new light and ponder over the plan of aggression they had so persistently pursued.

The Japanese imperialists, however, did not abandon their aggressive ambitions in regard to the Soviet Union. In order to test once more the hard-line policy of the Soviet Union, they prepared a new armed provocation on the Manchurian-Mongolian border. In this context, the Khalkhin-Gol incident, the so-called Nomonhan incident, broke out. Khalkhin-Gol is the name of a river in Mongolia near the Soviet-Mongolian border. I've been told nomonhan means "peace" in Mongolian.

The aim of the Japanese imperialists in setting off the Khalkhin-Gol incident was to occupy the Mongolian territory east of the river, create a defense zone from which to protect a second railway they were going to construct, and cut off the trunk line of the Siberian railway in order to bite off the Soviet Far East from Russia.

They also wanted to test the Soviet attitude towards a Japanese invasion and its strategy against Japan and its military power. At that time no details about the Soviet military power were known. Much was shrouded in mystery.

Around that time quite a few high-ranking Soviet military commanders were being removed from the battle lines, and Japan was watching the development with interest, for it was keen to know how such a change would affect Soviet military power.

As is generally known, Japan's political and military circles were long divided on the issue of northward versus southward expansion. They were having a hot debate on the strategic issue on whether they should attack the Soviet Union first, or occupy the southern regions first.

Their armed provocation at Kihalkhin-Gol was a kind of test battle to examine the possibility of their northward advance.

The Khalkhin-Gol area is a vast expanse of sand dunes and grassland. The Khalkhin-Gol incident was deliberately provoked by the Japanese, who made the absurd charge that the Mongolian border guard had violated the border. The absurdity of the incident lies in the fact that this local war was directly brought on by a flock of sheep grazing on the grassland in Khalkhin-Gol! Do cattle or sheep know anything about borders or military off-limits zones? Yet the Japanese sent out Manchukuo police to search and arrest Mongolians on the preposterous charge of border transgression by a flock of sheep. They seized this opportunity to set off the Khalkhin-Gol incident.

Already in 1935, the Japanese imperialists had forged a map on which they had drawn the borderline of Manchukuo over 20 km deep into Mongolia.

That Japan was preparing such a large-scale armed provocation as the Khalkhin-Gol incident beforehand is clearly shown by the fact that one of the Japanese masterminds of that incident was General Komatsubara, who had previously been the military attache at the Japanese embassy in Moscow.

Because of his finesse in anti-Soviet plotting, Komatsubara had become the commander of the division deployed in Hailaer, the area that could be said to be the forefront in Japanese anti-Soviet operations. At the outset of the incident he maneuvered his division deep into Mongolian territory, occupying a wide area west of Khalkhin-Gol and making it the bridgehead of the Japanese army. The Mongolian force disposed in that area was quite small, and the Soviet army was stationed 100 km away. Komatsubara took advantage of this weak point.

The Soviet-Mongolian allied army, however, hit back at Komatsubara's division and other large enemy forces, driving them to the point of annihilation.

The Japanese imperialists regrouped by bringing reinforcements from their mainland and launched a new operation.

The Soviet side dispatched Zhukov, the deputy commander of the Belorussian military district, to the Khalkhin-Gol front. He annihilated the numerically superior Japanese forces by employing mainly armored divisions and air strikes, using high mobility and surprise as tactics.

The local hostilities in Khalkhin-Gol ended in mid-September that year (1939?Tr.) with the victory of the Soviet-Mongolian forces. While their allied forces were engaged in heavy fighting in Khalkhin-Gol, we ordered the Korean People's Revolutionary Army to launch harassment operations in their support behind the enemy lines.

According to my orders, in the summer of that year all the KPRA units fought numerous battles and made great contributions to checking the Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union.

Typical of these were the battle we fought at Dashahe-Dajianggang in August 1939. The Dashaihe-

Dajianggang battle was fought in accordance with our plan to carry out harassment operations at a time when the enemy was busy moving troops and supplies for the formation of its 6th Corps, which was to be committed to Khalkhin-Gol. The battle lasted two days and destroyed 500 enemy troops.

At the Battle of Dashahe, Kim Jin blocked an enemy pillbox with his body to open up the way for his unit to charge.

The example set by Kim Jin was emulated by many soldiers of the Korean People's Army during the Great Fatherland Liberation War, when they silenced enemy guns by blocking them with their bodies.

Kim Jin had joined the army at Badaohezi, Ningan County, on our second expedition to northern Manchuria. When we entered the village of Badaohezi, O Jin U brought along a young farmhand by name of Kim Jin who had volunteered for the revolutionary army with such eagerness that we accepted him.

Comrade O Jin U knew Kim Jin well, for he was the latter's platoon leader.

Kim Jin had studied at the village school for only a few days, but after his enlistment he continued learning with the help of his comrades-in-arms. I took him along with me for a while, teaching him how to read and write. He was a simple young man who rendered an enormous service to our revolution and died a heroic death.

It is necessary to give wide publicity to a man like Kim Jin among the younger generation. I think it is very significant that the hero who blocked an enemy pill-box with his body was produced in the fighting in support of the Soviet Union at the tough Battle of Khalkhin-Gol.

Also, I'll never forget the woman fighter Ho Song Suk who fell in our harassment operations to assist the Soviet Union in that battle.

Having broken with her father, who was the chief of a Self-Defense Corps, Ho Song Suk came to the guerrilla zone alone in her teens and joined the revolutionary army. She told me she had been tormented by the thought of her father working as the chief of the Self-Defense Corps and had asked him several times a day to give up his job. Her imploring had had no effect upon her bigoted father, however.

Unable to dissuade him, Ho Song Suk had left home for the guerrilla zone in Sandaowan. That was in 1933, so she was probably about sixteen or seventeen at the time. I heard of her arrival only some years later.

I thought, however, that whatever her reasons, her turning against her father had to be reconsidered.

When I met her in connection with a women's company that needed to be organized, I reproached her lightly, saying, "You must first correct your attitude to your father. If your father is the chief of the Self-Defense Corps, you must patiently dissuade him from traitorous acts and help him. I think it's rather unreasonable of you to be hostile to your father." But she waved her hand in dismissal, saying I should not broach the subject of her father.

So I told her: "Even if your father has become a pro-Japanese element, you must not take this attitude towards him. Before accusing him you must think of how to bring him around to the revolution. If you turn your back on him and push him over to the enemy's side, what will become of him? How much can you do for the revolution if you are an undutiful daughter who cannot even reform her own father? Before long we are going to organize a women's company; if you don't change your attitude towards your father, we will not admit you into the company.

Only then did she confess in a tearful voice that she had not acquitted herself well and that she would do her best to persuade her father to change if she had the chance. She begged in earnest to be admitted into the women's company. Later she fought well in this company, being so brave in battles that her comrades-in-arms called her "General Ho" or "woman general".

On the evening of the day we fought the Battle of Jiansanfeng, I met Choe Hyon and told him to grant Ho Song Suk permission to visit her home for a few days in order to help her to reconcile herself with her father. Choe Hyon agreed readily. He promised me that he would send her to her father without fail once his unit arrived in the neighborhood of Mingyuegou.

Ho Song Suk, however, never did meet her father again. She was preparing to visit him just as other preparations were being made to fight the battle at Dashahe-Dajianggang in support of the Soviet Union at Khalkhin-Gol. She decided to postpone her home visit, saying she could not put her private affairs first at a time when operations to defend the Soviet Union were about to start.

On the day of the battle at Dashahe-Dajianggang, she unexpectedly encountered at her sentry post a convoy of enemy trucks. It was not her turn to stand guard that day, but she went to relieve an older veteran on duty so he could go and eat. Seeing several trucks full of Japanese troops approaching the sentry post, she told the veteran to hurry off and report the situation to Headquarters. She then took on the enemy single-handed. She opened fire, exposing herself to delay the enemy even for a few minutes. Naturally, the Japanese concentrated their fire on her.

She got hit in several places, but she hurled all her grenades at the enemy before she fell. Thanks to her heroic deed, her unit averted a possible disaster and was able to move to the battlefield in time.

She was probably about 22 or 23 years old when she died. How many dreams she must have dreamed at her age! She gave up her dreams and her youth to the fight in support of the Soviet Union in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol. She was true flower of internationalism. The regimental commander Jon Tong Gyu and the regimental political commissar Yang Hyong U also died in the battle at Dashahe Dajianggang. They were young men with long futures ahead of them, both of them from Hunchun. They had been highly respected and eagerly followed by their men, for they were officers of noble personality and high qualifications, always setting a good example to others.

Yang Hyong U had fought at the Hunchun guerrilla army from its inception. In his last battle, his unit had a



mission to attack Dashahe first and then occupy a height near Xiaoshahe to contain the advance of the enemy. However, the Battle of Dashahe dragged out so long that his unit failed to occupy the height and the enemy was able to hang on to it. Yet the outcome of the entire battle depended upon the seizure of the height. At that critical juncture Yang Hyong U seized a machine-gun and led the charge at the head of the attacking formation. The height was very nearly theirs when Yang Hyong U was shot in the belly.

Pressing down his wound with his left hand, he fired his machine-gun at the enemy with his other hand, shouting, "The Japs are the sworn enemy of our Korean people! Now they're invading the Soviet Union! Destroy the enemy to the last man! Let's defend the Soviet Union with our blood!" The soldiers stormed up the hill in angry waves and occupied the height in a minute.

The regimental commander Jon Tong Gyu, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with Yang Hyong U from their days in Hunchun, also died a heroic death after annihilating many enemy troops.

The guerrillas who fell in the Battle of Dashahe-Dajianggang are all internationalist martyrs who were loyal to the revolutionary cause.

The Battle of Yaocha was also fought by the People's Revolutionary Army at the risk of their lives in order to help the Soviet Union. The new regimental commander Lee Ryong Un commanded the battle in which he and his men killed hundreds of enemy soldiers. In the battle Lee was shot in the chest, but fortunately the wound was not fatal. After the Xiaohaerbaling meeting, however, he fell in small-unit action in the Soviet-Manchurian border area, fought in cooperation with the Coin-intern. His small-unit actions were also motivated by internationalism.

The People's Revolutionary Army fought many other harassment battles behind enemy lines in support of the Soviet Union at the time of the Khalkhin-Gol incident, among them a raid on the police barracks in a gold mine in Sandaogou, Helong County, an attack on Fuerhe, Antu County, and an assault on Baicaogou, Wangqing County.

How annoyed the enemy were by the harassment of the People's Revolutionary Army was illustrated by the fact that they had cut down all the trees and undergrowth within a range of 100 to 200 meters at the sides of all the roads and railways leading to the Soviet-Manchurian border. Nevertheless they were unable to check ambushes and raids by the People's Revolutionary Army. Because of the daring and brisk activities of our fighters, explosions and derailments of military trains took place constantly on the railways in the Soviet-Manchurian border area.

Through their successive attacks in the enemy rear, the People's Revolutionary Army not only wiped out large numbers of enemy troops but also pinned down large enemy forces within the area of their operations, thus preventing the enemy from throwing their full force against

the Soviet Union. At the time of the Lake Khasan incident, the enemy had deployed two brigades to Jiandao alone just to check our force. I've been told that in the Khalkhin-Gol incident they were forced to keep large forces in their rear.

As you can see, our harassment of the enemy in the rear under the slogan "Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!" played an important role in frustrating the Japanese imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union.

To make an all-out effort to provide protective cover for the attacking elements of the dispersed, advancing formation is a basic principle of military science. From the point of view of the communists, the Soviet Union, the one and only socialist state in the world at that time, could be compared to a soldier charging at the head of the line of advancing formation. The Korean communists struck the Kwangtung Army from behind to support both the Soviet Union that was leading the international communist movement.

To do one's utmost to maintain and defend a revolution that has emerged victorious and to preserve and consolidate revolutionary achievements is the internationalist duty of communists as well as their moral obligation. Only when active assistance is rendered to the advanced revolution can the backward revolution advance successfully in tandem with the former. For this reason, the international cooperation of the communists must be aimed at helping, supporting and complementing each other.

The Battle of Khalkhin-Gol ended in the disastrous defeat of the Kwangtung Army. The number of casualties, captives and missing amounted to 50,000 troops. The warmongers got what they deserved. I heard later that the Japanese officers who had lost all their men either voluntarily set fire to their colors and committed suicide, or were forced to kill themselves by their superiors. The top-level executives of the Kwangtung Army, including Commander Ueda, the chief of staff, chief of operations and operations officers were all dismissed from their posts before the cease-fire agreement was signed.

After suffering this bitter experience in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol, the Japanese imperialists changed their attitude towards the Soviet Union. They shifted from their former high-handed policy to one of temporary appeasement.

Some people may raise the following questions: Was it right for the Korean communists to have assisted and defended the Soviet Union at the cost of their own blood during the anti-Japanese war? In the light of today's reality, in which socialism has collapsed and capitalism revived in the Soviet Union, was the internationalist assistance of the Korean communists an exercise in futility?

In fact, there is no need to argue about these matters. Few of our people will raise such questions or argue about them. Only those who have abandoned their faith will do this. We have never considered the internationalist assistance of the Korean communists to the Soviet Union from a nihilistic point of view. Although the Soviet Union has disintegrated, the help we extended to their revolutionary struggle in the past was not futile. Loyalty to one's duty and efforts made on behalf of justice will never be futile.

We regard the setback faced by socialism in the Soviet Union as a temporary phenomenon. Socialism is a human ideal, an inevitable course of historical development, and therefore it is perfectly clear that socialism will rise again in the end. Socialism is justice, not injustice. And since socialism stands for justice, the assistance given to its first embodiment, the Soviet Union, is itself a just and sacred act. Such an act can never be futile.

We are still immensely proud that we helped the Soviet people with arms and at the cost of our own blood when they were in difficulties.

The name "Soviet Union" no longer exists and the veteran revolutionaries who created the Soviet state are all dead. Not many of the soldiers who took part in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol are still alive in Russia, and few people can recall our harassment operations against the enemy in support of the Soviet Union.

But even if no one remembers us, the painstaking efforts we made to tend the flower garden of internationalism was not in vain.

Whether anybody recognized it or not, we gave armed assistance to the Soviet Union in the past, and this was both for the sake of the Soviet Union and at the same time for our own sake. The Soviet people answered the Korean communists' internationalist deeds with their own internationalist deeds.

Most countries are now acting in their own selfish national interests. Many people seem to be completely self-centred, not caring a straw as to whether others are happy or unhappy. I object to both individual and national selfishness. What human worth is there in a purely egocentric existence? To my mind, the greatest pleasure in the life of any human being is in helping others.

## 21.7. The End of the "Maeda Punitive Force"

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The Battle of Hongqihe, fought in March 1940, was one of the highlights of the last days of the large-unit circling operations.

The enemy, who constantly boasted that it would annihilate the revolutionary army through the "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area", suffered a telling blow in that battle. The tragic end of one entire company in its "punitive" force threw the enemy into total confusion.

What was the world situation at that time? The Sino-Japanese War had entered the stage of drawn-out, pitched battles and the Soviet-Japanese relations had become extremely strained owing to the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol incidents. The flames of the Second World War were spreading far and wide.

At this point the top brass of the Kwangtung Army launched its "special clean-up campaign", claiming that it would put an end to the anti-Japanese movement in Northeast China once and for all.

As we used to vanish after each of our attacks, the enemy trekked about the backwoods of Fusong and Dunhua in search of us all through the winter. While the enemy was going around claiming that the KPRA had frozen to death, the main force suddenly appeared in the border areas of Antu and Helong Counties and wiped out the "Maeda punitive force" at Hongqihe. What an astonishing blow this must have been to the Japanese!

The Battle of Hongqihe remains so conspicuous in my memory because it is a major battle along with other major battles, such as Pochonbo, Jiansanfeng, Dongning county town and Fusong county town. This is also why I so clearly remember Maeda.

Company Commander Maeda of the "police punitive force" in Helong County, was, in fact, a small fry for the KPRA to deal with. Nevertheless, he was as rabidly against us as Commander Wang in Fusong and Lee To Son in Antu. Although low in rank, he found notoriety in the end because he was destroyed while attempting to wipe out the Headquarters of the Korean revolution.

During that period we were dealing repeated blows at the enemy, while at the same time relaxing and carrying out training now and then according to our plan for large-unit circling operations.

About one month before the Battle of Hongqihe, as we were conducting military and political training in the secret camp at Baishitan, the enemy came in to raid the secret camp. We struck the enemy like lightning and then slipped away towards Antu. This was the beginning of the second stage of the large-unit circling operations.

From the very start of the second stage we had to face many difficulties. Because Lim Su San at the

secret camp in Dongpaizi had neglected the mission given by Headquarters, we had to abandon the planned route and strike out on an alternate route that ran through the uninhabited region northeast of Mt. Paektu.

It was said that there were many map surveyors in the Japanese army, but they dared not venture into that region, so they left it white on the map. For this reason it was called a "white region".

On leaving Baishitan we planned to march across the white region, fire off our guns once again at Musan and Samiang in the homeland, then return to the central area of Antu, China, via Helong County. This was our new plan for the second stage of the large-unit circling operations. After fighting a battle at Laoshuihe, we marched across the Toudaobai, Erdaobai and Sandaobai Rivers towards the southern tip of Antu County.

We passed through the white region with great difficulty. At that time the great snowdrifts and blizzards were our greatest enemies. It was hard to endure the cold and hunger. The biggest problem was that we often lost our way. As everything was white, we could not judge where we were, nor could we see any landmarks. As we approached Damalugou, we had run out of provisions and our clothes and shoes were all worn out. We therefore raided Damalugou to capture supplies. Damalugou means "large elk valley" and Xiaomalugou "small elk valley." In those days the elk of Damalugou used to cross the Tuman River to graze in the meadows of Korea and then return to Damalugou in winter to feed on purple eulalia.

In Damalugou, the base of an enemy "punitive" force, there was also the headquarters of a company of rangers. The place could be called a stronghold of the enemy "punitive" force in the border area. The Japanese imperialists plundered great amounts of timber for wartime use from lumber companies and timber forests in the area.

Before the battle we dispatched a reconnaissance party to Damalugou. On their return, the scouts reported that they had seen strange tall men with blue eyes there. They said the men had long noses and that the backs of their hands were covered with thick hair. They did not know who these people were. I sent a man to check on them. He reported that the men were all Russians working as drivers at the lumber station. They were from the families which had supported the white army. There were many Russians in the Harbin area. I had seen them when I was in Harbin in the summer of 1930.

While the enemy's main force was out on a mission one day, we took Damalugou by surprise. The Russian drivers immediately offered my men gold rings, apparently taking us for bandits. When my men declined, they cocked their heads as if to say they had never before seen such strange people in this world. Their ideology was obviously a very backward one. We captured an enormous amount of wheat flour at Damalugou, which we distributed to the local people, one sack for each person. We captured so much that it was impossible for the guerrillas to carry it all. The workers of the lumber station volunteered to carry the remainder for us.

We planned to persuade the Russians to help us get away by truck to some distance, but I was told that

they would not cooperate. I sent a man who knew Russian to talk to them, and he managed to persuade the drivers to do the job.

At that time I talked to the Russians. I asked them why they were living in China and not in their own motherland. They replied that the Communist Party did not welcome the people of landlord and capitalist origin like themselves. They added that their fathers were guilty because they had been opposed to the socialist revolution, but that they themselves were not guilty of anything. I asked them whether they would build socialism shoulder to shoulder with the communists if they were sent to the Soviet Union; they answered that they would.

Among those who carried captured goods for us there was also a worker from Japan. I heard that he said good things about us on his return. He said: "I thought the soldiers of the revolutionary army were excellent men. They were all on our side, on the side of us workers. Though they knew that I was a Japanese, they did not discriminate against me and told me that Japanese workers, hand in hand with Korean workers, should fight Japanese imperialism." The superintendent of the lumber station caught him saying this and sent him off somewhere.

Our attack on Damalugou alerted the enemy forces in the Antu and Helong areas, who were hell-bent on annihilating us. Leading this force were Unami, commander of the "police punitive force" of Helong County and head of the police affairs department of the county; and Maeda.

The police authorities of Helong County had organized the "police punitive force" at the time we were fighting a series of large battles on the Tuman River after our campaign in the Musan area in May 1939. The force had been organized hastily for the sole purpose of containing and annihilating our army. Composed of four companies, including the one led by Maeda and two railway guard companies, it was running wild under the command of the head of the Jiandao district "punitive" force, trying to "mop up" the guerrilla army.

They had thought us to be far in the north. When we appeared in the areas bordering Helong and Antu Counties all of a sudden and raided Damalugon, the Helong "police punitive force" set off its entire force on a desperate pursuit of us.

As I learned later, Maeda launched himself into the "punitive" operations against us with even more bravado than others, bragging frequently that his company would destroy the main force of Kim Il Sung's unit for sure. The "Nozoe Punitive Command" set 10,000 yuan as a price on my head. Another source said that an even larger sum had been offered. When you consider that the public security authorities of Manchukuo set its "police reward" as 10 to 200 yuan, the highest reward in the name of the Public Security Minister, you can see that 10,000 yuan was an enormous sum indeed.

Having served as a junior policeman in Korea, and then in Manchuria under the garrison command subordinate to the metropolitan police office and as a head of police stations in areas bordering Korea, Maeda had received a reward from the Public Security Minister for the "exploits" he had performed in

the "clean-up operations" in the Jiandao area.

On hearing the news that we had raided Damalugou, Maeda went into a rage, raving that he was going to wipe out the guerrilla army. He wrote pledges in blood to this effect and held a grand ceremony of departure for the "punitive" troops. The joint "punitive" forces of army and police of Japan and Manchukuo were spreading out to encircle the vast forests at the foot of Mt. Paektu, throwing out "such a dragnet that even an ant would find it hard to escape".

Anticipating that the "punitive" force would follow in our wake without fail, we drew up an elusive plan to dodge it. First we sent a small unit, together with the 40 civilians who had carried the captured supplies for us, back to Damalugou, making sure that they left confusing footprints all over the place.

As a result the enemy lamented that they had failed to catch the guerrillas, whom they had taken such great pains to track, as they had been misled by the footprints. They then combed the forests every day, shouting that they would not be fooled again by the guerrillas and that Kim Il Sung could not very well have sunk into the earth, however elusive he might be. They were convinced that they would locate the Headquarters of the communist army easily enough if they combed Mt. Paektu.

After throwing the enemy off our track, we gave our main force military and political training at the secret camp in Hualazi. having a good rest while we were at it. Then we resumed our march towards Musan. The enemy troops who were trekking about in the Hualazi area in search of our whereabouts, finally detected us and began to tail us.

On the march we met peasants who had been drafted to carry supplies for the "punitive" force. They told us that the enemy soldiers on our tail numbered about 1,000. It was March, but both we and the enemy were experiencing difficulties while on the move owing to the waist-deep snow. Nevertheless, the enemy was marching faster than we, as they were following us along our trodden trail. To make matters worse, my men began to be afflicted with emaciation. At first they numbered only a few, but later they increased to 15. I asked Lim Chun Chu how he was planning to treat the patients. Lim, a political officer of the guerrilla army, also had rich clinical experience. He replied that he would give them opium. I granted approval, saying that he should do his best, either by using opium or through any other method he could think of.

Taking opium helped the patients, but they were not well enough to march. We had to put a distance between us and the enemy, but the pace of our march had slowed down because of the sick men, and soon the enemy was only about four to six kilometres behind us.

The Damalugou, on the upper reaches of the Hongqi River, consists of several streams. We arrived at one of these streams just as it was getting dark. We found an old house that had been used by lumberjacks; I posted a guard and told my men to stop and take a break there. Unless they had sufficient rest, we would not be able to continue fighting. As they were well aware that the enemy were on their heels, they were somewhat uneasy to hear my order to stop marching and take a rest in the house, but seeing me lying

down, they relaxed.

I decided to attack the "Maeda punitive force" in a valley on the Hongqi. I chose the valley as a place of ambush because I calculated that the enemy, who had been to Hualazi, would pass through the valley without fail on their way back to their base. Moreover, its terrain features were very favorable for an ambush. As the chief of the police affairs department of Helong County said later, the terrain features of the valley were "so unfavorable that no tactics would work" if one was caught up in an ambush there.

On hearing my choice of the spot for an ambush, O Paek Ryong asked me, "Since the enemy are well aware of our tactics, General, will they walk into such a trap?" His doubt was reasonable. The enemy was most afraid of our method of allurement and ambush. They named it the "net tactic" and carefully studied measures to counter it. "Don't be caught in Kim Il Sung's net"?this became a catch-phrase among them. You can imagine the hard time they had because of this tactic. They tried as far as possible to avoid places where guerrillas would find it favorable to lie in ambush. O Paek Ryong had this in mind when he spoke.

I considered that the enemy, aware of our "nets", would be convinced that the communist army would not repeat this tactic, so I decided to position my men in ambush in the valley on the Hongqi and fight a battle there. In other words, I planned to use once again the tactic the enemy had concluded we would no longer employ.

Next day we marched along the ridge of a mountain toward Xiaomalugou before descending into the valley. The mountains on both sides of the valley were unique. On the right, toward the upper reaches of the river, stood three peaks looking like three brothers. They were ideal places for an ambush. In addition there was a peak on the left with a small forest at the foot of it, which was also a favorable terrain feature for us.

I held a meeting of commanding officers and organized the battle. I positioned the machine-gun platoon and Guard Company on the three peaks on the right side of the valley and the 7th and 8th Regiments on the fringe of the peak on the left. Next, I ordered each unit to climb down to the valley, then climb up the heights again, erasing their uphill footprints before lying down in the designated positions for the ambush. Finally, I sent a decoy party to resume marching along the valley, leaving as many footprints as possible. I also positioned a group, led by Son Thae Chun, on the northern side of the first height in the valley to cut off any enemy retreat. The decoy party would block the enemy advance at the end of the valley.

That day we fought a battle on the Hongqi, as planned. It suddenly began to thaw, and the snow on the sunny side melted. The paths became muddy.

The enemy appeared in the valley of the Hongqi at the wane of day in the afternoon. I looked at the entrance of the valley through binoculars and found an enemy scout party, larger than usual for a scout party. It was their habit to dispatch one or two scouts, but this time they numbered nearly 10. It suggested



that all the "punitive" forces in Hualazi were swarming in. The scout were followed by a point.

As the point was marching past the last height, an officer with a sword at his waist entered the valley. I later learned that this was Maeda himself. The head of the enemy's main body was walking deep into the trap. Maeda stopped and carefully examined the footprints in the snow and the features peculiar to the valley.

I guessed he was probably thinking about dispatching a scouting party up to the heights, or about withdrawing his unit altogether. However, Maeda, extremely exhausted from his ten days of lost labor in the mountains, seemed to be off his guard just at the fateful moment when he ought to have been thinking and judging the situation coolly. Seeing Maeda standing under a lone tree, his subordinate officers gathered around him. Maeda, leaning on his sword, gave some instructions to them. In the meantime the main body of the enemy was pouring steadily into the area of our ambush.

Taking advantage of this golden opportunity, I fired my signal shot.

Half of the enemy was killed by our very first strike. Surprised by crossfire from the right and left sides of the valley, Maeda instantly dispersed his marching column on the spot and attempted to direct his main force to the height in the north to capture it, but was frustrated by our flanking fire from the bushes in the west. As the situation grew determined to fight a do-or-die battle. Then, drawing his sword, he led the charge himself. Though seriously wounded, he commanded the battle until the moment he fell.

The remaining enemy put up a desperate fight. Most of Maeda's men did not lay down their weapons until they were mowed down. Except for about 30 men, who laid down arms and surrendered, all the enemy soldiers were killed. Their casualties numbered about 140. In the Battle of Hongqihe my men fought very bravely. O Paek Ryong, the new regimental commander succeeding Oh Jung Hup, who had fallen in the Battle of Liukesong, fought with great audacity. Kim Il, too, showed great efficiency as the head of the shock troops.

We searched the battlefield after the battle and captured a large amount of booty, including a wireless equipment and tens of thousands of cartridges. It was difficult to dispose of all the weapons, for we had more than enough of them. We kept a number of the captured weapons to replace the outmoded ones still being carried by some of my men, and wrapped the remainder in oil paper and either buried them in the ground or stored them in the hollow trunks of trees for a future great event.

After we had finished the disposal of our booty, we discovered the "Fengtian unit" of the puppet Manchukuo army building campfires and watching us in a place not far away from us. Too scared of us to attack, they merely fired a few blind shots. I ordered O Paek Ryong to set up all the captured machine-guns and fire a couple of rounds at them so as to threaten them and test their efficiency at the same time.

That night O Paek Ryong, reporting that the "Fengtian unit" was sneaking towards us, asked me if we should strike back at them. I said to him, "Leave them alone. Why bother hitting mere on-lookers? It's

better to send them back alive, then they can tell the world how Maeda's unit was destroyed."

We discovered that Maeda had made his men write their wills before the battle. We found this out after reading a note in the pocket of an officer's uniform while searching the battlefield. The note was wrapped in a piece of silk cloth, and its content was very grim. According to the POWs, Maeda gathered his men before departing for battle and made them write their last testaments. He told them that their company, as part of the district "punitive" force, had to fight with Kim Il Sung's army, and that to win victory in the battle, they needed to cultivate Yamato Tamashii (Japanese spirit) and be determined to die for the Emperor. He even had a box made for the ashes of his own dead body.

On hearing this, I realized that Maeda, though only the company commander of a "punitive" force, was also an evil henchman of ultra nationalist forces. I think it was the militarism and ultra-nationalism of Japan that turned Maeda into an extremist of national chauvinism and an anti-communist fanatic. The Japanese imperialists resorted to all means and methods to transform the population of Japan into rabid supporters of ultra-nationalism, which often hides under the cloak of patriotism. This is why the virus of ultra-nationalism finds its way easily into the hearts of people not awakened ideologically.

As I have mentioned earlier, the militarists of Japan persistently indoctrinated Japanese youth and children with the aggressive idea that Japan would prosper only when it conquered Manchuria. It was said that they even baked slogans into such foods as bread and biscuits, which people consume every day, urging them into overseas expansion. This meant that while swallowing their food they were encouraged to think about swallowing other nations' territories. When propaganda is as persistent as this, its virus must penetrate people's minds.

Some of our people think that the bourgeoisie have no ideology, but they are mistaken. Just as communists have communism, they also have bourgeois ideology. And they persuade their faithful henchmen to espouse their ideology as well.

On the issue of indoctrination in the spirit of the Imperial Way in the Japanese army, some commanding officers in our revolutionary army were at one point teaching our men only about its deceitfulness and absurdity. This consequently gave rise to the incorrect view of Japanese soldiers as insensible robots only carrying rifles. This was a very dangerous way to think.

That we emphasize the political and ideological superiority of our own army does not mean that our enemy has no ideology. While we see our ideology as being superior to the enemy's, this does not mean that we can underestimate the enemy as having no distinct beliefs. I instructed our political officers that they should not place all their emphasis on the vulnerability of the enemy's ideology, and that they should not ignore the fact that the Japanese do inculcate ideology in their soldiers and fill them with a most evil spirit of anti-communism.

In the Battle of Hongqihe the enemy drank a truly bitter cup. They learned the harsh lesson that, however zealously they might track the KPRA, no victory would await them and that instead they would

experience a painful end, as the "Maeda punitive force" had done. They also found out that no force in the world could defeat the KPRA. In this battle we demonstrated to the whole world that the KPRA was going strong, winning one victory after another, and that however severe the trials, it would never yield or perish.

The battle exerted a good influence on the people in the homeland. As the Hongqi was within hailing distance from Korea, the news of Maeda's defeat in the fight with the revolutionary army spread like wildfire across the Tuman River into Korea. The people, who had been worrying about the fate of the KPRA, drew great strength from the news. After the battle they never again believed the propaganda that the revolutionary army was routed.

The battle occasioned widespread discussions about the power of the KPRA. It was a very good thing that people trusted the KPRA and entrusted their future to it entirely. It helped the anti-Japanese, patriotic forces of Korea promote an all-people resistance with greater confidence, looking forward to the glorious event of national liberation. This was our greatest gain in the Battle of Hongqihe.

In contrast, for the Japanese and Manchukuo army and police, who had been bragging that the anti-Japanese guerrilla war in the northeast would come to an end when Kim Il Sung's army was wiped out, this was an unhappy bolt from the blue and a tragic defeat.

The police authorities of Helong County, frightened by the annihilation of the Maeda unit, had to admit that they had not exactly been blessed by Divine Providence; they also confessed that the defeat of the Maeda unit had been unavoidable because of the adroit tactics of the KPRA. The destruction of the "Maeda punitive force" also meant the frustration of the "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area", in which the Japanese and Manchukuo top brass had invested so much effort.

Unami, Maeda's immediate superior and chief of the police affairs department of Helong County, returned to Japan after the defeat in the war. He left this article:

"It was from 1938 to 1941 that I, as a Manchukuo policeman in Jiandao Province, took part in the punitive operations against the anti-Japanese army, led by General Kim Il Sung.... "It was hard to collect information, but a relatively reliable source said that 'General Kim Il Sung finished school in Jirin City. With high academic records, he had an outstanding ability to make political judgments. He also had organizational and leadership ability and enjoyed great popularity.'...

"It seemed that his outstanding leadership talent found full expression during the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggle. We experienced especially hard times because of his deft luring operations and ambushes

"On March 11, 1940, Damalugou, in the gorge along the Hongqi, was raided by Kim Il Sung's army. Damalugou was a base of the punitive force that also housed the headquarters of a company of rangers. The headquarters was attacked, the motor-car repair shop was burnt down and weapons, ammunition,

food and clothing were plundered.

"Nunogami, commander of the district punitive force, ordered the police battalion of the punitive force to trace and annihilate Kim Il Sung's army in cooperation with Qoba's and Akabori's units of the Japanese army.

"I relayed the order to the company, led by Maeda Takeichi. On March 25 Maeda's company encountered Kim Il Sung's army not far from Damalugou and fought a fierce battle, but the whole company, including the commander himself, was annihilated. It was trapped in an ambush. The annihilation of Maeda's company had a shocking impact on the punitive force. "As Kim Il Sung's army was familiar with the geographical features and employed highly variable tactics, the punitive operations in forests hardly succeeded....

"At that time Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army was in high spirits, saying such things as, 'We are the Korean People's Revolutionary Army led by General Kim Il Sung. There is no compromise in the fight for the liberation of the country,' and 'The punitive force is a most welcome guest, for it supplies us with weapons, food and clothing.'

"The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now achieving a remarkable development under the leadership of Premier Kim Il Sung.

"I am convinced, from my own experience, that the Korean people, advancing under the leadership of this outstanding leader, will surely achieve the reunification of their country."

Recollecting the Battle of Hongqihe later, the great leader stressed the need to heighten vigilance against the revival of militarism. Here is what he said about the latter:

The ruling authorities of Japan are said to have awakened from their wild daydream of world domination after the Second World War. If this is true, then it is good for Japan and fortunate for the people of neighboring countries. Nevertheless, in view of the conduct of Japanese authorities, we still have to wonder whether or not they continue to dream of world domination and their "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere".

Many reactionaries in Japan have not yet admitted the crime of having invaded and plundered Korea and several other countries in Asia and of having killed millions of people, nor have they yet made reparations for their crimes. Worse still, they have not admitted their most heinous crime, that of having taken 200,000 women and girls as sex slaves and of having treated them with greater cruelty than they would animals. On the contrary, they are now seeking to become a political and military power on the basis of their economy.

Neo-fascists are now maneuvering in European countries as well. This also is highly dangerous.

We must clearly sharpen our vigilance against the revival of militarism.

## 22.1. At Xiaohaerbaling

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The meeting at Xiaohaerbaling was a historic conference that adopted a new strategic policy of hastening the ultimate victory of the anti-Japanese revolution and making full preparations to take the initiative to greet the momentous occasion of national liberation.

This conference was the culmination of the unremitting efforts and unquenchable enthusiasm the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung had devoted to overcoming difficulties in the national liberation struggle and the communist movement in Korea, and to turning misfortune into blessings, at a time when the anti-Japanese revolution was undergoing trials. Here, we recollect what the great leader said on many occasions about the preparations for and the proceedings of the conference.

After destroying the "Maeda punitive force" at Hongqihe, we gathered in the forest of Hualazi to sum up the lessons and experience of the struggle of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army (KPRA). We called it a review of a march of 200,000 ri. We had, in actual fact, made a march of 50,000 miles.

In order to consolidate the successes we had achieved on the long march and open up a new phase in the revolutionary struggle, we had to do much more work and tread still further along a thorny path. So I stressed, "The basic factor in our success on the long march lay in our political and ideological superiority and our tactics of guerrilla warfare. This is the core significance of our march of 50,000 miles. The present situation is more threatening than ever. Let us apply a variety of guerrilla tactics and techniques with the utmost efficiency in keeping with the prevailing situation and terrain conditions. We must go deep among the people and step up political work among them. We must be resolved to make a longer march than we have already made for the ultimate triumph of the revolution. Let us keep the revolutionary flag flying with a strong determination and unshakable confidence in the victory of the revolution. In future, too, as in the past, we must take the initiative and strike the enemy hard."

In the spring of 1940, the "Nozoe Punitive Command" was mounting an even more frantic offensive against the KPRA than ever before, deploying more troops and planning "punitive" operations down to every last detail to destroy the revolutionary army. Nevertheless, we were determined to take the initiative. We had pressed upon the enemy always with the initiative in our own hands, and we were set on maintaining the initiative no matter what changes took place in the situation.

What did we rely on in our determination to maintain the initiative? Our mental power and tactics. In terms of manpower reserves and weapons and equipment, we were inferior to the enemy, but we were far superior in terms of mental power and tactics. The point in question was which side had the advantage in tactics; and we had it.

Until we moved into the valley of Hualazi, the "Nozoe punitive force" had been occupying the local mountains. All the paths that might be taken by the revolutionary army were guarded tenaciously by the

enemy.

Although we emphasized the initiative, our situation was extremely unfavorable. Suspecting that his forces in eastern Manchuria were not strong enough, Nozoe was said to be bringing reinforcements from Tonghua. According to O Paek Ryong, the reinforcements had already arrived in the vicinity of Liangbingtai on the border of Yanji and Dunhua Counties. It was also reported that a fresh contingent of reinforcements in the name of a working party had come from the direction of Cbangbai.

What was to be done to counter the enemy's attempt at stepped-up "punitive" operations? The enemy's initial, large-scale "punitive" operations, staged in the name of the "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area", had been foiled by our large-unit circling operations. How should the enemy's more frenzied and more tenacious new offensive be thwarted? Should we repeat the large-unit circling operations because these had been effective? Or should we adopt some other tactics? The flames of war unleashed by Japan and Germany in the East and West, respectively, would envelop the whole world sooner or later, and involve all the major powers and small nations in the conflagration. In anticipation of these developments, we had to rack our brains for a new strategy.

We were faced with the challenge of working out tactical measures to defeat the enemy's "punitive" operations now under way, and also evolving a new strategic line capable of coping with the rapidly-changing situation.

I got down to working out a tactical scheme for overcoming the difficulty that had been created after the Battle of Hongqihe, and also decided to elaborate a new strategic plan. At that time the enemy had massed all his forces in mountainous areas. The only way to take the initiative in these circumstances was to disperse our forces and slip away into the foothills.

Because the enemy forces were massed in mountainous areas, leaving walled towns and internment villages to be guarded by police forces and Self-defense Corps units, it would be most advantageous for us to harass the enemy behind his lines and compel him to disperse his "punitive" forces.

On the basis of this tactical calculation, the main force of the KPRA slipped away from the secret camp at Hualazi in mid-April 1940, and launched a final campaign to smash the enemy's "special clean-up campaign". We first made simultaneous raids on Dongnancha and Yangcaogou, large internment villages by the Xiaosha River, destroyed the pursuing enemy in the valley of Shujiefeng, and then vanished in the direction of Chechangzi. The units that had been operating under the command of An Kil and Choe Hyon in the Yanji and Wangqing areas began to harass the enemy in these county centres in response to the movement of the main force.

We fired on several villages, but the enemy showed no tangible reaction. It was necessary to tempt the enemy with bigger bait to make him disperse his forces. We launched a simultaneous attack on three villages to the east of the Antu County town—Nanerdaogou, Beierdaogou and Xinchengtun.

This time the enemy took the bait. The units of the Kwangtung Army, which had been staying put on the southern border of Antu and Helong Counties, rushed to the Antu County town, fearing its immediate fall. The Korean-Manchurian border guards joined them. Our efforts to lure the enemy forces into the heart of Antu County were aimed at scattering them and spreading the flames of the armed struggle into the homeland, taking advantage of the movement of the Japanese forces encamped along the Tuman River.

At that time Kim Il's 8th Regiment was on a mission to advance into the homeland. I ordered the 8th Regiment to move slowly to the border area, in dispersed formation, and moved the 7th Regiment and the Guard Company to the northern part of Antu County. From that time on, we struck at the enemy every day.

Kim Il, in command of a small unit, infiltrated the homeland. He moved to Samiang Sub-county, Musan County, in mid-May, launched a surprise attack on the enemy's border guards and did political work among the local people for two days.

The daring combat action of the small unit of the KPRA and its audacious political work among the people in the homeland at a time when Governor-General Minami was ordering the border guards to prevent the intrusion of even a single guerrilla into Korea were notable successes in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle in the first half of the 1940s. In support of the successful advance into the homeland, we intensified strikes on the Tuman River and in central and northern Antu County, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

Thus, the new "punitive" operations of the "Nozoe Command" suffered heavily at the outset. His "Punitive Command" had its subordinates ?the "area punitive force" and "small-area punitive force"? on the carpet almost every day, and the subordinates were swift to clamor that the blame lay with their neighboring units. Nozoe was busy constantly issuing new guidelines for the "punitive" operations.

When we were making preparations for new operations, Han In Hwa came to us from southern Manchuria, bringing with him 50 or 60 men, the survivors of the 1st Route Army. He said they had been sent by Wei Zheng-min and wanted to join our unit. He was a staff officer of the 1st Route Army and political commissar of the Guard Brigade.

We decided to boost their morale through joint operations with them.

In June the same year we attacked Dongjingping and Shangdadong, only to find that Dongjingping was in a defenseless state. Its defense had been neglected because it had been raided only ten days before, and the enemy thought that we would not attack it again so soon. In the subsequent days, we launched simultaneous attacks on a few other villages. On the day following the raid on the lumber mill at Gudonghe, we had a sumptuous feast with the comrades from southern Manchuria in celebration of the Tano festival, using food supplies we had captured from the enemy in the battle.

When he had drunk a few cups of liquor, Han In Hwa squeezed my hand, saying, "Commander Kim, I



now understand why Wei Zhengmmn sent me to you. The situation in Jiandao is much more threatening than in southern Manchuria, and the enemy's 'punitive' forces seem to be moving as if on your orders, not on the orders of Nozoe or Umezu."

He had got so strong an impression from our operations that he exclaimed that the 2nd Directional Army was Number One, and that Commander Kim's army was invincible! He said he was now confident about the future of the struggle, and would go to visit Chen Han-zhang in Emu or in Dunhua and Zhou Bao-zhong in Ningan and then fight in high spirits.

The daring actions of the main force of the KPRA threw the Japanese completely off their balance. While the enemy was on full alert throughout Jiandao to turn the tide of the unsuccessful "special clean-up campaign" in his favor, an unexpected incident took place in our ranks. Lu Bo-qi, political chief of the directional army, who had been receiving medical treatment in a secret camp near Damalugou, was captured by the enemy and forced to spill all the secrets of our unit.

We decided to cope with the difficulty caused by his capture and surrender by ceaselessly attacking and by adopting a variety of tactical changes. In the first place, I made up my mind to divide my unit into a number of small units, and to regroup the directional army into many small units to fight an audacious and elusive war of attrition. The small units would be mobile in action, capable of slipping through the enemy's tight network of outposts with ease and throwing him again into confusion. The small units would be able to hide quickly even after they had been discovered by the enemy.

Therefore, we regrouped the directional army into many small units without delay, and started a war of attrition. As you can see, we did not flinch from the Japanese offensive, but faced up to it and countered it. What would have become of us if we had cowered in the face of the enemy's massive offensive and avoided the enemy, looking for safe places? Needless to say, we would have suffered a heavy loss. We were able to triumph because we maintained the initiative and struck the enemy time and time again, throwing him into confusion.

Even the enemy admitted that the KPRA had been victorious in the spring and summer campaigns in Juche 29 (1940).

"The bandits, who skillfully parried the spearhead of the spring and autumn punitive offensives, have been operating in full swing everywhere on the strength of the thriving season. Especially over the past few months, they have been audacious enough to raid villages behind the second and third lines, inflicting heavy losses upon us. This is a matter of great chagrin for us all.

We have tens of thousands of troops, namely, the Japanese and Manchukuo armies, gendarmerie, police forces, railway guards, members of the Concordia Association, and so on. No matter how unfavorable the season and terrain conditions may be, it cannot be denied that we all, particularly I, the commander of the punitive forces, should be held responsible for permitting the bandits to demonstrate such power.

A detailed analysis of the recent situation, however, impels me to feel acute pain and regret at the realization that many glaring weaknesses and defects in the harmony and unity of the punitive forces in particular, and the other related organizations, and in their activities have impeded the clean-up campaigns and resulted in allowing the bandits to run rampant." (Documents concerning the Clean-up Campaigns, Nozoe Punitive Command, Showa 15 (1940).)

We gained a lot of experience in the small-unit actions during the spring and summer operations in 1940. Previously, we had engaged mainly in large-unit operations, although the situation occasionally required small-unit actions.

During the summer of 1940, however, we frequently employed versatile tactics of continuous strikes, repeated strikes and simultaneous strikes by small units. In the course of this, we acquired new and valuable experience, learning that the more the enemy reinforces his strength and the tighter the network of encirclement, the smaller should be the combat units employed in guerrilla warfare. This helped greatly towards establishing the strategic task for the next stage and evolving the fighting methods to implement the task.

If I had not gained this experience, I would have been unable to propose the switch from large-unit operations to small-unit actions at the conference held at Xiaohaerbaling in August that year. Because we were experienced in this tactic and convinced of its advantage, we adopted small-unit actions as the major form of fighting in the first half of the 1940s, and in consequence, were able to maintain the initiative.

Some people think that we engaged in only large-unit operations in the years before that conference, and only small-unit actions after the meeting. But that is not true. Guerrilla warfare is characterized by adapting the tactics to the prevailing military and political situations and other circumstances. Small-unit actions had been considered important and employed, when necessary, during the latter half of the 1930s, when large-unit operations were the main form of fighting.

The dispersed small-unit action that was prevalent in the experimental stage in the first half of 1940 was adopted by all the guerrilla units after the conference at Xiaohaerbaling. What I have said above is the story of the events that took place after the large-unit circling operations. Today I have taken time to explain this because historians have said they felt there were many blanks in the study of this period.

If we view the conference at Xiaohaerbaling as a landmark, our activities in the spring and summer of 1940 may be regarded as preparations for the conference. It was when the war that had broken out in Europe was spreading quickly that we came to think of changing our strategy in keeping with the trend of the developments.

The Japanese imperialists were making frantic efforts to spread the flames of war to Southeast Asia in order to realize their ambition of creating the "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere", even though they were still engaged in aggression on the mainland of China. They were making every effort for the "security of the home front". Their tenacious, large-scale "punitive" offensive I mentioned above, and

their unprecedented brutal fascist oppression and plunder of our people were products of the furtherance of their aggressive policy.

We considered, however, that with the expansion of their aggressive war the Japanese imperialists would be further isolated at home and abroad and find themselves in a deeper political, economic and military predicament.

The general situation indicated that the downfall of Japanese imperialism was certain and imminent, and that the day of our national liberation, the historic cause of our people, was near at hand.

That was why I summed up the successes and experiences in the ten years of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, and evolved a new line of preserving and expanding our forces in order to deal with the great occasion of national liberation on our own initiative, in keeping with the rapidly-changing situation.

Making full preparations for the momentous occasion of national liberation was the logical requirement for the development of our revolution at that time.

The transition to a new strategic stage did not permit us to see only the change in the objective situation one-sidedly and follow it in a passive way, but required us to take the lead in the struggle at all times on the basis of the calculation of the motive force capable of speeding up the ultimate victory, as well as the analysis of the past course of the struggle.

I first went over the strategic tasks of the preceding stage to see whether they had been carried out.

I examined the strategic tasks that had been defined at the Nanhutou conference, and found none of them outstanding. I came to the conclusion that these tasks, the laying of the organizational and ideological foundations for Party building, the formation and expansion of the anti-Japanese national united front, the advance to the border area, and the extension of the armed struggle into the homeland, had all been carried out.

Another important matter that must not be overlooked in defining the strategic stage of armed struggle is the change in the balance of forces between friend and foe. In terms of numerical strength, the enemy was far superior to us. In those days, they said that we were a "drop in the ocean". In these circumstances common sense undermined the validity of the traditional military term "estimate of the balance of forces". Our estimate of the balance of forces was not arithmetical. I calculated that one of my men was a match for a hundred or even a thousand foes.

After the Nanhutou conference, the KPRA quickly developed politically, ideologically and militarily. This army, though smaller than the enemy in number, had always taken the initiative, and always triumphed over the enemy that was scores of times or even a hundred times superior in terms of numerical strength. In the course of this, it had grown up into a strong army that had acquired the tactical and strategic skills capable of coping with whatever situation cropped up.

The KPRA was a special, new-type revolutionary army that carried out both military and political missions at the same time.

In retrospect, the armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists, the established leadership position of the KPRA in the overall Korean revolution and its increasing role as the hard-core force patently proved that we were absolutely correct in adhering to the principle of concentrating on the building of the revolutionary armed force by giving it priority over all other matters.

In general, in the struggle of the communists to seize power, the principle was to organize the party as the political leadership first and then build the revolutionary armed force. However, in view of the decisive role of the revolutionary armed force and violence in the revolutionary struggle, in the national liberation struggle in the colonies in particular, and in consideration of the specific situation in our country, I chose the method of giving priority to building the armed force, and then building the party.

We organized the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, the first revolutionary armed force, in April 1932 and developed it into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. By relying on this army we not only ignited the armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists and led the overall national liberation struggle to a fresh upsurge, but also successfully pushed forward the laying of the organizational and ideological foundations for party building, the formation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland (ARF), the development of the united-front movement and the preparations for all-out national resistance under the leadership of the KPRA and its armed support.

We can say that the KPRA, which played the role of the backbone and hard core during the revolutionary struggle against the Japanese imperialist aggressors, gave the struggle political leadership and provided an armed guarantee for the national interests, was, in fact, our Party and our government as well as our armed force.

All this meant that our own hard-core force capable of carrying out the tasks of the new strategic stage had been prepared. Many successes had been achieved in awakening the popular masses to ideological awareness and organizing them to get them prepared politically and ideologically. In those days the membership of the ARE amounted to 200,000.

In the homeland there were many paramilitary organizations, such as workers' shock brigades and production guerrillas. These organizations served as parent bodies for the formation of armed units for all-out national resistance.

The political climate among the unorganized masses also was very good. Around that time Kim Il's small unit was on a march towards the Tuman River, on their way back from the homeland after giving the enemy hard blows. Suddenly, they spied a lame peasant hobbling after them. The man warned the guerrillas not to cross the river at the point to which they were heading. He said that the area was crawling with the enemy.

Kim Il was not sure whether he should believe this man or not, because he was a stranger. Seeing that the guerrillas were hesitating, the peasant produced a newspaper report of the battle in the Musan area in May 1939. The man was so proud of his countrymen's feat that he had been carrying the clipping with him ever since. Kim Il decided to trust him.

The peasant said he would guide them, adding that although there were guards on the route, these people would help the revolutionary army. The small unit crossed the river in safety that night, with the help of local villagers who had been forced to stand guard, who guided the guerrillas to a safe crossing. The growing politico-ideological awareness of the people and their invariable support for the KPRA gave a strong impetus to the development of the armed struggle against the Japanese.

Changes in the enemy's strategic aims are another question that has to be taken into consideration in defining the strategic stage of armed struggle. In the summer of 1940, we captured a Japanese engineer officer at a road construction site in Huanggouling. Through interrogation we got to know that the enemy was undertaking a large project to form a road network in the wide area of Jiandao and southern Manchuria. The prisoner said that roads were under construction not only in Helong, Yanji, Dunhua, Huadian and Fusong, centering on Antu County, but also in the homeland and in the steep, inaccessible valleys in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu.

The progress of military road construction was reported every day to Kwangtung Army headquarters through the "Nozoe Punitive Command". The prisoner said that Commander Nozoe would soon inspect the roads, which were being built to increase the mobility of the "punitive" forces in the campaign against the KPRA. These roads would be used by the enemy to mass forces in the theatre of our operations from various parts of Korea and Northeast China.

In addition, many aero plane landing-strips had been constructed around us. The prisoner said that more landing-strips would be constructed in the three provinces in the southeast on Nozoe's top-secret orders. He revealed the locations of the landing-strips that he knew, saying that the aircraft would be attached to the "area punitive forces" and even "small-area punitive forces".

If the prisoner's statement was true, we would be as good as surrounded by the enemy's landing-strips.

About that time, the "Nozoe Punitive Command" was going to be moved from Jirin to Yanji, and the headquarters of the "east-area punitive force" from Yanji to Tumen. Our Headquarters continually received information from reconnaissance parties and other sources that enemy reinforcements were ceaselessly moving towards the theatre of our activities. It seemed that the enemy was seeking a final showdown before long at any cost. It seemed impossible to deal with the rapid change in the enemy's situation using the previous strategic measures. A drastic change in our strategy was imperative.

For this reason, I put forward the strategic task of preserving and increasing our revolutionary force through actions on our own initiative while avoiding losses from inadvertent combat, regarding this task as most important for the revolution. The strategic policy of taking the initiative to greet the momentous

occasion of national liberation was adopted at the conference held in Xiaohaerbaling in August 1940.

When we reached the border between Antu and Dunhua Counties, Lee Ryong Un, the commander of the 15th Regiment, and Company Commander Im Chol came to see us with several bodyguards. I explained to Ju Jae lithe purpose of calling the conference of military and political cadres in Xiaohaerbaling, and told him to summon company commanders, company political instructors and higher officers to the meeting. They were to arrive by August 9, or the 7th of the seventh month by the lunar calendar. An Kil and Choe Hyon, who were operating around Wangqing and Dongning, were to be informed of the results of the conference later, and the 13th and 14th Regiments were to send only their company delegates who were fighting not far from us. Since Lee Ryong Un and Im Chol were already with us, there was no need to notify the 15th Regiment.

The conference lasted two days, from the tenth to the eleventh of August. The major issue at the conference was whether to define the next strategic stage as the period of a great revolutionary event, in other words, whether we could liberate the country in the next stage.

I said, in short, that we could. I explained that the Japanese army was crumbling, though it still was strong, that the outbreak of mutiny in the air corps of the Kwangtung Army, its crack unit, foreboded its imminent collapse, that the enemy was hard pressed to stop his men deserting and surrendering time and again on the battlefield in China, that there was no need for further explanation, and that the day of Japan's defeat was not far off. Some time earlier, Japan had issued what it called the "special volunteers" decree to force Korean youths to serve as its cannon-fodder. This decree was being enforced in Taiwan and Manchuria as well.

For Japan to have to resort to procuring cannon-fodder even from among the young people of her colonies who hated her, her shortage of military manpower must have been serious indeed.

During the period from the September 18 incident to the July 7 incident, the Japanese army lost nearly 200,000 troops in Manchuria alone. In the Sino-Japanese War, Japan was said to have suffered even greater manpower loss in a single year.

Japan's strategic material reserves were nearing a critical point. In the days immediately before the conference at Xiaohaerbaling, the Japanese used ammunition that had been produced later than 1939, Whereas at the time of the Battle of Jiansanfeng they had used ammunition produced in the 1920s. This meant that their ammunition reserves were exhausted.

Meanwhile, Japan's political situation was very complex. The Cabinet changed once almost every three days, and polemics raged ceaselessly. The military also was full of contradictions. Because the senior officers were divided into different factions and wrangled with each other, they could not ensure the unity of operations and cooperation. On top of that, the contradictions between capital and labor, between the military and civilian sectors of the population, and between suzerain and colonies were reaching the point of explosion. Secret agents bad to be planted even in the villages of Japan itself to gag her own people.

At the conference, therefore, I summed up Japan's state policy as an overt indication of her attempt to occupy Southeast Asia, taking advantage of the outbreak of war in Europe, and laid special emphasis on my consideration of the prospect that if Japan advanced into Southeast Asia, it would amount to digging her own grave.

To proceed, the conference discussed the strategic task that should be carried out pending the great event of national liberation. At the time, we defined a new strategic task of preserving and accumulating the force of the KPRA, the backbone of the Korean revolution, and training its officers and men to be able political and military cadres in preparation for greeting the great event of national liberation on our own initiative.

The great event meant a final decision into which the opposing sides would throw all their political and military capabilities. To win the decisive battle, each of our men should be prepared to perform the duties of ranks several grades higher than his present one. After the country was liberated, these men were to play the pivotal role in the building of a new Korea.

The decisive battle and the building of a new country were a strategic challenge that would mean the making of a new history of our country and bringing about a dramatic change in the fate of our people. It was a task that could not be carried out by any foreigners. The KPRA and the Korean people had to carry it out themselves.

We had to rely on the force we ourselves had prepared through many years of revolutionary struggle against the Japanese. It would be welcome if other people helped us in the decisive battle, but we must fight in our own right. So I asked my men if they could raise their qualifications by a few grades, and they answered yes with confidence. I again asked if they could arm all the people and mobilize them in resistance, and again they answered in the affirmative.

In order to ensure the success of the strategic task, we put forward a new fighting policy on switching over from large-unit operations to small-unit actions.

Certainly, there was some argument about this idea. Some comrades were apprehensive of the possibility of small units being defeated piecemeal in an encounter with large enemy forces, which would attack us from all quarters.

"The heyday of large units is gone," I said to these comrades. "This is no time for noisily moving about in large units. If we continued with large-unit operations when the enemy is trying to surround us with large forces and destroy us at one stroke, it would mean falling into the enemy's trap and ending in self-destruction. Figuratively, it would amount to covering our heads with pumpkins and crawling into a pigsty. If we move and fight in small units and conduct political work among the masses, it will be easy to obtain food supplies and maneuver with freedom. How many comrades have been killed by the enemy on missions to get food! Even the food supplies that had cost their lives soon ran out because they had to be shared out among large units. Small-unit actions will scatter the enemy forces to the maximum. This

was proved in the whole course of the small-unit actions carried out during this spring and summer. Our intention should be to minimize the enemy's targets."

We re-emphasized the need to develop elusive small-unit military actions in the wide areas of Korea and Manchuria, conduct intensive political work among the masses, quickly organize the work of improving the military and political qualifications of every soldier and officer, and strengthen solidarity with the anti-imperialist forces throughout the world, in order to carry out the new strategic task. We reached agreement on specific measures, and then closed the meeting.

The Xiaohaerbaling conference was a historic meeting that decided to change our strategic line at a new turning point of our revolution, like the Mingyuegou conference in December 1931 and the Nanhutou conference in February 1936 that also set forth important strategic lines for the armed struggle against the Japanese.

If we had continued with large-unit operations in pursuit of only immediate successes, unable to see the trend of developments at the opportune moments, it would have been impossible to preserve our force and we would have been wiped out, to be remembered by history as mere martyrs.

Xiaohaerbaling is the tail of the Haerba mountain range that stretches along the border between Dunhua and Antu Counties. The meeting was held on the northern slope of the range. There was a grassy area in front of the site of the conference.

Mention of the conference reminds me of that grassy area. No one came to cut the grass, probably because the place was far from any village. Seeing the grass, I thought that Kim Chaek, Ho Hyong Sik and Park Kil Song, who were said to be riding about on horseback in northern Manchuria, would like to have their horses graze there. I met those comrades in the Soviet Far East.



# Looking Forward to a Bright Future

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In Spring of 1940, the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army (KPRA) was engaged in intensive military operations and political activity around Antu and Helong, in the area northeast of Mount Paiktu. We suffered through a severe trial that Spring. As we were set on taking the initiative with small-scale units, we had to overcome many obstacles, the most difficult of which was the enemy's unending waves of "punitive" attacks on our Headquarters. Hundreds and thousands of enemy troops attacked us from all sides with ear-piercing battle shrieks, which cut into my nerves.



*Lee Wha Rang note: Photo: From left to right, Gen. Nozoe Shotoku, Col. Yu Chenzi (a Chinese) and Col. Fukube Kunio. Nozoe commanded of a special Japanese army unit for hunting down partisans in Manchuria. His unit was made up of mostly Korean and Chinese traitors. He had 30 million yen to buy turncoats led by Kim Pong Jun, Lim U Song, Han In Hwa and Kim Chae Bum. On April 6, 1940, Gen. Nozoe's forces captured five wounded partisans and one of them, Kim Hye Sun, claimed to be Kim Il Sung's wife. Gen. Nozoe tried, in vain, to trap Kim Il Sung using Kim Hye Sun as a bait. The Japanese killed her.*

Nozoe seemed to be determined to fight to the bitter end. He was furious with us; he used to brag that he would wipe out "banditry" by charging horseback as far as the summit of Mount. Paiktu itself, only to encounter one defeat after another. His army was hit hard throughout the winter by the KPRA in large-unit encircling operations. Not only Kwangtung Army's commander but also the top brass of the Japanese military derided him. Depressed by the loss of the initiative in battle and angry with himself to the point of frenzy, Nozoe brought in reinforcements from Fengtian, Tonghua and even Soviet-Manchurian border guards, and hurled them into "punitive" actions against us.

To make our situation worse, there were traitors like Lim Yu Song, who surrendered to the enemy and led them to track down our Headquarters. On top of this, the enemy's secret agents, lurking in mountain huts, which were put up by hunters, mushroom pickers and outlaw opium growers, watched our movements like hawks. Groups of traitors in "working parties", appeared in places where we were active and shouted to us that the situation was in favor of the Empire of Japan and that we should surrender instead of spilling blood in vain for a revolution that had no future.



*Lee Wha Rang note: Photo - Gen. Nozoe (far right standing) had many Korean traitors on his payroll. Col. Kaneyama (Kim Suk Won), 3rd from left in dark glasses, led the Korean traitors. Col. Kaneyama became a leading figure, "Gen. Kim Suk Won", in South Korea after liberation.*

But the shortage of food was the hardest problem for us to solve. The enemy did everything conceivable to prevent even a handful of grain from reaching us. No sooner we buried food reserves in the mountains than the enemy quickly sniffed them out and destroyed them. The enemy also strictly controlled food supplies for the inhabitants in internment villages. When the peasants went out to their fields, the sentries at the gates searched even their lunch pails. In many internment villages, food rations, clothing and ammunition for the army and policemen stationed there were kept in secret stores outside the walled villages, and the locations of these stores were known only to those few who dealt with them. The store-keepers were the only ones who had keys to the stores and, only when necessary, opened the stores in secret and transported the supplies little by little to the villages. The enemy took such countermeasures because we frequently attacked fortified towns and villages, and carried away all the supplies that we could get hold of.

The same situation prevailed in mining and lumbering areas. They kept food rations enough only for a couple of days, or for three or four days at the most, in those places. When we were in the vicinity of Chechangzi, we ran out of food and salt. The 7th and 8th Regiments roamed around in the Antu area looking for food, but in vain. So the whole unit had to go hungry. We were so hard up that we ate frog legs on May Day that year. In some countries, fashionable restaurants serve frog legs as gourmet foods, but in our country no restaurant serves frog legs. It is true that children catch frogs in rice fields or in

brooks and broil them skewered on sticks. But they do this not for the taste of the meat but mostly for fun.

Although guerrilla life was arduous, we had never gone hungry on a May Day before. On the May Day of 1939 on the Xiaodeshui plateau, we even served liquor to our fighters. On the May Day of 1940, however, liquor was out of the question; we had nothing to eat at all. So we caught frogs in brooks to allay our hunger. That was how we spent that May Day, a special day for us, and there is no need to talk about how we got along on other days. We suffered severely from hunger in the vicinity of Chechangzi and also on the outskirts of Yangcaogou. The whole unit had to survive on boiled grass near Yangcaogou; I'll never forget the name of that place.

One day I looked around the mess hall of our machine-gun platoon and admonished them: "The thaw set in a long time ago," I said. "You could have picked wild vegetables and made soup of them, which would have been tasty and made up for the shortage of food." Kang Wi Ryong, the platoon leader, replied that he was short of men, so he had not sent any men to pick edible herbs. His answer annoyed me. Edible plants could be picked up on the way to and from the guard posts. If he had organized his work properly, his men could have obtained enough plants for hearty soup in no time at all.

I rebuked him, saying that a unit leader must know that he was responsible for his men's welfare. I told him that if he was short of men, he should take my orderlies with him to gather edible plants. The next day, the platoon leader took Jon Mun Sop and Lee Ui Sol, two of my orderlies, and Han Chang Bong to gather edible plants. The four men came back in the evening with a basket half empty. I asked them why they had picked so little, and they said they spent a long time wrestling! I asked why they had wasted time wrestling instead of picking plants. They said that the rustle of the spring breeze, the fragrance of the flowers and the sight of a soft lawn awakened in them the memory of their home villages and their childhood, when they had frolicked on spring hillsides, so they spent the whole morning wrestling, in spite of themselves.

Jon Mun Sop and Han Chang Bong were nearly of the same age and same strength. So it took a long time to decide the winner of the contest. Kang Wi Ryong, a man of unusually large build, acted as the referee and encouraged the wrestlers, shouting, "Well done! Well done! Go on! Again!" clapping his hands at the end of each round. Encouraged by the platoon leader, the two men grew more enthused and kept on wrestling. I was dumbfounded by their story. For four men to return with half a basket of plants, having wasted their precious time wrestling when we were starving, and to add insult to injury, my own orderlies in the party, it was incredible.

I criticized them severely and gave them an official warning. I could have meted out a heavier punishment in view of the graveness of their mistake. None of my men had ever slighted his commander's orders as they had done. The irony of the incident was that it involved four men who had had a strong sense of responsibility and had been more faithful to his duties than anybody else. They were in the habit of carrying out any assignment, light or heavy, with credit. To be honest, they were worthy of being held up as model guerrillas in our unit.

When I lay down in my bed that night, the basket with its light load swam before my eyes. Although I had given them the penalty of a warning at the sight of the basket, I pictured them in my mind, enjoying wrestling, forgetting everything, and I found myself beaming with delight at the thought of their optimistic way of life that found expression in the wrestling bout, unconcerned with the awful situation at that time.

A man without mental composure or without an optimistic view of life cannot think of wrestling in that threatening situation. Only men of strong faith and strong will like the men of our guerrilla army can live with optimism, dreaming of the future, singing songs and wrestling even when they are surrounded by the enemy.

The KPRA was a body of optimistic people, the like of which has never been known in all history, Eastern or Western. Although there have been many renowned armies and guerrillas in the world, probably none has been as vivacious and full of revolutionary optimism and ardor for a great future as the KPRA was. The KPRA was a collective of optimistic people who overcame difficulties with laughter, changed misfortunes into blessings, and firmly believed that there would be a way out even if the whole world crumbled.

Jon Mun Sop, though diffident, was very optimistic. Taking leave of his parents to join the revolutionary army, he had said, "Please wait for me. When the proletarian revolution has triumphed and the country has become independent, I will return in a car. To return to the embrace of his parents in a car after destroying Japanese imperialism! How extraordinary and optimistic he was as he voiced his determination.

An Kil was also optimistic. I especially loved him because he was not only loyal to the revolution, but extremely optimistic, which I set great store by. He was a cheerful revolutionary who knew no pessimism.

Most of the anti-Japanese guerrillas were optimistic. In effect, all the men and women who took up arms to fight battles to the death against the Japanese imperialists lived with revolutionary optimism, knowing no pessimism. Although I considered the mistake committed by the four men serious, I refrained from meting out heavier punishment than a warning because I valued innocent cheerfulness and the courage that lay behind their behavior.

This minor incident convinced me that even if we had to make arduous marches ten times or even a hundred times, those men would follow me to the end. In my experience, optimistic people fighting for the revolution with unshakable faith will never be swayed, no matter what wind blows. Even if they were to mount the gallows tomorrow, they would stay firm. By contrast, those who drift into the revolution with the wind of the general trend, without their own faith, just to have a try at it, seeing that everyone else does, will run away to a more comfortable place sooner or later.

You comrades must have read about the way we caught crayfish during a march. That is a vivid example

that shows how important optimism is in the lives and struggles of revolutionaries. That was an event that took place during the expedition to Dunhua, the first stage of the large-unit circling operations in the autumn of 1939.

In those days, too, we went through severe hardships because of a shortage of food. To procure food supplies, it was necessary to throw off the pursuing enemy. But the enemy's "punitive" force was close on our tail, so it was impossible to obtain food. Not even a rabbit was to be found on our way, for some reason, and as we were marching through a vast expanse of wilderness, there were no local people we could turn to for rations.

The men were so exhausted that they found it difficult to step over fallen trees, and had to go around them. When a break was ordered once in a long while, they sank to the ground or lay down anywhere they happened to be to allay their fatigue. Some of them were still fast asleep even when orders were given to resume the march. Toudaobaihe, Erdaobaihe, Sandaobaihe and Sidaobaihe on the upper reaches of the Songhua River were full of marshes and primeval forests, so that even hunters were reluctant to go there. So the march was sluggish. "Comrades, shape up!" I used to shout, encouraging and helping the fallen comrades to rise. "We must keep our chins up in a situation like this. We'll take a rest and have plenty to eat when we reach Liangjiangkou."

I myself was hungry and tired, but, as their commander, I knew I should not reveal any sign of hunger or fatigue. One day, at noon, I ordered a break on the flat side of a gently-sloping ridge and sent scouts to a nearby valley to reconnoiter the place. They came back with a report that there was a small stream there and no sign of danger. I took a few of my men with me to the brook, rolled up my trousers to the knees and stepped into the water. I began to grope about in the stream, lifting stones noiselessly. Before long, I had caught a big crayfish. When I threw it onto the bank of the stream, the others cheered and dashed into the water to try to catch some more.

The men vied with one another to jump into the water. They caught crayfish in high spirits, as if forgetting their days of starvation. When their feet became too cold, they came out and stood for a while, and then jumped back into the water. All the men spent a pleasant time catching crayfish. Even the men who had been plodding on the march with great difficulty did the same.

We went back to the spot on the ridge and built a fire and broiled the catch. Eating the reddish, fragrant broiled fish, the men joked and laughed. A short while catching crayfish had made a complete change in the atmosphere of the unit. Of course, a few crayfish could not fill the men's stomachs. But the joy of fishing had dispelled all feelings of hunger and fatigue. After that, the speed of the march doubled.

Looking at their merry countenances that day, I wondered, how the men could become cheerful so suddenly, as only a short while before they had been unable to stride over fallen trees, and had sunk to the ground as soon as a break was ordered. I believed that the catching of crayfish had enlivened the men to be optimistic. While concentrating on catching crayfish, they forgot their tiredness, became refreshed, and gained new strength and grew cheerful as if they had not gone hungry for many days. The unit

acquired a cheerful atmosphere because the sport of fishing aroused romantic emotions in the men.

As I said previously, we arranged a joint entertainment for our soldiers and the local people. At Yushidong on May Day in 1939 we held a spectacular football match. As they had not played football for many years, the men were so inept that the spectators split their laughing.

The players made many slips, but the spectators did not blame them at all. Such mistakes provoked louder laughter among the people. It sounds easy, but it was not a simple matter to celebrate the Tano festival with a football game in the heart of Helong, when the enemy was concentrating all his forces on the main force of the KPRA to destroy it after the battle in the Musan area. It was a venture that was possible only for the men and officers of the KPRA, who used diverse tactics and had bold hearts bubbling over with revolutionary optimism.

Revolutionaries are optimistic about the future. The revolution itself originates from a dream of the future or from the craving for a new life. Revolutionaries have a noble ideal for the future, and devote all their minds and bodies to the struggle to realize this ideal. If they had no optimistic view of the future nor a firm faith in the victory of the revolution, they would not embark on the road of revolutionary struggle; and even though they threw themselves into the revolution, they would be unable to endure the severe trials and hardships that stand in their way.

A revolutionary's view of life, his personality, and his creed and way of life differ from those of others, not only in his unshakable faith or his unbreakable will, but more importantly in the greatness of his ideal and ambition, and in his unwavering optimistic view of the future when his ideal and ambition will be realized. It may be said that revolutionary belief, will and optimism constitute the three special qualities of a revolutionary, or the three major elements of his ideological and moral qualities.

Some foreign journalists once asked me what the secret was of maintaining my health at 80 years of age just as if I were in my fifties. I answered that the secret was my optimistic attitude to life. Hearing my answer, they all applauded. A man's physiological age is affected by the degree of his optimistic attitude to life. Likewise, the success or vitality of a revolution in a country depends on the revolutionary optimism of its people. This is my firmly held view.

An optimistic man can feel the worth of life even if he is to live only a single day. An army that lives in low spirits can neither unite nor fight well. Revolutionary faith and will can endure until the ultimate victory of the revolution when these are based on an optimistic view of the future.

What is meant by becoming a revolutionary? It means taking the road of struggle, ready to face prison, the gallows and death. It means, in other words, committing oneself to the cause of national liberation, class emancipation and human freedom, with a firm and optimistic view of the future, with a resolve and determination to dedicate oneself single-heartedly to the victory of the revolution. We talk much about living in a revolutionary way, implying living like revolutionaries. Revolutionaries beat an untrodden path without hesitation for a bright future. On this path, they endure whatever trials crop up with a belief

in eventual happiness, and throw themselves into fire and water, with a noble awareness that it is a matter of honor whether they live or die on the road of struggle for the party and the leader, for their country and fellows. This is the very reason why the lives of revolutionaries are valuable and worthwhile.

The deserters from our ranks were, without exception, pessimists who lost confidence in the future. They were weak-kneed people who had drifted into the revolutionary ranks with the wind of a revolutionary upsurge and ran away to save their own skins, afraid of manifold hardships and unfavorable situations, without caring a straw about the revolution.

The 1940s was a period when revolutionary romanticism and optimism were more valuable than anything else. These were the touch stones that tested the real value of each of my men and his loyalty to the revolution. Those who believed that we would emerge victorious followed me on the road of revolution to the end, and those who did not believe, gave up the revolution and left our ranks.

Revolutionary optimism does not come about of its own accord. It is acquired only through ceaseless education and continuous ideological training. Frankly speaking, it is not easy to take an optimistic view of the future when the enemy is strong and there is no knowing exactly when the revolution will triumph. That is why we need unremitting efforts for ideological education and ideological training. The KPRA was a strong army that was not swayed by any storm because we put great efforts into ideological education from the outset.

We consistently educated the guerrillas in unfailing loyalty to the revolution, and inspired them with an unbreakable fighting spirit, revolutionary optimism, the justice of our cause and unshakable confidence in the victory of the revolution. I made use of every odd moment to inspire my men with optimism. I used to say, "When the country is independent, let us go to Pyongyang and eat mullet soup and cold noodles and then climb Moran Hill to view the Taedong River!" Then, the men would exclaim, "Oh, let us hasten the coming of that days" giving clenched-fist salutes. They then used to fight with redoubled courage.

On May Day in 1940, too, when we ate frog meat in celebration of the festival, I encouraged them to have revolutionary optimism and a firm conviction of victory. On the evening of that day, we set up around the campfire deep into the night. We had a pleasant time, talking about the revolution, about the motherland, about our parents, brothers and sisters at home, and about the coming day of victory. "Comrades," I said to the men, "although we celebrated May Day by eating frog meat today, we will defeat Japanese imperialism and celebrate the liberation of our homeland in Pyongyang by feasting on the soup of mullet caught in the Taedong River. The enemy is now making frantic efforts to destroy us, but we will never be brought to our knees. Let us all fight more determinedly to destroy the Japanese imperialist aggressors and liberate our motherland, with a firm confidence in the future and with the lofty pride of the Korean nation and Korean communists.'

The men's faces, reflected in the light of the campfire, looked all cheerful and lively. They were full of confidence and determined to endure whatever hardships faced them bravely and optimistically, and win

back their lost country, at any cost.

If I had kept my eyes on a distant mountain with folded arms in the face of difficulties, or if I had told the men to break up and go to bed in the tents now that they had eased their hunger with frog meat, it would have been impossible to create such a cheerful and lively atmosphere in the unit. Many of them would have been unable to sleep, worrying about what was in store for them to eat the following day, although they had managed to eat frog meat that day.

When they were told to catch frogs to prepare festival food, all the comrades turned out, raising cheers and rolling up their sleeves. When I was talking about the future of the revolution deep into the night, they sat by my side, and drank in my words. They did so because they had sensed in the looks of their commander unshakable confidence in the victory of the revolution and solid determination that no peril could shake.

I was convinced that, although the enemy was sticking to us like a tick so as not to allow us to eat, rest and sleep, the KPRA would never yield to them, nor would it be defeated by them.

As you see, a commander's mental state is important. If the commander is courageous, his men will be courageous; if the commander's belief is unshakable, so will be his men's. Just as soldiers' optimism is affected by their Commander's faith, so the people's optimism depends on their leader's faith and determination. This is the reason why the masses look up at the faces of their leaders in times of difficulty. When I said we would emerge victorious, the guerrillas believed that they would triumph; when I smiled, they saw a bright future for the revolution in the smile. When I hummed a little while angling, they judged that the next operation would result in victory.

Not only, I but also all the commanding officers, inspired the men with an optimistic spirit. Choe Kyong Hwa and Kang Gun talked a lot even on the march to boost the men's morale.

Artistic and literary activities served as major means of inspiring faith and optimism in the minds of the men. There is no talking about the lives of the guerrillas without revolutionary entertainment; and it was inconceivable to talk about the victorious struggle of the KPRA apart from revolutionary songs and dances.

Comrade Kim Jong Il was right when he said that the Korean revolution had begun with songs, advanced to the strains of singing and emerged victorious with songs. Probably no revolution in the world was so closely linked to songs or woven with songs as the Korean revolution was.

The revolution itself was a heroic symphony as well as a source of songs. There can be no revolution that is separated from songs. Can you imagine the development of the international working-class movement, separately from the International? It was our songs that won over the people on our expedition to northern Manchuria, the people who had been giving us a wide berth; it was the Song of Su Wu, which the Chinese fond of, that attracted to us the people who were avoiding us.



Songs have had a great effect on my own life. It may be said that my life began with the Lullaby and that my revolutionary struggle started with the Song of Yalu River. When I was crossing Yalu at the Phophyong ferry, I made up my mind while singing the song to win back my motherland. Whenever I sang this song in subsequent years I speeded up the struggle, recollecting the pledge I had made on the river.

In my middle-school days I myself wrote the texts of songs and composed the melodies. Thus the Song of Korea, the Song of War against the Japanese, and the Song of the Ten-Point Program of the ARF were produced. Whenever I was in difficulty I derived strength from singing. When food supplies ran out, I used to pass the crisis by drinking only water and singing. In the course of this, I grew up and the revolution advanced.

When hungry, the melodies of songs allayed my hunger; and when exhausted, the sounds of songs braced me up.

Once on the Arduous March, some guards-men were buried in an avalanche and could not get up. They struggled, but their limbs failed them because they had eaten nothing for days and were completely exhausted. I myself was hardly able to keep steady on my feet at that time. I approached the men lying in the snow like mummies and sang in a low voice the Song of Red Flag. The men came to themselves at the sounds of the song, stood up and resumed the march.

Once, the enemy blockaded the Chechangzi guerrilla base with thousands of troops, so that many people there died of hunger. It was the revolutionary song sung by the Children's Corps that roused to a life-and-death battle the people in the guerrilla base who had been at the end of their tethers because of starvation and repeated "punitive" attacks by the enemy.

In those days, we had neither professional artist troupes nor professional creative workers and actors. Nevertheless, the anti-Japanese guerrillas wrote and composed songs, excellent revolutionary songs like the Guerrilla March - and produced a large number of revolutionary dramas, operas and dances.

In our days in the guerrilla zones, as in the days of the youth-and-student movement, we frequently organized artistic performances. Also, in the days of large-unit mobile operations in a wide area after the dissolution of the guerrilla zones we had cultural and emotional lives as part of our daily routine. Artistic performances were given both in mountains and in villages.

Artistic performances were given under the protection of machine guns that had been posted in the surrounding area. In this way security was provided for the performances even when the enemy came to attack.

Performances took place on festivals, in the wake of major battles, and when many recruits had joined us. All these performances were aimed at equipping the soldiers and people with an unbreakable

revolutionary spirit to destroy the enemy, unafraid of death, and at training all of them to be indomitable<sup>12</sup> revolutionary fighters.

The announcement of the performance programs was made in an optimistic way to meet the purpose.

Comrades from the 2nd Company of the 7th Regiment gave a performance in the form of army-civilian joint entertainment at Taoquanli, and this event was advertised as a "guffaw meeting". A notice was put up to the effect that a guffaw meeting would be held and that everyone would be welcome to the meeting. Large crowds gathered in the yard of a villager and in the vicinity. How witty and humorous the "guffaw meeting" was! People smiled even at the sight of the notice.

Guerrillas gave artistic performances not only on happy occasions. Even on sad occasions, they held entertainments to change the atmosphere.

After Oh Jung Hup and Kang Hung Sok fell in battle, we gave two big concerts. The officers and men of my unit had never been so mournful and indignant as they were when those comrades were killed in action. On the day of O's funeral, an evening meal of rice and salted, roasted mackerel was served in the camp, but nobody touched it. Whenever she saw mackerel after liberation, Kim Jong Suk used to tearfully recollect Oh Jung Hup. You can imagine how sorrowful my men were when they had lost him.

That was why we took time off during our marches for entertainment. Songs, dances and juggling somewhat dispelled the gloom that had enveloped the ranks. A few days later, we attacked Jiaxinzi and staged a concert on a large scale in a forest near the Sogghua River. Some veterans and historians said that the performance was given to welcome new recruits, but that was not the only purpose. It was necessary to create an optimistic atmosphere by shaking off the grief and bitterness over the loss of Oh Jung Hup.

The performance was an unusual one.

Poplars were cut down to improvise a stage, and a large tent was made by patching up several small ones. The floor of the stage was covered with blankets, for the frozen logs were slippery. The program, with a variety of items, such as choral singing, vocal solos, dances, juggling, a harmonica ensemble, and soon, was announced in advance. The curtain was to be opened and closed at the sound of a whistle.

After the evening meal, the veterans and recruits, and the workers who had helped us carrying away the spoils gathered to see the performance. I still remember Kim Jong Suk singing the Song of Women's Emancipation and dancing. When she was dancing, somebody behind the folded curtain sang a song for the dancer. Comical interludes were also interesting. A lanky recruit from Diyangxi and another from Yanji voiced narratives like a silent film interpreter moved the audience to tears.

"Conjuring Up the Spirit of Paebaengi" was quite spectacular, but I don't remember who performed it. A Chinese man danced on stilts like an acrobat playing in the interlude nowadays. That was exceptional.

When necessary, he used to walk on stilts to rub out the footprints of men on the march in the snow. The repertoire contained juggling by Jo To On and a song accompanied on a banjo by a recruit, which was novel. The last item was a sketch showing the life of the guerrillas. The script had been written by me at odd moments on the march. The performance lasted four to five hours that night, but the audience was not bored at all. At the end of the performance, more people joined the army.

The entertainments during the years of the anti-Japanese revolution proved the great importance of art and literature in inspiring people with optimism. Ideas, will and discipline are not all that is required for a revolution. Romantic emotions, in addition to ideology and morality, are also essential. Patriotism cannot sprout where there is no tangible love for one's homeland, parents, wife and children. It would be naive to assume that such a profound thought as communism could be accepted as an eternal truth by a person who has no attachment to his fellows and no feelings of devotion to them.

The whole course of the revolution against the Japanese proves that the guerrillas, with optimism and rich emotions, were unfailingly loyal to their leader and his ideas, and, with firm confidence in the victory of the revolution and with all devotion, performed heroic exploits to be remembered for ever by their country and people.

What did Park Kil Song say at the last moment of his life? He said, "Motherland! I am proud of you .Communism means the youth of the world is the cradle that raises a bright future for the country... We know this so clearly that we face death with smiles." What did Choe Hui Suk say when she lost her eyes, tortured by the enemy? She shouted that she could see the victory of the revolution, that she could see our people cheering on the day of liberation.

The Japanese hangmen said to Leei Kye Sun, who was bound in chains, that if she made a speech of repentance, they would not only spare her life, but let her live in clover for the rest of her days. But she told the enemy not to defile her ears, censured them for their ignorance of what the Korean communists were like, and then shouted on the gallows that the day of national liberation was not far off. All the fighters who laid down their lives on the road of the revolution against the Japanese were optimists, with rich emotions and unshakable confidence in the triumph of the revolution.

Revolutionaries have an optimistic view of the future. They set greater store by tomorrow than today, and give their lives when in full bloom for the good of tomorrow without hesitation. They are indomitable fighters. I speak to you here today with special emphasis on revolutionary optimism because the situation at home and abroad now requires it more urgently than ever before.

Because of the imperialists' clamor for sanctions since the collapse of socialism in several countries, our people are undergoing serious difficulties in many ways. We are faced with grave challenges in all fields of political, military, economic and cultural life. It may be said that we are in a hair-trigger confrontation with the enemy, in a situation more strained than in a war.

These difficulties, however, cannot last a hundred or two hundred years or indefinitely, These are

temporary difficulties, and are bound to be overcome. You comrades must work hard with an optimistic view of the future and in the spirit of self-reliance and fortitude to resolve today's difficulties as soon as possible and promote the country's advance.

The core of today's optimism is a strong belief that we can emerge victorious as long as we have younger people like Comrade Kim Jong Il. We are perfectly optimistic about the future because Comrade Kim Jong Il is giving leadership to the revolution. I would like to emphasize again: Believe in Comrade Kim Jong Il, and everything will be all right. The future of Korea and the 21st century exists in the mettle of Comrade Kim Jong Il. History will prove this without fail.

## 22.3. On Receiving a Message from the Comintern

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In 1939 we restored contact with the Comintern that had been interrupted for several years. It was when we had changed into new cotton-padded uniforms for large-unit circling operations. The main force of the KPRA was then undergoing military and political training in the secret camp at Hualazi.

One day Kim Il, who had been on a small-unit operation, returned to Headquarters with three prisoners in dark dabushanzi. He said that he had captured the men because their appearances and behavior were suspicious. They did not look like mountain peasants, and so he thought they might be special agents of the Japanese. They had pistols, pans and roasted soy beans with them.

When I questioned them, and when they found out that we were the 2nd Directional Army and that I was Kim Il Sung, they said they were messengers from the Comintern. They produced a match-box, in which the match sticks were longer than those produced in Manchuria or Korea. They said that they were made in the Soviet Union. At that time, however, none of us could recognize them as being Soviet-made. I asked for more proof of their identity.

They then produced a pocket knife. It was the one I had sent to the Comintern through Wei Zheng-min. It had been intended for use as a secret sign of identification when making contact with us. Many stormy years had passed, but I remembered that knife well. I had told Wei Zheng-min to leave it in the care of the Comintern in Moscow to be used by its messengers to us as their credentials. The knife dispelled our suspicions about the three messengers. It was very pleasing to us that the Comintern had sent us messengers, and had not forgotten us, though we had not yet heard their mission.

Contact with the Comintern that had been severed after the Nanhutou conference was re-established in this manner. The messengers' arrival was a great encouragement to us as we were preparing for new operations, decisive battles, against an enemy force of more than 200,000 troops. The messengers said that six men had been sent originally, but three of them, including a Korean, had fallen ill while searching for us and returned.

The Comintern, unable to pinpoint where we were, had instructed them to look for Kim Il Sung's army around Yanji. They had searched for us here and there, guessing at our whereabouts, wasting much time and suffering many hardships. Although they had a map, it was useless because we were on mobile operations at the time.

To make matters worse, the local people shunned them, and they were going to give up trying to contact us and return to the Soviet Union when a man in the village of Sandaogou hinted to them that they should. They said that their clothes had been burned in an accidental fire while they were sleeping in a mountain hut. Their food rations had run out and they had had to survive on roasted soybeans. If they had failed to find us at Hualazi, they would have abandoned their mission and gone back. They said that from

the moment they set foot on the soil of Manchuria, they had felt as if they were on a ship in distress in a raging sea. I provided them with new clothes and articles of daily use. Then, after a meal, they took a good rest in comfort in the Headquarters tent.

An official record of the Japanese imperialists about the Comintern's dispatch of messengers to the 1st Route Army of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army (NAJAA) in late 1939 goes as follows:

"On October 11, in the 6th year of Kangde (1939), eight Russians wearing pistols and dressed like bandits, accompanied by two Korean interpreters, came and had an important interview with Kim Il Sung, who was in the forest of Zhenfeng, northwest of Sandaogou, Helong County. They stayed there approximately ten days, allowing nobody except high-ranking officers to approach them, and then left there taking with them 12 infirm persons from the group of Kim Il Sung's bandits. It is said that the Russians were messengers from the Soviet Union.... Although nothing is known in detail, they must have been on an important mission directly from the Soviet Union." (Report from Hunchun consul Kiuchi, July 26, Showa 15 (1940).)

"Next, about the line of party leadership. In December last year (1939), four messengers came to the 1st Route Army directly from the Soviet Union, but nothing is known about the content of the message or its purpose. Only the fact is clearly stated in Wei Zheng-min's letter to Yang Jing-yu, a letter that was obtained in Fusong on January 22 this year (1940). It is clear ... that they took the route via Dunhua, Dapuchaihe, and then Liangjiangkou." (The Movements of the 1st Route Army of the NAJAA, Thought Monthly, No. 77, Criminal Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, November Showa 15 (1940).)

The message for us from the Comintern at that time was brief, and concerned two matters. One was the invitation of the delegates of the KPRA and the 1st Route Army to the conference of commanders of the guerrilla forces in Manchuria to be convened by the Comintern. The other was the Comintern opinion about the desirability for the anti-Japanese guerrilla forces in Northeast China to refrain from large-unit operations for the time being.

In those days, the Comintern and the Soviet Union were taking a new approach to the trend of development of guerrilla warfare in Northeast China. In the late 1930s, the internal affairs of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army movement were somewhat complicated. The 2nd and 3rd Route Armies operating in northern Manchuria and in the Jidong area differed in their opinions about leadership, cooperation and some other problems.

To settle these differences, the Comintern discussed the matters in the Soviet Union with the delegates from the 2nd and 3rd Route Armies. In the course of discussion, they thought of inviting delegates from the KPRA and the 1st Route Army in southern Manchuria for a wider-ranging discussion, availing themselves of the meeting of the delegates from the Anti-Japanese Allied Army operating in northern Manchuria and in the Jidong area, in order to work out measures to effect an upsurge in the anti-Japanese revolution in the whole area of Northeast China and to coordinate the guerrilla warfare in Manchuria with Soviet Far East policy.

Of course, the messengers from the Comintern did not explain to us these details, but such an inference was fully possible from the military and political situation in the Far East region and from the policies pursued by the Soviet Union and the Comintern. However, neither Yang Jing-yu and Wei Zheng-min nor I were in a position to leave the theatre of operations. Our absence from our units for a trip to the Soviet Union at a time when the enemy's large-scale "punitive" offensive was imminent might involve serious consequences. In carrying out our new operations and badly affect the men's morale.

The Comintern advice to reconsider the advisability of large-unit operations, too, was not to be accepted without reservation. Whether or not the suspension of large-unit operations might end in a passive, evasive dispersion needed prudent consideration. After explaining our views about the two issues to the messengers, I sent one of them to Wei Zheng-min. Our Headquarters' correspondent code-named Mangang guided him.

I sent the records and photographs about the struggle of the KPRA to the Comintern through its messengers when they left the Hualazi secret camp. These documents would be safe in the Soviet Union, and we would be relieved of the burden of carrying them about.

There were about enough documents to fill a knapsack. The photograph of me wearing spectacles, taken at a secret camp at Wudaogou, Linjiang County, was among them. Unfortunately, the messengers were said to have been captured by Self-defense Corps men at a railway crossing in Helong County on their way back to the Soviet Union. In consequence, all the documents fell into the enemy's hands. Judging from the fact that our photographs appeared in the official records of the Japanese imperialists, it is evident that they suffered misfortune on their way back to the Soviet Union.

There was a Chinese named Ning among the messengers. A letter Wei Zheng-min sent to the Comintern mentioned that Ning had been wounded in a clash with the enemy. Wei Zheng-min held the same opinions as we did about the two issues raised by the Comintern. It was in the early 1930s that we first got in touch with the Comintern. It may be said that we were in fairly close contact with the Comintern during the first half of the 1930s.

From early 1936 to the autumn of 1939, however, we had almost no contact with the Comintern. Wei Zheng-min had been to Moscow in early 1936 to settle the differences about the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, an issue that had not been resolved at the Yaoyingou conference. After that, we did not send any messenger to the Comintern, nor the Comintern to us.

Frankly speaking, we felt no need to contact the Comintern. Since the question of the strategic line that would affect the future of the Korean revolution had settled in a reasonable way, we believed that all that we needed was to continue with the revolution in line with the decision adopted at the Nanhutou conference.

We advanced the revolution in keeping with this clearly-defined strategic line, and expanded the armed struggle into the homeland from the base on Mt. Paektu. It was our consistent attitude and part of our

fighting spirit to lay down all our lines and policies independently, and carry them out in the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance. The Korean communists were short of many things and had many difficulties, but managed to overcome all these obstacles by their own efforts. We didn't beg for anything from anybody. Because we have the historical tradition and experience of firmly maintaining an independent revolutionary line ever since the years of the struggle against the Japanese, we are still the Party with the Strongest spirit of independence, the nation with the strongest spirit of independence, and the country with the strongest spirit of independence, in the world.

There are many nations in the world that have fought guerrilla wars or modern wars using regular armed forces, to drive out foreign forces from their lands. But one can hardly find another example of armed resistance that has been carried out in such arduous conditions as in our land. We often say that we fought for 15 long years without our own home front and without any support from a regular army, and there is no exaggeration in this expression. When we say this, we are referring to the arduousness of the Korean revolution. We are well aware that the Yugoslav guerrillas fought well during the Second World War. Considering, however, that Yugoslavia was occupied by the German army in April 1941, their guerrilla warfare covered only a few years. When Tito began his guerrilla campaign, a considerable part of the Yugoslav regular army remained in existence.

Moreover, the Yugoslav guerrillas received much aid from the Soviet people. According to Zhukov's memoirs, the Soviet Union sent hundreds of thousands of rifles and machine-guns alone to that country. The Yugoslav guerrillas were said to have received even tanks and artillery pieces from the Soviet people.

The Chinese people's war against the Japanese can also be explained in a similar way. Chiang Kaisek had several million troops under his command. You cannot say that his large army fought only against the communists. In fact, they had engagements with the Japanese, though in a passive and lukewarm way. If Chiang Kaisek's army contained the Japanese even a little, that should be considered support for the Chinese people's guerrilla war. The expression, Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation, should be understood as meaning joint resistance against the Japanese.

In Korea, on the other hand, the regular army ceased to exist in 1907, and we began the armed struggle more than 20 years after that. When we started the armed struggle, there was no remnant of the regular army.

Because the country had gone to ruin, a home front was totally inconceivable. There were some rifles that had been left over from the Righteous Volunteers and Independence Army, but these were all outdated and so rusty that they were useless. We had to obtain every single rifle at the risk of our lives.

There would be no end to it if we were to dwell on all the hardships we suffered during the armed struggle and the bitter trials our guerrillas underwent in the mountains for nearly a decade.

Still, we never turned to others for help.



As I have said on many occasions, the Comintern paid great attention to the revolution in large countries like China and India, but not much to the Korean revolution. Some people in the Comintern regarded the Korean revolution as an appendage to the revolution in China or Japan.

Even in its relation to the Chinese revolution, the Comintern showed great interest in the revolutionary struggle in the heartland of China, but it may be said that it cast only a glance at the revolution in Northeast China. The world knows that the Comintern sent Borodin and Blucher to the Kuomintang as advisers, and it sent Voitinsky, Maring and Otto Braun to the Communist Party of China (CPC).

By contrast, it sent no advisers to help the revolution in Northeast China. If it gave any support to the revolution in Northeast China, it was only for the 2nd and 3rd Route Armies. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Comintern was almost indifferent to the KPRA and the 1st Route Army, which were fighting far away from the Soviet-Manchurian border.

The Comintern's slighting of the revolution in Northeast China can be seen clearly from the fact that it brought commanding officers from Manchuria to the Soviet Union to give them training, but it sent most of them to China proper, not back to Northeast China, after their training. Liu Hanxing, chief of staff of the 2nd Corps of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army, and Li Jing-pu of the 5th Corps, with whom we had waged joint struggles in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao, were assigned to Yanan after their training in the Soviet Union, instead of returning to the place of their origin. Only after Japan's defeat did they return to Northeast China.

Records left by the Japanese say that the revolution in Northeast China was carried out with the support of the Soviet Union or the Comintern. That is not true. At one time, the Japanese claimed that I had been trained in the communist university in Moscow and that I had come to Manchuria in command of a crack unit from the Soviet Union in the summer of 1938. Some Japanese official records also said that I had trained my men in the Soviet Union with its support for quite a long time before I came back to Manchuria, or that I had returned to Manchuria after the Zhanggufeng incident<sup>9</sup> and exerted great influence in Dongbiandao.

This kind of propaganda was aimed at describing us as people acting under the instigation and control of the Soviet Union, or of foreign forces, in order to weaken and obliterate our influence upon the people in our country. To tell you the truth, we owed nothing in particular to the Soviet Union or the Comintern in those days. When we were in Wangqing, we wrote to the Soviet Union asking for the construction of a factory to supply us with grenades, but they did not even answer. So we made "Yanji bombs" on our own and used them.

So how was it that the Comintern, which had been somewhat cool and indifferent to the revolution in Northeast China and in Korea, took the unusual step of sending messengers to us and inviting us to the Soviet Union in 1939?

It may be explained that the change in its attitude was, in short, the requirement of the military and

political situation in the Soviet Union in those days, when an invasion by Japan seemed imminent. The Soviet Union, which became wide awake to the Japanese imperialists' wild ambition for territorial expansion and their piratical nature through the Lake Khasan incident and the Khalkhin-Gol incident, was fully aware of the danger of Japan's imminent northern expedition and, in cooperation with the Comintern, was seeking every way to cope with such an invasion.

At this point, the Comintern attached special importance to finding potential allies capable of giving armed support to the Soviet Union on its flanks and behind enemy lines, and to realizing military and political link-ups with these allies. The KPRA and the NAJAA were the only forces capable of providing armed support for the eastern flank of the Soviet Union. The Comintern regarded the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China as one wing of the Soviet Far East forces, as their outer-line forces, and tried to make them a detachment of the Far East forces.

The Soviet Union was of the same opinion on this matter. It seems that the Soviet people, who had paid no particular attention to the anti-Japanese resistance movement in Northeast China in the first half of the 1930s, realized that the guerrillas in Manchuria were not to be slighted only when they saw the KPRA and the NAJAA taking powerful offensives behind the enemy lines in support of their country at the time of the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol incidents. From that time, they made every effort to strengthen ties with us.

The Comintern also made concerted efforts with the Soviet Union. Subordinating everything to the support of the Soviet Union was the basic mission and a consistent policy of the Comintern.

This does not mean, however, that the Comintern and the Soviet Far East military authorities were in complete agreement in their views on the anti-Japanese forces in Northeast China. The Comintern considered that the guerrilla forces in Manchuria should place emphasis on preserving themselves intact until a war broke out. But the Far East military authorities insisted that a powerful military offensive to prevent the Japanese troops from moving deeper into the Chinese hinterland was operative, because the whole of China was now already in a state of war and sacrifice was unavoidable.

Anyhow, it was a notable change in its policy for the Comintern to take more interest in the anti-Japanese movement in Northeast China and invite us to the Soviet Union to discuss important strategic and tactical problems. This meant that we had grown into a powerful force that could provide armed support for the Soviet Union behind enemy lines.

However, we reserved judgment on the Comintern proposal. We did not suspend large-unit operations, nor did we visit the Soviet Union. We stayed in Manchuria instead, and resolutely carried out our large-unit circling operations as planned and foiled the enemy's offensive.

As a result of the victorious large-unit circling operations, we were able to map out a new fighting policy on our own initiative. If we had paid a visit to Khabarovsk at the invitation of the Comintern at that time or had immediately switched over to small-unit actions, we would not have been able to carry out the

large-unit operations.

I received a second message from the Comintern in mid-October 1940. At that time, all the units of the KPRA were engaged in small-unit actions everywhere, in line with the policy adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference.

Two messengers from the Comintern came to see us. They said that they had been sent by General Lyushenko working in the Headquarters of the Soviet Far East Forces, and that the general had given them a message in the name of the Comintern to the effect that I was invited to a conference to be convened by the Comintern at Khabarovsk in December. They also conveyed to me the Comintern instructions that all the anti-Japanese armed forces in Manchuria should switch over from large-unit operations to small-unit actions, and that they should move as soon as possible into the Soviet Far East area to establish bases there and regroup.

While working in the Headquarters of the Far East Forces, Lyushenko dealt with the Comintern affairs. Later, I went to Khabarovsk and met him there.

"Hello, Comrade Kim Il Sung. It's very difficult to get to shake hands with you," he said and explained how he had sent small groups of men to get in touch with me. I got the first impression that he was an attractive man of ardor and friendship.

Lyushenko often used the alias Wang Xin-lin, doing a lot of work to establish contact mainly between the Comintern or the Soviet Union and us. According to the messengers, the Khabarovsk conference of the commanders of the guerrilla forces in Manchuria convened by the Comintern in early 1940 had ended in a meeting of only the delegates from the guerrilla units in northern Manchuria and in the Jidong area because of the absence of the delegates from the KPRA and the 1st Route Army.

However, the Comintern did not abandon the original plan, and was set on holding the conference of the commanders of all the armed forces in Northeast China to discuss the direction of the development of the anti-Japanese resistance movement in Northeast China and straighten out the difficult situation facing the Soviet Union.

The messengers arrived in October 1940, but the Comintern had issued the notice on the convocation of the conference in September of that year. Telegraph messages had been sent to the 2nd and 3rd Route Armies, but we received the message through the messengers because we had no wireless communication system. The Comintern invited the commander-in-chief, political commissar, Party secretary and other major military and political cadres of each route army to the Khabarovsk conference.

I notified Wei Zheng-min of the arrival of the Comintern messengers, and proposed to him to take joint measures for the event. Wei Zheng-min said that he ought to attend the conference to be held on the authority of the Comintern, but that ill-health did not permit it. He asked me to represent not only the KPRA but also the 1st Route Army of the NAJAA and the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee.

The Comintern idea of small-unit actions was in agreement with the policy we had adopted in this regard at the Xiaohaerbaling conference. The military and political situation in this period was much more difficult than in late 1939 and early 1940, when we were engaged in large-unit operations. In other words, it became difficult to move about in large units.

In the first place, the enemy had completed setting up a network of internment villages, which obstructed our procurement of food supplies for large units. We often obtained a handful of food grains or a piece of maize cake only at the cost of our blood and the blood of our comrades.

The enemy in those days were putting special efforts into what they called eradicating the basic roots and ideological work. The enemy's policy of internment villages in this period was much more vicious than the one they had pursued against us in West Jiandao. They burned down houses located outside the fortified villages to "keep the people away from the bandits", tightened the control of food grain, ammunition and other supplies, were bent on searching for and arresting people "in secret touch with the bandits", and strictly guarded ferries and other river crossings. The control of illicit opium cultivation was unusually severe at this time.

At the same time, they clamored about "relief for the poor" and working for the people's livelihood" in order to demoralize the revolutionary masses and other sections of the population.

Our experience proved that small units in action found it relatively easier to obtain food than large units. The food problem was a vital consideration in working out strategy and tactics. Food took priority over tactics. Can you fight without eating? I use the expression, "food, cloth-mg and housing", instead of "clothing, food and housing" from my experience of many hardships due to food shortages in the years of guerrilla warfare.

If we operated in small units, moving in and out of the Soviet Far East region, it would be convenient to do political work among the people and to train the cadres of our units. We should also be able to engage in military actions in the summer season, and military and political training in the winter season in places recommended by the Soviet Union, with ample time and space. It would also provide favorable conditions for preserving and developing our forces.

In the late 1930s and the early 1940s we lost many cadres because of the enemy's large-scale "punitive" operations.

We informed the messengers from the Comintern of the fact that in view of the requirement for the development of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we had adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference the policy of preserving our forces and undertaking small-unit actions, and said that we would take into consideration the invitation to move into the Soviet Union.

Securing a breathing space as well as geographical space for regrouping in a situation in which the

enemy was making frantic efforts to destroy us would be beneficial to us not only for the armed struggle at that time but also for its future development. In addition, a base for us to settle down in was needed to preserve and consolidate our forces. At that particular moment we paid a lot of attention to the need to preserve our forces, because we were convinced that the day of ultimate victory of the Korean revolution was near at hand.

In the latter half of 1940, the conflagration of the Second World War enveloped the whole of Europe. Everyone had a foreboding that a war would break out between the Soviet Union and Germany. Japan was planning another war in the southern hemisphere, even before it had been able to crush China. It was as clear as day what the outcome would be if Japan were to provoke a war against the United States and Britain.

The best thing to do in this situation was to avoid a frontal clash and preserve and build up our forces. This view of ours was in basic agreement with that of the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

It was welcome news that the Soviet Union was ready to provide us with a base in its territory where we could assemble, regroup, and preserve and build up our strength, and to give us the military and material support we needed.

However, I did not make a hasty decision about our move to the Soviet Union, because it was an important matter that required prudence. The first problem was how long we would be staying there: Would we be there for a short time or for a long time? If we were to establish our base there and remain there for a long time, how could we continue with the armed struggle? Would we be able to move back when necessary into our homeland or into Manchuria? How could we give leadership to the movement in the homeland if we were in the Soviet Far East region? These were questions that required answers.

In these circumstances, I contemplated a number of choices.

The first option was for the commanders to go to participate in the conference, leaving behind the main force where it was at the moment, and then continue the struggle in the original theatre of operations on return of the commanders. The second option was for the commanders to go first to attend the conference, and then take our unit into the Soviet Union at an appropriate time, after sizing up the situation there. The third option was to make our participation in the conference and our unit's entry into the Soviet Union coincide, and take further measures while in temporary residence there.

I settled the matter on the principle of reinforcing our secret base in the Mt. Paektu area even in case of our entry into the Far East region and, on this premise, of establishing a new base in the Soviet Union. So I needed time and detailed information regarding the situation.

My original intention had been to develop small-unit actions in the area under our control during the winter, in line with the policy adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference. So we had been making preparations for the winter operations, and it was not advisable to abandon these preparations.

On the basis of this analysis and judgment, I put off giving my answer to the request of the Comintern. We continued with our winter preparations while waiting for the persons we had sent to the Soviet Union to investigate the situation in detail and return to inform us of the results. We gave Lee Ryong Un an assignment to open a new route to the Soviet Union and report on the feasibility and safety of the route we had been using.

Lee Ryong Un was a regimental commander who was renowned for his fighting skills in the 3rd Directional Army. He became regimental commander as successor to Jon Tong Gyu when the latter fell in the battle of Dashahe-Dajianggaflg in Antu County in August 1939. Lee Ryong Un was to go to the Soviet Union carrying Wei Zhengmin's letter to the Comintern. But he did not go for some reason.

He was a man of large build and looked much older than he actually. He was reticent and prudent. Usually he was quiet, but on the battlefield he was courageous and swift in action. Once his unit raided an internment village in Dunhua County because the unit had run out of food on the march. The reconnaissance party had reported that there were only three enemy soldiers in the village. The original plan was to send a machine-gun squad to destroy the enemy, but Lee Ryong Un said that there was no need to send a machine-gun squad against only three enemy soldiers, and that he would go with his orderly to deal with them and then give a signal for the rest of the unit to move into the village. His orderly was Thac Pyong Ryol.

When darkness fell, Lee Ryong Un and his orderly went down to the internment village and walked straight into the barracks without being challenged. In the main office, however, there were approximately 30 officers being given a briefing.

The orderly, who followed him into the room, said in subsequent days in recollection of the event that at that time he thought that he would never get out of there alive. Lee Ryong Un, taking out his revolver, said in a calm and composed manner: "You are surrounded. Raise your hands up".

The senior officer grabbed Lee's revolver. Lee Ryong Un pulled the trigger, but the gun misfired. He pulled it back so hard that the Japanese officer let go of the barrel. Lee Ryong Un reloaded his revolver and shot the officer down, kicked off the resisting officers, and overwhelmed them single-handed. Many officers were shot to death. All this time, Thae Pyong Ryol stood by the door, without firing a single shot. Only when he heard Lee Ryong Un shouting, "Pyong Ryol, guard the wall!" did he notice scores of pistols hanging on the wall.

Lee told his orderly to collect the pistols, and took the officers in the room prisoner. That night he and his orderly captured all the enemy soldiers returning from a "punitive" action. Lee Ryong Un became renowned as a peerlessly courageous, audacious and talented commanding officer in the raid on the Emu County town and in the battles at Dashahe-Dajianggang, Yaocha and in many other battles.

I think I gave him the mission on the outskirts of Xiaohaerbaling. I met him and Im Chol at the same

place. When I told him to open a safe route to the Soviet Union, he said that I need not worry about that. When he and Im Chol were opening the route on the Soviet-Manchurian border, Lim Chun Chu and Han Ik Su left for the Soviet Union, escorting the wounded and infirm.

The wounded and infirm comrades reached their destination in safety, but Lee Ryong Un, who had departed with the mission of an envoy, died a heroic death in an encounter with the Japanese. He had carried out his assignment to open the route and succeeded in sending the wounded to the Soviet Union by that route. The other part of his mission was to go to the Soviet Union and inform us of the situation there. While proceeding to the border to carry out the mission he thought of providing new clothing for his companions, who were in rags, saying that the delegates from Headquarters to the Soviet Union should be decent in appearance. He decided to obtain clothes with the help of a charcoal burner with whom he had been in touch.

But the charcoal burner was a turncoat, who had once worked for the revolution but had become a secret agent of the enemy. He said he would go to buy clothes for Lee Ryong Un, but brought back with him a hundred enemy soldiers. Lee fought against heavy odds and died heroically after mowing down scores of the enemy.

Contact with the Comintern, which had been interrupted for several years, was re-established in this manner. In subsequent years, I maintained close touch with the Comintern and worked hard to strengthen solidarity with international revolutionary forces.

# The Autumn of 1940

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Reading articles recently about the history of the anti-Japanese revolution, I have found some phases that need deeper exploration, although historians have made many research achievements in this field.

Especially, information about the events in the period centering on the Xiaohaerbaling conference is scarce. The autumn of 1940 was unusual. Several tomes would not be enough to cover all the tortuous events we experienced. Because we were engaging in small-unit actions after the change-over from large-unit operations, we did not have big engagements like the Battle of the Fusong County Town or the Battle of Jiansanfeng.

Everyone says that no march was so hard as the Arduous March and no period was so trying as the period of the Arduous March in the history of the revolution against the Japanese. That is correct. It may be said, however, that the trials we underwent in the autumn of 1940 were no less severe. During the Arduous March we had to endure unbearable physical hardships, whereas our adverse circumstances in the autumn of 1940 were another trial in which our mental sufferings were just as great.

Strong will power is needed to endure mental suffering just as much as for physical hardships. And the process of their endurance is accompanied by a ceaseless struggle with oneself. Our experience in the autumn of 1940 was exactly of this kind.

After adopting the policy of change-over from large-unit operations to small-unit actions at the Xiaohaerbaling conference, we reorganized ourselves into many small units under the 2nd Directional Army, in keeping with the changed fighting strategy.

After designating the missions and areas of activity for the small units, I moved towards the Yanji area in command of a small unit. At that time, Kim Il's small unit was given an assignment to operate around Wangqing and Dongning, and O Paek Ryong's small unit was given the task of obtaining food grain for the winter around Yanji and Antu, before they were sent off on their assignment.

We waited for O Paek Ryong's small unit at the edge of Facaitun, Yanji County. But there was no word from them for many days. I did not wonder why, because in those days it cost us blood to obtain even a single ear of maize. To obtain a few pounds of cereal, it was necessary to break into an internment village, a venture that had to be made at the risk of our lives.

Throughout the previous summer, we had lived almost entirely on boiled-down *musuhae* (a plant of the family Compositae .Tr.). There were plenty of these plants in the mountains, but by themselves they could not dispel the feeling of hunger, no matter how much we ate.



A reconnaissance party, which had been sent to look for a possible source of food, came back with a report that they had found a farmhouse down at the foot of the mountain. They said that there was a spacious ploughed field around the house, in which three Koreans were living. They added that if we asked them, we might get some food grain.

I sent Kang Wi Ryong to the farmhouse, telling him to talk to the farmers, without hiding the fact that we were guerrillas. When he asked them for help, they were reticent, saying that they would have to go to Mingyuegou to obtain food, but that they could not get past the enemy's surveillance. After thinking it over, however, they said it would be ignominious to decline the guerrillas' request, and left for Mingyuegou. Hearing this report from Kang, I ordered my men to be wide awake and stand guard with especial vigilance.

The men on mess duty were preparing gruel from todok (*Codonopsis lanceolata* .Tr.). This plant, if crushed and boiled down, made something like gruel, and when mixed with a little cereal it tasted very good. It was the best of similar grass foods. Just as the gruel was coming to the boil, Son Jang Chun, who was standing guard, shouted that the enemy was swarming upon him. The men rushed to the guard post, but said that they could see no enemy anywhere. Still, Son Jang Chun insisted that the enemy was approaching, pointing down towards the foot of the mountain. But there was nothing but tree stumps where he was pointing.

A man who has had a fever can be subject to such a hallucination, and Son had had a fever not long before. While I was calling the officer on duty to account for having posted a sick man to keep watch, the alarmed men in the kitchen threw away the gruel that had cost us much effort.

A few days later, I received a report that the farmers who had gone to Mingyuegou to obtain food, had returned together with a man in a Western suit, who was requesting an interview with me. The man turned out to be Choe Yong Bin who had once been a company commander of the Wangqing guerrillas. He was one of the best fighters as well as a man of great physical strength.

Once he had come to see me and asked me for leave of absence, saying that he needed to recuperate from exhaustion. I had sent him home on leave so that he might hunt in the backwoods of Xiaowangqing and help the Party organization there in its work. Later on, he had been charged with involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case. He fled to the enemy-ruled area, leaving behind a note to his wife, which said,

"Good-bye to you and the baby, I would hate to be killed on a false charge of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan' case while fighting for the revolution. So I am going away. I will continue to work for the revolution there."

His wife, who had given birth to the baby only a few days before, came to see me in tears, with the note. Her face was swollen probably because of ill health after delivery. The baby seemed to have trouble breathing. How can you run away to the enemy area to save your own skin, deserting your wife and baby in distress! Are you a man at all? These feelings of indignation flared up in my heart. Though

condemning him for his cold heart, I hoped that he would continue to work for the revolution, as he said in his note.

We looked after his wife and baby, and later sent them to the Soviet Union, together with our wounded men. Now, after five years, that man, Choe Yong Bin, appeared before me again. Our current circumstances were worse than at the time of the "Minsaengdan" hullabaloo. He had climbed up the mountainside carrying a knapsack from which a pan was dangling. The fact that he was in good shape gave me the impression that he had not gone through many hardships.

"How many years has it been?" he bellowed, as he stepped into the Headquarters tent, and hurried towards me. I received him cordially. His past was not without blemish, but he had been an officer under my command at Wangqing. He immediately reeled off a lengthy account of how he had trekked around in the mountains to join the guerrilla army again. I asked whether he had eaten, and he said that he had just had a meal of boiled rice down the hill.

He produced a packet of rice, dried flatfish and a bottle of liquor from his knapsack. I noticed that the pan tied to the knapsack was not sooty at all. It was strange that a man who said that he had been trekking in the mountains looking for the guerrillas for many days and had boiled rice only a short while before, had a brand-new pan.

I did not doubt that he had degenerated into scum of the Earth like Lee Jong Rak. There had in fact been a rumor in my unit that Choe Yong Bin had surrendered to the enemy. Not knowing that he had aroused my suspicions, he filled a cup to the brim with liquor and offered it to me as a token of a memorable reunion. When I declined, his hand holding the cup suddenly began to tremble. Hearing my angry voice, he must have felt that his real identity had been revealed. I demanded that he tell the truth, how he had met the farmers, and what was his real purpose in coming to see me.

He instantly realized that it would be useless to lie any further. He confessed that the three men in the farmhouse were enemy spies, and that, hearing their report, he had brought three "punitive" units, which had now surrounded the area. At his signal the "punitive" troops were to fall upon us. I felt that we were trapped. My heart, however, ached more at the fact that Choe Yong Bin had become a lackey of the Japanese imperialists and had so shamelessly appeared before me than at the thought of the danger that had to be faced with a determination to fight to the death.

What appalled me more than that was that he was resorting to all kinds of absurd rhetoric to try to persuade me to surrender: "General Kim, I know how hard your circumstances are," he blabbed, reading my face. "The whole of Manchuria is swarming with Japanese troops. No matter how hard you might try, it would be useless now. General Kim, you have done all that you can for the good of the nation, and no one will blame you even if you surrender right now.

Those who have surrendered are sitting pretty. They say that if you come down, they will give you the position of governor of Jirin Province." Unable to hear him out, I interrupted with angry words:

"Yong Bin, how is it that you've come to this pass? You were once a company commander at Wangqing. Shame on you! We were sorry that we had lost a good commanding officer when you deserted your wife and child. How dare you come to see me in this wretched state? Do you have an iota of human conscience, you who have thrown yourself into the enemy's embrace, abandoning your family? You have degenerated in a shocking way."

A man who thinks of himself alone ends up like this fellow. Choe Yong Bin's treachery had started already when he left the company on an excuse of ill health to live in the backwoods of Xiaowangqing, I should say. At that time he placed his own health above the revolution. He later claimed to have run away to the enemy area to escape death on a false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case, but that was the outcome of his weak faith in the revolution.

As Choe Yong Bin's case shows, one step back from the road of revolution will end up in treachery. That was why I always said to my men that the only way for a revolutionary to follow was the road of revolution, dead or alive, that going astray from this road would lead to reaction, to treachery, to being human scum, and that a man who would abandon the cause of revolution, afraid of the rain and snow, bullets, hunger, marching through mountains, prison and gallows, would instantly change his colors if he was dragged to the rack a couple of times and forced to gulp down peppered water.

It can be said that treachery begins with the discarding of conscience. This is the lesson we learned from the incident of Choe Yong Bin. A considerable number of people left the guerrilla zone for the enemy area, as Choe Yong Bin did, in those days, when many people were executed on false charges of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case in Jiandao. But most of the revolutionaries stood firm in the revolutionary ranks, instead of deserting the guerrilla zone, although they were unfairly subjected to persecution, stigmatized as "Minsaengdan" members.

Why? Because they could not afford to sell out their consciences even if they were to be murdered, because they knew well that deserting the cause of revolution was the way to counterrevolution and nowhere else. As you can see, the revolutionaries considered it a disgrace and a living death to abandon their consciences and turn away from the red flag of the revolution. They thought that, in short, it would be an inhuman act.

In the years of the Shenxiandong guerrilla zone, there was a woman guerrilla named In Suk in Park Song Chol's company. One day she showed a letter secretly to Park Song Chol, who was on sentry duty. It was a letter from her husband, the commander of another company. The gist of the letter was that he was "bound with a red rope", meaning that he had been charged with involvement in the "Minsaengdan".

In those days, Park Song Chol was an instructor in charge of the young guerrillas of his company. From the point of view of her attitude towards her organization, it was a good thing that she showed the letter to her instructor to discuss her problem with him. She said to him that because her husband had been branded a "Minsaengdan" member, she, too, would not be safe. She asked him what he thought about her going down to the enemy area, instead of suffering undeserved death.



*Photo: Women guerrillas.*

Park Song Chol advised her that that would be absurd, that going down to the enemy area would mean abandoning the cause of the revolution and surrendering to the enemy, and that she should by no means do so. She said that she was not giving up the revolutionary struggle, but escaping from the "Minsaengdan" uproar.

Park Song Chol explained that by leaving the revolutionary ranks she would end up becoming a counterrevolutionary. The woman guerrilla realized at last that she had been on the brink of going astray, wandering from the road of revolution. It was fortunate that Park Song Chol gave her good advice. Had he encouraged her to run away if she didn't want to be killed, what would have happened to her?

In Suk continued to fight in the revolutionary ranks and died a heroic death in battle, so I heard. When poised between revolution and desertion, she was able to choose revolution, because she took her personal affairs to her instructor, instead of dealing with the matter as she pleased, and received advice from her organization. As a result, she regained her reason and overcame her vacillation like a revolutionary.

By contrast, Choe Yong Bin ran away, unlike a man of integrity, to the enemy area, leaving behind a note to his wife, not even thinking of getting assistance from his comrades in the revolution. If he had valued human conscience even a bit, he would not have run away in that cowardly manner to the enemy area, deserting his wife who had just given birth.

He lost control of his personal feelings, and that decided his fate. Loss of self-control may result in committing an unimaginable capital crime. A man who thinks only of himself and regards his own feelings as absolute will probably betray the revolution sooner or later. Treachery always starts from self-centeredness, while the concept of the collective cannot and will not give rise to treachery.

Revolutionaries must, therefore, exercise self-control at all times and try to become accustomed to the concept of the collective. This means that revolutionaries must have clear consciences as well as engage in a ceaseless process of self-cultivation leading to self-perfection. A man who thinks only of himself can never be a revolutionary, nor can he follow the road of revolution to the end.

At Nanpaizi, Lee Jong Rak, in the uniform of a Japanese army employee, appeared before me and advised me to surrender; at the time of the Arduous March, Lee Ho Lim ran away, and Lim Su San too became a turncoat; and now Choe Yong Bin had come to see me and was blabbing absurdities. How much heartache they caused me!

What was the crux of the question?

The point was that both Lee Jong Rak and Choe Yong Bin were men I had had confidence in and had taken loving care of. Had I not trusted them and had I not loved them so much, my heart would not have ached so bitterly. Commander of the Korean Revolutionary Army was not a simple job, nor was the job of company commander in the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army. It would have been a different matter if the turncoats had stayed quietly at home. My heart ached all the more bitterly because these brazen-faced traitors appeared in front of their one-time commander and preached "surrender", without an iota of conscience and not at all ashamed of betraying the revolution.

How did they dare to appear so shamelessly before my face?

It was because they had become blind to the situation and degenerated to such an extent that they believed that the revolution had come to naught, and that, therefore, they could preach "surrender" to the face of their old commander with impunity. Choe Yong Bin met the same end as Lee Jong Rak.

That day the enemy surrounded our mountain base in double and treble rings. Campfires could be seen all around. No matter how tight they might surround us, however, they were not able to cover all the mountain. They usually posted sentries on ridges and valleys after surrounding us. We slipped away down the mountainside, leaving the enemy to clash among themselves.

We crossed the road that led from Mingyuegou to Antu, and then took shelter in a nearby forest. While getting our breath, we saw the "punitive" troops fighting among themselves in the gorge of Facaitun, where we had been. We disappeared deeper into the forest.

Because of this unexpected situation, we found it difficult to get in touch with O Paek Ryong's small unit. Originally we and O Paek Ryong's small unit were to meet in the gorge of Facaitun. So somebody had to go there to meet his messengers . a very risky venture.

A more serious matter was that his small unit had no idea that the gorge was in the enemy's hands. We sent Ji Pong Son and Kim Hong Su to the rendezvous. When he had joined the guerrilla army at Changbai, Kim Hong Su had got the nickname of "little Bridegroom". He had a strong sense of responsibility. Ji and Kim met the messengers from the small unit at the rendezvous the next day, and returned safely with a note from O Paek Ryong.

On their way to the rendezvous they had had a hair-raising experience. They had had to dodge from tree to tree to avoid the enemy's eyes. Meanwhile, O Paek Ryong's small unit had obtained some food grain by raiding an internment village. Later they sent most of it to Headquarters.

From Facaitun we proceeded to the base in Huanggouling, Antu County. We decided to spend the winter of 1940 there, conducting small-unit actions. To engage in small-unit actions and restore the damaged revolutionary organizations, building up a mass foundation, it was necessary to winterize ourselves

properly. I had given many other small units, in addition to O Paek Ryong's assignments to procure food rations, salt, cloth and other supplies needed for the winter.

Politico-ideological preparation was the most important of the preparations for the winter. It was especially important to give the men ideological training so as to help them keep their revolutionary faith, however difficult the circumstances might be. In addition, we had to tighten discipline more than ever to prevent any accidents.

Later, however, Kang Wi Ryong's small unit revealed a sign of ideological laxity. On their way back from their mission to look for a place suitable for setting up a secret camp, they came upon a stream teeming with fish and fired at them at random. I felt a chill in my heart when I heard the account of the incident. How dangerous it was to fire shots when enemy soldiers were building a gun turret on a hill nearby! Our plans for doing a lot of things, entrenched in the secret camp, might have fizzled out because of their gunshots.

Another thing that I still remember from those days is an incident concerning a cow. Jang Hung Ryong was involved in this incident. Jang, a squad leader of the machine-gun platoon, was out in command of a small unit seeking to obtain food supplies in the vicinity of Jiapigou. He came back with a cow that belonged neither to a lumber station nor to the "people's association", the cattle of which were branded with the Chinese character for "king" on the horns. It obviously belonged to a peasant.

We could, of course, make allowances for Jang's situation at the time. On their way down to a village to obtain food grain, they saw the cow on the mountainside. Jang Hung Ryong looked here and there for the owner of the cow, but in vain, and told his men to take it to the secret camp. He stayed at the spot where the cow had been tethered, to pay the price to the owner if he came. Jang waited for a long time, but the owner did not turn up. So he returned to the secret camp without paying the price after all.

As we found out later, when the owner came to take the cow back he saw an armed man hanging about there, and ran away in fear. Hearing this account of the incident, I got indignant at Jang. It would have been another matter if he had been a raw recruit without a good knowledge of the regulations of the revolutionary army. I could hardly believe that a veteran revolutionary like Jang Hung Ryong could make such a blunder. In 1932 he had lost a finger to an enemy bullet and been taken prisoner in an engagement with Self-defense Corps men.

He soon escaped, however, and returned to his unit. At that time, the other guerrillas suspected that he might have been given a mission by the enemy and allowed to return. He had made strenuous efforts to recover the confidence of his comrades and, in this way, endured severe hunger in the Chechangzi guerrilla zone and the Arduous March.

It was beyond my understanding that such a man could steal a cow. Maintaining good relations with the people had been emphasized ever since we first embarked on the armed struggle, and this principle was clearly stated in the regulations of the revolutionary army. By 1940 our relations with the people had

been maintained on a high level. How good were these relations? When local people brought aid goods to us we would return them as soon as possible.

In the spring of 1940 we engaged in a battle at Yangcaogou. When the battle was over, the local villagers sent us many chickens. We, for our part, offered them a price more than twenty times what the chickens were worth. The villagers were unwilling to receive the payment. They even got angry, saying that they were not the sort of people to sell chickens to the revolutionary army, to their own sons and daughters, and that we were indifferent to their goodwill.

We had nothing more to say. It was natural that they were offended at us responding to their goodwill by offering cash. Then we said we would not accept the chickens if they refused to accept the money. The money and chickens were passed back and forth several times. Finally, we accepted the chickens and they the money. When we withdrew from Yangcaogou, we released the chickens for which we had paid.

Now this was only a recent event, not an event of many years or months before. But Jang Hung Ryong, ignoring this precedent, had transgressed the principle of maintaining good relations with the local people. His comrades criticized him severely. They insisted that Jang would be unable to amend his mistake even by death. Jang also criticized himself unmercifully. Therefore, we only punished him and told him to return the cow. He belonged to Kim Il's small unit and fell in battle in 1941, when I entered Manchuria again in command of a small unit.

When we were at the Huanggouling base, a man of Chinese nationality, named Cai, deserted. He was unusually homesick. One Harvest Moon Day he was so homesick he ate moon cakes in tears. He was very weak-minded, so the Party organization had given him a lot of individual education.

As he had caught a fever, we sent him to a hospital in a secret camp. Later, Headquarters received a report that he had egged on a woman guerrilla of a cooking unit to join him in returning to their home village. He was not faithful to military service. When on duty, he used to doze off. When told to stand guard, he used to complain that he had a stomachache. One cannot carry out revolution against one's will.

At last he deserted us, turning his back on our goodwill, and to make matters worse, he soon came back as a guide for a "punitive" force. Most of my men were out on a small-unit mission at that time. Only a few orderlies and I remained in the secret camp, so, as Headquarters, we moved to the backwoods of Mengshancun.

Small units and groups assembled there after carrying out their missions. O Paek Ryong's small unit obtained hundreds of sacks of maize and stored them in secret places. They bought maize standing in the fields, harvested the crop, put the ears in hemp sacks and then stored them in chests deep in a forest nearly 13 miles from Fuerhe.

It was around that time that the Comintern sent its messengers to invite us to the conference of Korean,

Chinese and Soviet commanders to be held in the Soviet Union. As I mentioned before, I sent an advance party to the Soviet Union to get to know the situation there in detail, at the same time ensuring that the preparations for the winter in Northeast China were finished in keeping with the policy we had adopted.

Unfortunately, however, word soon came to me that all the stored food supplies had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Because Regimental Commander Bi turned traitor, the location of the stored food rations was revealed to the enemy. The regimental commander was a man, nicknamed Bilaogada, who had been saved by Kim Myong Hwa's kind nursing in the forest near Dunhua. Even the regimental commander turned renegade, unable to endure the hardship. Having discovered the location of the maize storage, the enemy set fire to the forest and took away all the maize. Months of hard work came to naught overnight.

Despite all these setbacks, however, I did not despair. True, the difficulties in those days were great, but we had gone through many such before. How arduous the hardships we had suffered on the tableland of Luozigou, the two expeditions to northern Manchuria, and the expedition to Fuson were! What an agonizing experience the Arduous March was!

We had endured all these trials. We had endured freezing cold, hunger and the darkness of despair. We had stood up, enduring heartache and grief over our fallen comrades. That was because we all had firm confidence in the victory of the revolution, and always bore in mind the mission and responsibility we had undertaken before our motherland and nation. We always kept true to our revolutionary conscience, no matter what situation arose.

"Let us overcome this crisis, come what may, and bring about a fresh upsurge in the revolution. All right! Let us see who will be the winner!" I said to myself at Mengshancun at that time. The sense of revolutionary mission in my innermost heart set me afire with greater audacity, and with ardor and a lofty sense of responsibility for the revolution in the recurrent trials.

What was the way out?

A forced march was the sure way to break out of our dilemma. But such a course required ideological mobilization for inspiring the men with confidence and courage. The upshot of this was the convocation of the Mengshancun conference. I told my men frankly:

"The situation is growing more and more rigorous and arduous. We all believe that our revolution will triumph and that our country will become independent, but nobody knows when. We have fought for some ten years or more already, undergoing all sorts of hardships. But it is difficult to say definitely how many more years we shall have to endure such sufferings, five years, ten years or more?

"It is clear, however, that the ultimate victory will be ours. "Needless to say, our road ahead is beset with many difficulties. These difficulties may be much more serious . ten times or twenty times . than those we have experienced so far. So any of you who is not confident about following us to the end in carrying out the revolution may go home.



"If any of you wants to go home, we will give him travel expenses and food rations. We will not take issue with him for giving up the revolution. It cannot be helped if he is too weak and lacking in confidence to remain in our ranks. Anyone who wants to go may go. But you must say goodbye to us for ever when you go."

Hearing this, the men rushed to cling to my arms, saying tearfully:

"General, we won't regret it even if we die without seeing the day of the revolution's triumph. Dead or alive, we won't leave you, General. How long can a man live after all? We prefer fighting here to the death to betraying our comrades and going down the mountain to live in submission to the enemy. We'll share life and death with you, General!"

Their resolve moved me to tears. You can't imagine what great strength and courage I derived from their determination. No speech, no matter how eloquent, could move people as profoundly as what the men said to me that day. The pledge we made at that time was our resolve not to waste our own blood that had been dedicated to the great cause of revolution against the Japanese.

The conference held at Mengshancun reaffirmed the unbreakable unity between the commander and his men, the steel-like unity of the leader and the masses. This conference deepened the belief of the anti-Japanese guerrillas that the basic way of saving the anti-Japanese armed struggle from the current crisis was to keep their revolutionary conscience intact, and for the commander and his men to share the same lot through to the end. The conference inspired us with a firmer conviction that the Korean revolutionaries would surely emerge victorious if they fought indefatigably with unshakable revolutionary faith and will.

At this very moment, a message came from the comrades I had sent to the Soviet Far East region. The message again requested that Wei Zheng-min and I, and other delegates of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army (KPRA) and the 1st Route Army of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army (NAJAA), come to the Soviet Union as soon as possible to participate in the conference of the Korean, Chinese and Soviet army commanders to be convened by the Comintern at Khabarovsk.

The message also said that preparations had been made to receive the guerrilla forces coming to the Soviet Union from Northeast China, availing themselves of this opportunity. The Comintern proposed that we spend the winter in the Far East region and then discuss measures for further operations to suit the circumstances.

Now that the Comintern's purpose of holding the conference was clear, and now that the other commanders of the NAJAA were said to have arrived, I decided to go to the conference in command of part of the main force of the KPRA.

Making this decision was not easy. In general, the men were reluctant to go farther from their motherland

and leave the battlefield, even on a temporary basis. When I announced the decision to the men after making it at a meeting of the commanding officers, some of them asked if it wouldn't be better for myself and a few other delegates to go there, since the Comintern had invited the commander to the important conference, leaving the other men behind to continue the fighting.

Of course, it might have been an alternative. But I thought at that time that it was better to take the unit to the Far East region. So I said,

"We are not going there to give up the revolution or to live there for good. I think I must participate in the conference this time, although I did not do so the last time, and discuss the future of the Korean revolution on a broader scale with the Comintern or the Soviet authorities. Doing so may be beneficial to us. I am not sure how long the conference will last, so I intend to take you, comrades, with me. I must not leave you behind when the preparations for the winter are not satisfactory. So let's go to the Soviet Union together, and return to the battlefield when the winter is over."

Later, looking back upon rigorous autumn of 1940, I thought that I, as Commander, had made the right decision at the right time. We finished the preparations to go to the Far East region and left Chechangzi towards the end of October.

Before our departure, I sent messengers to Wei Zheng-min and O Paek Ryong, both of whom were too ill to go with us. O Paek Ryong, who had not met the messengers, searched the whole area of Antu looking for us, so I was told. He arrived at Chechangzi when we had already started off.

It was at that time that he and his men shed tears when they found the food supplies and winter clothing we had stored underground for them. The two straw sacks of rice and scores of padded clothes we had buried for them before our departure saved them from great difficulties over the winter.

Later, O Paek Ryong and his small unit came to the Far East region in our wake. On our way there, too, we went through many hardships. In the daytime we mostly took shelter in woods and marched by night, which cost us much effort and time, to avoid the enemy's surveillance. But as far as Laotougou we marched at a stretch.

When we were marching towards Baicaogou, we encountered a "punitive" force. As we were crossing over a mountain pass in single file, the enemy was climbing up the pass towards us from the other side. We turned back and ran up over the ridge. Kim Jong Suk, who was carrying a heavy load on her back, lagged behind, finding herself in a great danger.



*Lee Wha Rang note: Photo: Kim Il Sung and wife Kim Jung Suk, circa 1940 in Siberia. Kim notes in the paragraph below that Kim Jung Suk was loaded down. She was pregnant with Kim Jong Il at the time.*

When we crossed the ridge, I checked the column and found her missing. I went back onto the ridge and looked down the pass along which the enemy was approaching. Kim Jong Suk was plodding up under the weight of the heavy load. The enemy was pursuing, shouting that she must be caught alive.

I fired my Mauser at the pursuers. The Guard Company men also protected Kim Jong Suk with machine-gun fire. Thus she was saved. We shook off the enemy and camped near Hamatang. That day the enemy prowled all around, so we had to lie hidden in foxtail millet fields near the village until dusk. There were cabbages and radishes

growing in the furrows, and we allayed our hunger eating them, but the cold was unendurable. We lighted candles to warm our fingers that were numb with cold.

From Hunchun onwards, two Korean peasants guided us nearly to the Soviet-Manchurian border. They said that beyond the mountain in front of us was the territory of the Soviet Union. We crossed the mountain and found a wide stretch of fields without any landmark. It was impossible to identify the boundary between the Soviet Union and Manchuria. I told Lee Tu Ik to climb a tree and see if any river flowed in any direction and if there were any houses. He had been good at climbing trees since his boyhood. But he said that he could see neither a river nor houses.

We moved further to the east for some time, and found telephone lines in the woods. The insulators differed from those in China and Korea, so we felt that we must be in the Soviet Union, but further confirmation was needed before we moved on. That night we sent out a reconnaissance party and took a rest for a good while. Then, we suddenly heard the crackle of machine-gun fire in the east. Soon the reconnaissance party returned with the report that they had found a sentry box about four kilometers away, and that they had been discovered while they were fumbling with the cups and kettle there, and had fled. They said that, judging from the unusually large and clumsy shapes of the cups and kettle, it was clear that the sentry box belonged to the Soviet border guards.

The Soviet border guards fired their machine-guns all through the night. Our reconnaissance party must have alarmed them. The next day, I sent Lee Ul Sol and Kang Wi Ryong to parley with the Soviet border guards. They came back with some of the Soviet guards, but the language barrier caused us a lot of trouble. I said over and over again that we were Korean partisans and I was Commander Kim Il Sung. Fortunately, they seemed to understand the word "partisan" and my name.

Our journey to the Far East region of the Soviet Union was difficult in this manner. Although we were

going there at the invitation of the Comintern, we had to suffer so much, for our route and time of entry into the Soviet Union had not been notified to the border guards.

Quarantine upon our entry into the Soviet Union delayed our journey for several days. My men felt bored, spending whole days in one room, not doing anything in particular. Some of them sang all day. They sang all the revolutionary songs they knew; and when their repertoire was exhausted, they sang whatever ditties they had picked up many many years before. The sight was spectacular.

My comrades had a large repertoire of songs. I went to their room and urged them not to feel too bored. "You may be sorry about being delayed for several days at the border," I said, "but you must not think that the Soviet comrades are inhospitable to us. Every country has its regulations about border transit. There may be the necessary investigation of personal identities in accordance with the regulations. Quarantine is needed to discover carriers of diseases. Recently, the bacteriological research group of the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria has spread infectious diseases in the Soviet Far East region. So the Soviet government has adopted a decision to make strict investigations of people entering its territory.

We have a lot of work to do as well as a lot of trials to go through. Our revolution is now facing a new phase, and the day of our national liberation is not far off. So we must make up our minds firmly and stoutly fight till the day of the liberation of our country, loudly singing revolutionary songs."

Then, Soviet guards took us to Posiet. At the border post I met Kim Sung Bin who had been an interpreter for Hong Bom Do's volunteer army. He acted as an interpreter for us and the Soviet people. He knew a lot about Chechangzi. Our women guerrillas saw Soviet women walking about freely and wearing fashionable dresses. They wondered aloud, in tears, how long it would be for Korean women to be able to walk about like them.

As you can see, each day of the autumn of 1940 was replete with hardships and trials. But even in the midst of these hardships and trials, we were not stifled but survived, because we faced and broke through whatever adversity cropped up, without wavering in the least, cherishing our revolutionary faith.



*Photo: Kim Il Sung (center) in Siberia - 1940.*

We never took a roundabout way when treading the thorny path. We always rushed straight forward to liberate the country. We never avoided any trial if it could hasten the day of the liberation of our motherland. It may be said that revolutionaries are destined to go through trials, because the lives of revolutionaries who change the outmoded and create new things are always accompanied by trials and difficulties. A man who is afraid of trials or avoids them cannot be called a revolutionary.

I still remember the autumn of 1940. The mountains of Jiandao, where we used to sleep in fallen leaves in the late autumn, still swim before my eyes. In the Soviet Far East region, where there were neither gunshots nor death, we felt as if we were in a wonderland. However, we still had many trials to endure, as five years still remained till the day of the liberation of our motherland.

## 22.5. My Memories of Wei Zheng-min

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I made the acquaintance of Wei Zheng-min when he came to Jiandao to participate in the conference at Dahuangwai as the representative from the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee. After that, he and I always shared warm friendship on the road of anti-Japanese struggle.

Wei Zheng-min was a professional revolutionary who had fought against the Japanese for the cause of patriotism from an early age. He had been trained at the military academy at Anyang, and when he was a student in Beijing he had participated in anti-Japanese demonstrations. His revolutionary career, it may be said, entered a new stage when he moved his activities to Manchuria after the September 18 incident. In Manchuria he first settled down at Daowai, Harbin, where he worked as Party secretary.

Wei Zheng-min looked more like a university professor or a civil servant than a soldier. He was a meditative man who, had it not been for the revolution, might have devoted all his life to scientific research or to authorship. He was characterized by sincerity, integrity and modesty. He was also sociable and not afraid to speak his mind.

One of the personal files of commanding officers of the guerrilla forces in Manchuria, kept in the Comintern archives, reads:

"Wei Zheng-min. Deputy commander of the southern group. A member of the CPC. Secretary of the South Manchuria Party Committee.... A politically well-qualified commanding officer. "He enjoys high prestige among the guerrillas. No details about his past record. "No negative information available from the Reconnaissance Bureau or the Ministry of the Interior."

Wei Zheng-min, though a Chinese revolutionary, made unremitting, silent efforts to give support to the Korean revolutionaries and to promote the Korean revolution. How serious the issue was at the Dahuangwai conference! If he had not been fair and reasonable as the Party representative at that time, we might have found ourselves in very unfavorable circumstances. He, alone of all the other people, listened to me with attention, affirmed what had to be affirmed, and took into consideration what had to be considered. After the conference at Yaoyinggou, he took the trouble to visit the head office of the Comintern in Moscow to get answers to our complaints.

His visit to the Comintern proved very helpful to the Korean revolution. I still remember how warmly I embraced him when he returned to Nanhutou, shadowed by death all the way. When he hugged me as he conveyed the Comintern view that my argument that the Korean revolutionaries should fight under the banner of the Korean revolution did not contradict internationalism, and that my statement that the struggle against the "Minsaengdan" had been conducted in an ultra-leftist way was right, as well as the Comintern conclusion that the Korean revolutionaries should lead the army of the Korean people and fight in Korea and on the Yalu River, I determined not to forget his efforts to assist the Korean revolution.

On the occasion of the Nanhutou conference, the warmth of friendship between him and me became redoubled. During the fortnight we spent together at Nanhutou, we had many conversations, and I gained a deeper understanding of him.

Wei Zheng-min supported my opinion about unit reorganization at the conference at Mihunzhen, and warmly welcomed the formation of the ARF later.

Around that time, he started to study the Korean language, saying that a smooth communication of ideas was essential for the joint struggle with Korean comrades. He dearly loved the Korean guerrillas. This was the expression of his internationalist support for and encouragement of the Korean revolution.

We, in our turn, did everything we could for Wei Zheng-min, as there is a saying that "Love is returned for love."

On our advance to the Mt. Paektu area immediately after the Mihunzhen conference, he was wounded near Fuerhe. At that time we had several war-horses we had captured from the enemy. We picked the best one and gave it to him. He then went as far as Maanshan on horse-back with us. I got Park Yong Sun to arrange medical treatment for him at Dajianchang. Subsequently, Wei Zheng-min went to Yang Jing-yu to convey to him the Comintern directive about the expedition to Rehe, and then came to see me when we were putting the finishing touches to the secret camp on Mt. Paektu after our advance to West Jiandao.

After his journey to southern Manchuria, Wei Zheng-min looked very ill. He had been suffering from chronic heart and stomach troubles. As he was a man who threw himself into any work, careless of his own well-being, on top of his weak physical constitution, his health went from bad to worse. Once, while leading a group of his men over a mountain ridge he had a heart attack and fell unconscious. When I advised him to get treatment, he passed off the matter with a smile, saying that physical illness was not to be feared, but ideological ill-health was to be dreaded.

I gave Park Yong Sun and Kang Wi Ryong an assignment to build something like a sanatorium in the vicinity of Hengshan for Wei Zhengmin. The Heixiazigou secret camp was situated in the battle area, so it was not suitable for the treatment of an infirm person like Wei Zheng-min. He spent some time recuperating in the secret camp at Hengshan.

I sent Kang Wi Ryong and Kim Un Sin to Changbai to obtain tonics and nutrients for Wei Zheng-min. They bought artificial terrapin blood, rice, flour, tinned goods, milk and even pancakes for him at the cost of 200 yuan they had raised. He was especially fond of food made of flour.

On the lunar New Year's Day I celebrated the festival with Wei at the Hengshan secret camp. Park Yong Sun made a noodle-press out of an empty tin, and Wei and I ate starch noodles and even drank a few cups of liquor on the festival that year.

Quan Yong-lin, commander of the 8th Regiment, also enjoyed the festival with us. He could cook wonderfully. He even brought with him different kinds of knives for slicing meat and cutting vegetables, and prepared a variety of dishes. He sliced meat as thin as paper and portioned the slices out from dish to dish and then sprinkled condiments over them like lightning. His skill was uncommon.

We also assigned men to Wei at his request. Hwang Jong Hae and Paek Hak Lim were my favorites, but I sent them to him because he had asked me for them by name. Hwang Jong Hae was a man intelligent enough to cope with the job of company commander or regimental commander. He was capable of tackling any difficulty. He spoke Chinese fluently. He was also the right man to work among the masses.

Paek Hak Lim had served as my orderly for many years. He was faithful, straightforward and did not spare himself, so I had always taken him with me wherever I went. He was with me when we attacked Pochonbo. When I was commanding the battle under a poplar on the Karim River, he ran about here and there to convey my orders to different units. When the comrades of Choe Hyon's 4th Division were surrounded by the enemy at the time of the Battle of Jiansanfeng, I ordered the 7th Regiment and the Guards Company to charge to their rescue. It was Paek Hak Lim who conveyed the orders to these units at that time.

Once he asked me to assign him to a combat unit so that he himself could fight, so I did as he wished. After some time, I asked him how he liked the combat unit, and he answered that he liked it very much but that he could not get along away from me, and asked me to make him my orderly again. So I brought him back to Headquarters. He underwent the Arduous March with us. He was one of the men who shared a handful of roasted rice flour with me at that time.

If an officer and his men get along on such intimate terms, they will take loving care of each other as they would their own flesh and blood. To be candid, sending away such a man to work with another man went somewhat against the grain. However, I sent him away without regret, because he was wanted by Wei Zheng-min, who was seriously ill.

Wei Zheng-min grieved at the news of Yang Jing-yu's death more bitterly than anybody else. He was so upset that he ate nothing for days. Wei, who assumed command of the 1st Route Army after Yang's death, fought courageously. That autumn, he was again wounded in battle. To make matters worse, he contracted a lung disease and became unable to command his army.

After killing Yang Jing-yu, the Japanese imperialists displayed his head on a post on a public street, and claimed that they had destroyed all the anti-Japanese allied forces operating in southern Manchuria. They also bragged that the anti-Japanese struggle in Northeast China would soon peter out.

The NAJAA was, in fact, undergoing severe trials both internal and external at that time. The Japanese "punitive" actions were growing more rampant as the days went by, and traitors and waverers were appearing one after another in the ranks of the armed struggle. Fang Zhen-sheng, the commander of a brigade, was captured and turned renegade around the time of Yang Jing-yu's death. On top of that, the



mass foundation of the 1st Route Army in southern Manchuria was severely weakened.

This state of affairs greatly worried Wei Zheng-min, political commissar of the 1st Route Army and secretary of the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee. He thought that there were gaps and serious shortcomings in his work that had to be corrected.

He was a soldier and political worker who made strong demands on himself and was modest enough to learn from other people's experience and good points. He told me that he would like to hear about the experience of the Korean comrades, who had made great efforts to build up party and mass organizations in the wide areas of eastern Manchuria, Korea and West Jiandao even after the dissolution of the guerrilla zones.

In the years of the guerrilla zones, the revolutionary organizations had mobilized everything in all the counties in Jiandao. Even children aged six or seven marched around carrying clubs and singing loudly, doing the work of the Children's Corps. Women cast off the shackles of feudalism and rallied around the Women's Association. These organizations roused the people to activity. The masses turned out to fight shoulder to shoulder with the soldiers, to do farm work and set up the people's revolutionary government.

By contrast, the units in southern Manchuria had concentrated on military actions and slighted work among the masses after they left the guerrilla zones. After the high-spirited masses from the guerrilla zones moved into the enemy-ruled areas, the guerrilla units did not pay much attention to them, nor did they think of laying new mass foundations. In consequence, their ties with the people crumbled.

These units revealed the tendency to resolve all problems by means of military action and military confrontation. This tendency found its most glaring expression at the time of the expedition to Rehe.

Even when conducting an armed struggle, you must not regard military actions as everything. Guerrilla warfare is impossible without reliance on the masses, the mass foundation that supports and assists the army and provides it with manpower reserves.

When we were organizing the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army, we did not have many rifles, nor was our force large. However, we declared war against the Japanese without hesitation. We launched ourselves into the great war against the Japanese with firm confidence in victory and a strong determination to destroy the enemy. To compare the fighting capability of our guerrilla army with that of the Japanese army that had powerful economic support was out of the question.

What, then, did we rely on when we started the great war against the Japanese? We made our decision to defeat Japanese imperialism on the strength of our politico-ideological, moral and tactical advantages based on our revolutionary outlook concerning the masses. The absurdity of the expedition to Rehe was that the masterminds of the expedition attempted to fight the Japanese army in a frontal confrontation, away from terrain familiar to them, swayed by their subjective desire, without giving priority to their ties with the people and tactical calculations.

After the dissolution of the guerrilla zones, we had adopted the decisions of the Nanhutou and Donggang conferences, decisions to build the Party, to form the united-front organization, to reorganize the Young Communist League into an Anti-Japanese Youth League, and to extend the armed struggle to the area on the Yalu River and the homeland. Entrenching ourselves in the Mt. Paektu area, we had formed the ARE and expanded it quickly in the wide area of the homeland. We had taken all these measures because we valued work among the masses, who were to back up our military actions.

The KPRA benefited greatly from these organizations. Had it not been for them, we would have found ourselves in a fix, no matter how elusive the tactics we employed, in a situation when the enemy was making frantic efforts to separate the people from the guerrillas by building mud walls around their villages and prevent even a handful of cereals or a single thread from leaking through the walls.

The army in relation to the people is what the needle is to the thread; they must always exist in inseparable unity. At a conference convened by the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee, Wei Zheng-min got a decision adopted on sending well-qualified guerrilla officers to various parts of Manchuria to correct his past mistake.

It was fortunate that, though belatedly, he realized his defects and decided to rectify the tendency of placing exclusive emphasis on military actions. What he was concerned most about while struggling with his illness in the secret camp was how he could retrieve the huge manpower and material losses of the 1st Route Army and revitalize its strength, and how he could bring about a fresh upsurge in the south Manchurian revolution that had suffered failures and setbacks.

While racking his brains to formulate a flexible strategy in anticipation of the forthcoming great event and to change his tactics in line with the strategy, he was unable to make a decision to cope with the prevailing situation, and so he was extremely irritated.

As an option, he was thinking of effecting a link-up with the 8th Route Army in the interior of China, and waiting impatiently for a reply to the letter he had sent to the Comintern in April that year.

Here is a passage from his letter to the Comintern, which reveals his problem: "We are now under attack from the cunning enemy in every quarter, when neither directives nor documents and correspondence from the central authorities are available to us because we have been completely out of touch with the central authorities since the autumn of 1935...

"We really feel as if we were aboard a ship without a navigator on a vast ocean, or like a blind child groping about here and there. Although the waves of the great revolution are raging, we are like a man who is cooped up in a strange house or locked up in a large, airtight drum.... We have been suffering unexpected, serious losses in our activities since we lost touch with higher organizations."

The purpose of his letter was to give a clearer knowledge of the difficult situation of the 1st Route Army to the Comintern and the Central Committee of the CPC and to get active support from them for

bolstering this army.

His expectations from the Comintern and the CC of the CPC were most unlikely to be met. The Comintern, or the Soviet Union, was pursuing a policy of appeasement at that time, so as not to provoke the Japanese imperialists in Manchuria, in consideration of its own security, and the CC of the CPC was up to its ears in fighting against the Japanese imperialists in a far-off theatre and was not in a position to help the revolution in Northeast China.

Wei Zheng-min pinned his hopes on the Comintern and the CC of the CPC for support in the circumstances because he had been away from military and political operations for some time, was unable to obtain the latest objective information for a correct estimate of the situation and was very weak in both mind and body because of ill health.

He was waiting so impatiently for a reply from the Comintern because he had strongly appealed for cadres and war supplies needed for the 1st Route Army. He believed that support from the Comintern was the only way to revitalize his army. At a time when the Comintern found it difficult to send even a messenger to him, where could it get cadres, and how and by which route could it send war supplies? I was of the opinion that restoring the damaged underground organizations to strengthen the mass foundation and receiving manpower and material support from them would be more reasonable than expecting impossible support from the Comintern.

After the conference at Xiaohaerbaling, I went to see Wei Zhengmin, who was getting treatment in the secret camp at Hancongou. My heart ached as I saw his face so pale from illness. My comrades, who had been taking care of him, said they were worrying about his recurrent chronic illness, although his wound was healing up. It occurred to me that in the adverse conditions at the secret camp, it would be difficult to ensure his recovery. Wei Zheng-min said that something like a stone was surging up in his chest. I shuddered at his words because I had heard my mother complain of such a symptom when she had had heart trouble.

Wei Zheng-min, however, tried to turn the topic to the immediate task of the guerrilla movement, and its strategy and tactics. I told him that we had adopted the policy of preserving and accumulating our revolutionary force in keeping with the prevailing situation and of changing over from large-unit operations to small-unit actions, and that we had taken practical measures in line with this policy. He expressed his support for our policy, saying that the Korean comrades had made a correct estimate of the situation and formulated a correct strategy.

We had a long conversation about the situation and our future activities. We discussed the matter of sending the wounded, sick and infirm comrades to the Soviet Union and of obtaining winter food supplies needed for small-unit actions.

That day I advised him to go to the Soviet Union for medical Care. However, worrying about the conditions of the 1st Route Army, he said he had too many things to put right to go to the Soviet Union.

He asked me, instead, to inform the Comintern of the actual situation of the 1st Route Army in detail and confirm whether his letter had arrived there if I was to visit the Soviet Union.

I was distressed to see Wei Zheng-min worrying more about the future of the 1st Route Army than over his own ill health. Since the death of Yang Jing-yu, his army was undergoing severe trials.

The situation at that time did not permit me to visit the Soviet Union right away, nor did I have any intention of doing so. We promised to get in touch with each other through messengers, when necessary.

"Commander Kim, that is my request of you!"

That was what he said to me when I left the secret camp. That was his last will, for I never saw him again.

The request was, in fact, simple and commonplace.

But I heard it with a heavy heart and understood its profound meaning. I believe he had meant to ask me to carry the revolution through to success, the revolution to which he had dedicated all his life and for which he had a close attachment. He might have meant to entrust the work of the 1st Route Army to me.

I cannot forget the look in his eyes as he made the request. It was a look of deep grief. When I left the secret camp, I left food rations and other supplies for him, but my heart was heavy. Could rice or winter clothing revive him? What he needed was good health to carry out the revolution.

I impressed on Hwang Jong Hae and Kwak Ji San that they should do their best to cure him by whatever means.

They said they would take good care of him and told me not to worry. My feet would not move on at the thought of leaving them behind on that nameless mountain. So I delayed my departure.

On my visit to Khabarovsk later, I complied with his request. The officials of the Comintern said that Wei Zheng-min's letter had arrived without a hitch.

Wei Zheng-min's secret letter to the Comintern was made public after the Japanese imperialists carried the full text of the letter in their official publication, Thought Bulletin No. 25, in December Juche 29 (1940).

The letter fell into the hands of the Japanese imperialists because it was contained in the kit of Lee Ryong Un, a regimental commander of the 3rd Directional Army, which was captured by the enemy when Lee fell in battle at Wangqing in the autumn of that year. For this reason, it was understood that the letter had not reached the Comintern. Who, then, delivered the letter that the Comintern said it had received without a hitch? The following document kept in the Comintern archives may be considered to give a clear answer to this question.

"Top secret. To the Executive Committee of the Comintern. "I am sending translations of the report dated April 10, 1940 and two letters from Comrade Wei, Deputy Commander of the 1st Route Army and Secretary of the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee of the CPC.

Sheliganov, August 10, 1940"

The document bears the date January 23, 1941, and Dimitrov's signature.

The first section of the letter reads:

"Our information comprises four sections. Many things have been omitted or overlooked here. So I hope that you comrades talk to the messenger Wang Run-cheng and find solutions to all the questions you are concerned about.

"He will tell you about the secrets which I have refrained from putting down in my letter. "I stand special surety for the messenger."

The quotation suggests that Wei Zheng-min duplicated his letter to the Comintern, one copy to be delivered by Lee Ryong Un and the other by Wang Run-cheng. Slight differences can be found in some parts, but the basic content is the same in the two copies. The only major difference is that the letter discovered in Lee Ryong Un's kit says nothing about Wang Run-cheng.

Wang Run-cheng was known by his nickname, Wangdanaodai, when he was fighting in close coordination with me earlier in eastern Manchuria. He was the political commissar of the 4th Regiment, 2nd Division, 2nd Corps of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army, and later became the political commissar of the 2nd Division of the 2nd Corps of the NAJAA.

In the spring of 1941, I came back to Manchuria in command of a small unit, braving great perils, and paid a visit to Hancongou where he had last met Wei Zheng-min, but the latter and his company were no longer there. I heard the details about them several months later, at the end of the year.

When I returned from small-unit activities in Manchuria and Korea, Soviet comrades wanted to see me at once. A Soviet army colonel in civilian dress, who was said to have come from Vladivostok, appeared before me. He said that a group of people, supposedly a small unit of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, had come across the Soviet-Manchurian border and was staying in Vladivostok. He added that they insisted on seeing me because I was the only person who could identify them.

Traveling to Vladivostok by car with the colonel, a thousand conjectures ran through my mind. Mightn't Wei Zheng-min be among them? Mightn't it be a false rumor that he had died of illness? I ardently hoped that he would still be alive. The car seemed to be moving at a snail's pace, so I was most impatient.

On our arrival in Vladivostok, the colonel brought Kwak Ji San to me. I was surprised to see that aide-de-camp Kwak had grown so old in a single year as to be taken for a man in his sixties. His appearance testified to all the hardships suffered by Wei Zheng-min and his company. Kwak Ji San had been a teacher in Yanji before he joined the guerrilla army. Later he had become a political worker. In his early years, he had been in command of a guerrilla company in Yanji.

He was a seasoned revolutionary who had gone through all kinds of hardships. Many guerrillas had learned from him how to read and write. He was good-natured and well-informed, and enjoyed respect from everyone everywhere. People respected him from the bottom of their hearts, because he helped them through thick and thin.

He was also generous. Some people called him a "twelve-width skirt", which must have meant that he was magnanimous to everyone, or that he was like the mistress of a large family, a mistress who takes the trouble of looking after all the family affairs. When the 1st Route Army was organizing its guards regiment, we had recommended him as Wei Zheng-min's aide-de-camp for supply work. Since then, the men had followed him, calling him "aide-de-camp Kwak, aide-de-camp Kwak!"

Kwak Ji San did everything for Wei Zheng-min. More than once he ventured into the enemy-held area at the risk of his life to obtain food and medical supplies. It was no accident that Wei Zheng-min used to say that he was able to live long thanks to the aide-de-camp. When his excitement at our reunion had subsided somewhat, Kwak asked the Soviet army colonel to bring the Mauser he had entrusted to him. The colonel did so, and Kwak told me in a choking voice that it had belonged to Wei Zheng-min.

I took the Mauser from Kwak, but I didn't dare to ask what had happened to Wei. Anyway, the solitary revolver explained everything. It was not until that day that I heard in detail about Wei's death, as Kwak explained. After I bade farewell to Wei Zheng-min at Hancongou, he and his men moved to the secret camp at Jiapigou in Huadian County. There are also other places with the name Jiapigou in Wangqing and Dongning Counties, and in many other parts of Manchuria. Wei's company established two secret camps, one several miles north of Jiapigou, the other a little farther to the southwest of the district.

Wei Zheng-min lodged in the first one. Hwang Jong Hae, Kim Pong Nam and a doctor named Kim Hui Son were with him. A machine-gun section of seven or eight men also stayed with them. Kwak Ji San, Kim Chol Ho, Ju To Il, Lee Hak Son, Jon Mun Uk and Kim Tuk Su set up their quarters in the second secret camp.

Kwak Ji San alone knew the locations of the two secret camps. He traveled between the two, carrying heavy loads of food and delivering messages. He obtained food rations with the help of puppet Manchukuo army officers with whom he had sworn Jiajiali (brotherhood). These officers complied with all Kwak's requests. The commander of the special corps of gendarmes was also under, his influence.

Both the puppet army officers and the special corps commander ran with the hares and hunted with the hounds. They brought food, salt and other supplies to the guerrillas in the mountains, and then took away

worn-out clothes, shoes, pans and similar things from the guerrillas to make false reports that they had killed or wounded guerrillas, and got bonuses for doing so.

It was said that Wei Zheng-min had wielded his pen until the last moment of his life, writing reports, reviewing his guerrilla struggle and drafting documents relating to his unit. It must have been his revolutionary desire to work as long as he breathed. When death was knocking at his door, he turned over his Mauser and his documents to his comrades, saying, "You vigorous young comrades must fight to the last. The revolution depends on you. The revolution is an arduous undertaking accompanied by bloodshed and sacrifices, but you must not be afraid of such hardships. Our bloodshed will not be in vain.

"You must go to Comrade Kim Il Sung without fail."

Wei Zheng-min died in March 1941, at the age of thirty-two. He died too young. There was neither a volley for his death nor a mourning ceremony. His comrades buried him with acute sorrow and great care.

Strange to say, one of his men, of Chinese nationality, sneaked down the mountain and guided the enemy to his grave. There is no knowing why that man, Wei's favorite, did such a thing.

The enemy's report that they had killed him in action was not true. He was not killed in action, but died of illness. The Japanese were fond of such false propaganda. They exhumed Wei in order to get a bonus. Only barbarians could do such a thing.

The account of how the Mauser reached my hands also showed that Wei Zheng-min's bodyguards had undergone many excruciating experiences. Wei Zheng-min handed over the Mauser to Hwang Jong Hae, whom he loved dearly and trusted deeply.

Hwang was in charge of communications at first. When necessary, he also acted as an interpreter for Wei. Later, he became the leader of the guards platoon, guarded Wei at all times and became his right-hand man. He translated documents and materials under Wei's instructions and wrote for him when he was too ill to write himself.

Hwang and Kwak guarded Wei to the last moment of his life. Hwang was a devoted guard. Once, Wei's white horse disappeared from the secret camp. Leaving Wei in the care of a machine-gunner, Hwang went out to look for the horse. As he was tracing the horse's footprints he noticed enemy troops stealing towards the secret camp. They were also following the horse's footprints in the opposite direction. It was a critical moment. The guardsmen were all out obtaining food supplies, and only Hwang and the machine-gunner were by Wei's side.

Hwang hurried back to the camp, and, after hiding secret documents, ran through the forest, carrying Wei on his back. Bullets whistled like hail around him, but he clasped Wei in his arms, shielding him with his own body, and kept running. He was determined to save Wei, even at the cost of his own life. Wounded in the shoulder and unable to carry Wei any further, Hwang turned him over to the machine-gunner. He

took the machine-gun himself, and held the enemy back with constant firing.

Being such a man, he was dearly loved by Wei Zheng-min. It was not without reason that Wei handed over his Mauser to him.

After the death of Wei Zheng-min, Hwang Jong Hae and his small unit moved to the secret camp where Kwak Ji San was. They hunted wild boars, bears and any other animals they could find both for immediate consumption and for supplies of food for the next march. It was at this time that Hwang Jong Hae was killed in a hunting accident. As he was chasing a wounded bear the animal turned and mauled him to death. It was a tragedy that we lost such a loyal man in such an accident.

The Mauser was taken over by Lee Hak Son, a friend of Paek Hak Lim's from the same hometown. Lee Hak Son cleaned the weapon every day, in memory of Wei Zheng-min. He also met an accidental death.

After his death, Kwak Ji San took care of the weapon.

Kwak grew opium while conducting small-group actions, in preparation for moving into the Soviet Union.

It was probably around this time that Ryu Kyong Su and his small group met an old man who had been in touch with Kwak in the vicinity of Jiapigou. But because the old man kept this fact secret, Ryu Kyong Su failed to meet Kwak, and returned.

Kwak and his company obtained new uniforms and food rations including salt in exchange for the opium they had grown. In spite of these preparations, they experienced many hardships on their way to the Soviet Union. When crossing the Soviet-Manchurian border, they even took their trousers off and carried them on their heads across the river, so I was told. The revolver reached me through several hands.

Later, Kwak Ji San joined Kim Il's small unit and moved into Manchuria. With the help of the puppet Manchukuo army officers with whom he had a Jiajiali relationship, he formed underground organizations and did political work among the people.

Kwak and other Korean communists, who had served as bodyguards for Wei Zheng-min, made every effort to put an end to the tendency of concentrating exclusively on military actions, the tendency over which Wei had been so remorseful in his lifetime, and to strengthen the mass foundation of armed struggle.

Kwak fell in battle, probably in 1943. He had returned to Manchuria on a reconnaissance mission, but on his way back after accomplishing his mission, he was shot by the enemy. Wei Zheng-min gave us sincere support when the Korean revolution was undergoing the severest of trials. That is why I still recollect him with affection.



Whenever he had a difficult decision to make on practical matters, he consulted us. How deep the confidence was that he placed in us can be seen from the fact that after Yang Jing-yu's death in battle, he discussed exclusively with us the problems relating to the work of the 1st Route Army and the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee.

When cadres of the 1st Route Army brought to him problems that needed his decision, Wei Zheng-min sent them all to me.

After Wei Zheng-min's death, the Comintern discussed with us all the problems relating to the work of the 1st Route Army of the NAJAA and the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee.

Wei Zheng-min was an excellent man and an excellent revolutionary. For this reason, we helped him wholeheartedly.

Many people made painstaking efforts to take care of him, and many internationalist fighters protected him with their lives.

Wei Zheng-min was specially concerned about the Korean revolution, and cherished a special friendship for us.

According to our comrades who worked at his side for a long time, Wei Zheng-min always linked the future of the Korean revolution with us, and, therefore, he always told them to give loyal support to me.

Wei Zheng-min's life was beautiful because his life was the same both at its beginning and at its end. A man who has started his career for his country, for his fellow people, and for humanity must end his life for his country, for his fellow people, and for humanity. Only then will his life be remembered by people for ever as a noble and beautiful life. In the years of the revolution against the Japanese, people's spiritual world was a pure one.

Since the emergence of modern revisionism in the international communist movement, not many people talk about internationalism. Even those who used to preach internationalism whenever they opened their mouths are now busy feathering their own nests.

The times were good when revolutionaries, though not well fed and well clothed, helped one another, regardless of nationality, offering food and other necessities to one another. Communists must not betray their internationalist duties and obligations anytime, anywhere.

## 23.1. The Khabarovsk Conference

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In the summer of Juche 73 (1984) the great leader stayed overnight in Khabarovsk on his way back from an official goodwill visit to the USSR and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. That day he recollected with deep emotion his life at the training base in the Far East region of the Soviet Union and the conference held in Khabarovsk.

Khabarovsk is a place I wanted to visit. When I was entering the Soviet Union I did so via Manzhouli, so I had no chance to visit Khabarovsk. But since I am returning home via Khasan and Tumangang Station, I have decided to stay here overnight. I have long wished to see this place again and my wish has been realized after scores of years.

In the days when the KPRA and the NAJAA formed the International Allied Forces (IAF) together with the units under the Soviet Far East Forces and waged a joint struggle, Khabarovsk became an important place where the officials from the Comintern and the communists and military cadres of Korea, China and the Soviet Union got together to exchange opinions and discuss the orientation and methods of their joint struggle. In those days the Headquarters of the Soviet Far East Forces was situated in Khabarovsk. The Oriental Propaganda Department of the Comintern was also located there for some time. It was in November 1940 that I first entered the Soviet Union by crossing the Soviet-Manchurian border, to participate in a conference convoked by the Comintern.

After going through the due procedures, I parted with my comrades and proceeded instantly to Khabarovsk, guided by a Soviet officer.

I gazed at the snow-covered land of the Far East region through the car window. Flashing before my mind's eye were the images of the innumerable independence champions and patriots who had shed blood on this land. How many martyrs and patriots followed in vain the thorny road on this land, lamenting the national ruin and crying for the restoration of national sovereignty? Some came to obtain weapons, others to form organizations, and still others to ask for assistance for the prostrate nation of Korea. No one came to this land to see its sights. But the independence of the country was still a national task. Praying for the souls of my forerunners lying buried in this land, I made up my mind to win independence by our own efforts and thus avenge them.

My thoughts were complicated from the first step I took towards Khabarovsk. And why not, as it was the first time for me to attend a conference called by the Comintern? It was noteworthy that the Comintern had invited us to the conference. This signified that its leadership was paying a high tribute to the KPRA. The Comintern had seldom invited Koreans to its meetings.

In the 1920s people connected with the Korean Communist Party frequented the Comintern, each

carrying an ID card with a stamp produced by a seal made from a potato; nevertheless, these were factional visits aimed at winning hegemony. They were not activities in the true sense of the word aimed at promoting the communist movement. What these people achieved by their scurrying back and forth was the disbandment of the Party itself and the compulsory transfer of its members to the parties of other countries under the principle of one party per country.

As far as I know, the Comintern leadership rarely put forward the issue of the Korean revolution as an independent agenda item of any meeting.

After the breakup of the Korean Communist Party, the Korean revolution virtually disappeared from the view of the Comintern. What the Comintern was mostly concerned about in Asia was the revolutions in such big countries as China and India. Some people in its leadership prohibited the Korean people fighting in Northeast China from advocating the Korean revolution and issued one order after another that did not suit the actual situation, thus doing considerable harm to the Korean revolution.

It was at its Seventh Congress that the Comintern recognized the independence of the Korean revolution, and for the first time expressed its official support for it. Despite its poor attention to the Korean revolution, we did not resent this too much, but supported the Comintern consistently and valued its work and the importance of its existence.

In the years after the First World War it performed great exploits in rallying the ranks of the communist movement and in ensuring the purity of those ranks to cope with the new situation. We made a due appraisal of the achievements of the Comintern that performed faithfully the role of an international vanguard for the victory of the world revolution. With the dignity of being the masters of the Korean revolution and the pride of being full-fledged members of the international communist movement, the Korean communists strove for the victory of their revolution and at the same time made efforts to implement the directives of the Comintern aimed at promoting the world revolution.

I expected a great deal from the Khabarovsk conference. But I thought that the conference would not proceed smoothly, as it would be the first time for the representatives of the armed forces of three countries to get together and discuss issues of common concern. Nevertheless, I felt optimistic about the outcome of the conference.

In Khabarovsk the snow was knee-deep, and the weather was very cold. As I had been fighting in forests for such a long time, everything in front of my eyes was strange. The peaceful avenues free from gunshot reports, plunder and hunger, the happy looks of the people striding along the streets, talking freely all these were signs of the life we had been imagining as an ideal one.

Khabarovsk is entered on some atlases as Happu or Paekryok. In the past Korean people called Vladivostok Haesamwi. Many places in the Far East region have Korean names, like Ssangsongja, Yonchu, Suchong and Sosong. I was told that Khabarovsk was so named after Khabarov, a pioneer of the Far East region. An impressive statue of Khabarov was standing in the plaza of the railway station in the

city center. The population of the city was about 200,000 at that time.

On the very day of my arrival, I met So Chol in our lodgings, and An Kil the next day. So Chol was to participate in the conference in the capacity of a member of the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee, and An Kil as chief of staff of the 3rd Directional Army. I could not express in words the emotion of meeting the comrades-in-arms whom I had failed to see frequently because of battles when I went to and fro in eastern, southern and northern Manchuria.

The commander of the 1st Route Army, Yang Jing-yu, had fallen in action; Wei Zheng-min was bed-ridden; and Cao Ya-fan and Chen Hanzhang, both commanders of directional armies, had been killed in battle. In this situation, the three of us represented not only the KPRA but the South Manchuria Provincial Committee of the CPC and the 1st Route Army of the NAJAA as well. In other words, we were representing the Party organizations and all the guerrilla units active in southern Manchuria

So Chol and An Kil informed me that Zhou Bao-zhong, commander of the 3rd Route Army, had come to Khabarovsk already in early November, followed by Zhang Shou-jian and Feng Zhong-yun, commander and political commissar of the 3rd Route Army, respectively, and Ji Qing, chief political officer of the 5th Corps. They told me that Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon were also in Khabarovsk, awaiting my arrival. All in all, officials representing the three route armies of the NAJAA and the Jidong, North Manchuria and South Manchuria Provincial Party Committees were all there.

Before the opening of the conference I met General Lyushenko from the Soviet Far East Forces, the representative of the Comintern. He explained to me the purport and objectives of the conference of the representatives of the guerrillas in Manchuria and the Soviet army convoked by the Comintern and asked me to formulate, together with others, effective ways and means to meet the requirements of the new situation. He asked me to compile data on the composition of the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee and the 1st Route Army and their achievements.

I acceded to his request, and compiled with So Chol and An Kil detailed data, which I sent to Wang Xin-lin on New Year's Day 1941. Wang Xin-lin was the pseudonym of Lyushenko, chief of intelligence of the Soviet Far East Forces. In the days when the units of the KPRA and the NAJAA were in the territory of the Soviet Union, the men representing the Comintern, the Soviet Party and the Soviet Far East Forces went under the name of Wang Xin-lin. During the last stage of the Khabarovsk conference General Sorkin took over the duties of Lyushenko. Sorkin also went under the name of Wang Xin-lin.

In the archives of the Comintern there is the original text of my report written in January 1941 in the capacity of representatives of the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee (1st Route Army). The front page reads as follows:

Dear Comrade Wang Xin-lin,

As for all the questions you raised with us concerning the work of the 1st Route Army of the NAJAA

from the spring to the summer of 1940, we hereby present answers to the best of our ability. Therefore, this report does not cover the situation of the 1st Route Army as a whole.

Bolshevik salute, Kim Il Sung, An Kil, So Chol, January 1, 1941

Before the conference I had an emotion-filled meeting with Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon, and a reunion with Zhou Bao-zhong after a long separation.

An Kil and So Chol stayed in the same lodging with me until the day we left Khabarovsk after the conference. It seems as if it were only yesterday that we looked back on the bygone days and discussed with heart and soul the issues concerning the future of the revolution.

Already in late January 1940, a conference of the guerrilla commanders from Manchuria called by the Comintern had been held in Khabarovsk. The KPRA and the 1st Route Army were not represented. Attending the conference were Zhou Bao-zhong, Zhang Shou-jian, Feng Zhong-yun and others representing the 2nd and 3rd Route Armies.

Reviewing the experiences and lessons of the guerrilla movement in Northeast China and analyzing the situation, the conference defined the policies for future struggle and discussed the issues of establishing relations between them and the Soviet Far East Forces and realizing mutual cooperation. As a result, they reached a necessary agreement on taking unified action.

On the basis of this success, another consultative meeting was held in mid-March 1940 to strengthen mutual relations and cooperation between the NAJAA on the one hand and the Soviet military authorities on the other. Attending the meeting were the representatives of the 2nd and 3rd Route Armies of the NAJAA, the acting commander of the Soviet Far East Forces, the commanders of the Soviet troops stationed in Khabarovsk and Voroshilov, and Lyushenko.

At the meeting the NAJAA asked the Comintern and the Soviet army to increase their support for it. But the Soviet army requested that the prerogative of command over the units of the NAJAA be handed over to it. The commander of the Soviet troops stationed in Khabarovsk suggested that the armed units in Northeast China be separated from the CPC, explaining that in that case Soviet assistance to those units could be realized more easily. This attitude of the Soviet side aroused heated controversy at the meeting, and only basic agreement was reached on the issue of the forms and contents of mutual support and cooperation. This matter was not solved satisfactorily, and was earmarked for further discussion at the forthcoming conference.

The gathering we frequently refer to as the Khabarovsk conference of 1941, in which I participated, was convoked in December 1940 and continued until mid-March 1941. It was held in an army barracks used by the Soviet intelligence service. The barracks were fenced off. The conference hall had been a secret rendezvous used by an operative.

As the senior officers and officials from the NAJAA, the KPRA and the provincial Party committees had got together here for the first time, in the first stage they discussed in real earnest for several days the measures to be taken to establish relations between the different route armies and provincial Party committees, and to take concerted action with the Comintern and the Soviet Union. Then, from early January 1941, they mainly discussed with the authorities of the Comintern and the Soviet Union the future of the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement in Manchuria and the contents and ways of mutual support and cooperation between them and the military authorities of the Soviet Far East.

Representing the Comintern and the Soviet Union were several people, including General Lyushenko.

Right from the beginning, the conference proceeded in an awkward atmosphere owing to the conflicting attitudes between the Soviet side and the NAJAA side towards the power of command over the NAJAA. The other thing that made the atmosphere awkward was the discontent felt by the officers of the NAJAA at the absence of a representative of the CPC at the conference.

When calling the Khabarovsk conference in the name of the Comintern, the Soviet side had informed the Jidong and North Manchuria Provincial Party Committees that the Central Committee of the CPC would be represented at the conference. Nevertheless, no such representative appeared in Khabarovsk. The leaders of the NAJAA, who had long been keen for the restoration of their relationship with the CPC Central Committee, were particularly disappointed at this. Frankly speaking, their eagerness to participate in the conference was greatly influenced by their expectancy of meeting a representative of the Central Committee of the CPC.

I do not really know why the representative failed to go to Khabarovsk, perhaps the Soviet authorities had not informed the CPC Central Committee concerning the convocation of the conference, or the information sent had not reached it. Anyhow, the absence of the CPC representative aroused suspicion among some representatives of the NAJAA and induced them to feel displeased with the purport of the conference, casting a cloud over its initial proceedings.

The conference proceeded in the form of round-table talks, without a separate communiqué. The representatives of the different route armies of the NAJAA reported on their work, broadening each other's knowledge and understanding needed for the discussion of the issues on the agenda. I reported on the activities of the 1st Route Army and the KPRA. In the situation prevailing at that time it was impossible to present a comprehensive report on the military and political activities of the NAJAA.

The CPC did not provide a centralized and unified leadership over the activities of the NAJAA. Some people such as Zhao Shang-zhi and Zhou Bao-zhong tried in this way or that to establish relations with the Party Central Committee and thought about setting up a separate Party organization in Northeast China, but all such schemes failed. The North Manchuria, Jidong and South Manchuria Provincial Party Committees were conducting activities independent of each other. In this situation, the different route armies of the NAJAA had to fight in isolation.

It was no easy job to grasp the revolution in Northeast China as a whole and give guidance to it. As hundreds of thousands of Japanese troops were occupying Manchuria, it was very difficult for the CPC in China proper to guide the Party and military activities of the people in the Northeast.

The central issue discussed at the Khabarovsk conference was the orientation of the future activities of the NAJAA and the KPRA, how to establish correlation between the guerrilla warfare in Korea and North-east China and the Soviet army, and how to adapt this to the new situation and develop it.

As for this issue, the Soviet side proposed that the NAJAA give up its independence and merge with the Soviet army, stressing the need to take substantial measures for a joint struggle in order to emerge victorious in the fight against world fascism, as the fascist forces of Germany, Japan and Italy were forming an anti-Comintern alliance and as the Second World War was continuing to spread. They went on that this would agree with the principle of proletarian internationalism and benefit the revolution in Northeast China. This was in effect the issue the leaders of the NAJAA had opposed most stubbornly at the meetings of the previous year.

During that one year one dramatic change took place after another in the global political situation and in the military situation in the Soviet Far East region. The Soviet proposal reflected the trend of these situations. In those days the Soviet Union saw a conflict with the German forces closing in upon its western frontier to be virtually unavoidable. If Japan were to attack it from the east at the same time as Germany did from the west, the Soviet Union would find itself in a dire predicament.

The Soviet people were making every effort to avoid a pincer attack from the east and the west. At the sight of the plan of cooperation presented by the Soviet side one could fully guess their anxious state of mind caused by the strained situation.

It was impossible for the Soviet Union, a country with one part of its large territory belonging to Europe and the other part occupying a vast area of Asia, to perfect its national defense only by defending one side of its long frontiers or by building up defense capabilities with which to repulse the enemy's attack on one side alone.

From the first days of its founding, the Soviet Union advanced the principle of making preparations to repulse enemies attacking simultaneously from the east and the west, and channeled great efforts into building up its defense capabilities. In view of this principle of national defense and their relations with Japan and China, the Soviet people tried from the outset to build the Far East region as an independent military unit. However, the First Five-Year Plan, with its emphasis on developing the economic and military sectors in the European region, could not extend its benefits to strengthening its military power in the Far East region.

It was the September 18 incident that directly occasioned the Soviet Union's drastic expansion and replenishment of its military strength in the Far East region. Stunned by the Japanese imperialist invasion of Manchuria, the Soviet people worried that Japan might advance into that region.

The Soviet forces in the Far East region before the September 18 incident amounted to 50,000 troops, 100 planes and 30 tanks. After that incident, the Soviet Union began to increase its forces by two, three and four times. And after Japan turned down its proposal to conclude a non-aggression treaty, it deployed heavy bombers, new-type tanks, submarines and the like in the Far East to cope with Japan's threat of aggression. The agreement it concluded with Mongolia in 1936 was aimed at containing Japan. It further accelerated the arms buildup in the Far East region after its eastern frontier was greatly threatened by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War and the successive eruption of the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol incidents.

The Soviet proposal to put the NAJAA under the direct control of its Far East Forces was interpreted as a repetition of the proposal it had advanced one year previously and, worse still, it incited criticism that the Soviet Union, giving precedence to its political and military interests, was trying to subordinate the anti-Japanese movement in Northeast China to these interests.

In view of the situation prevailing in the Far East in those days there were some understandable points in the Soviet proposal. The threat of war fronts opening up both in the west and in the east was not a thing of the distant future, it was a hard fact near at hand. The Soviet Union did not want guns roaring in its eastern territory. Clamoring that the anti-Japanese armed units in Manchuria were fighting under the instigation and directives of the Soviet Union, Japan tried in every way possible to find an excuse for invading it.

Proceeding from this actual situation, the Soviet Union, while strengthening its defense capabilities in the Far East region, channeled all its efforts into pre-empting a Japanese invasion by enlisting the necessary diplomatic methods to the full. In those days it had no allies with whom it could counter aggression by Germany and Japan. It pursued a policy of collective security so as to dispel the threat of war growing in Europe, but failed owing to the maneuverings of the Western imperialists. It had no allies in the East, either, that could help it by force of arms.

China was fighting against Japan, but it was receiving assistance from the Soviet Union; it was not an ally that could help the Soviet Union. As it wanted at least the east of the country to be peaceful, the Soviet Union had to be careful to give no excuse to Japan for an armed invasion.

The Soviet proposal to set up a military system combining its Far East Forces and the NAJAA was aimed on the one hand at giving no excuse to Japan for invading the Soviet Union and on the other hand at gaining an ally with whom its Far East Forces could collaborate in case of an anti-Japanese campaign.

With regard to the issue of merging, heated discussions took place in and out of the conference hall.

The leaders of the NAJAA had not the least intention of placing themselves under the umbrella of the Soviet Far East Forces. They insisted: We have fought bloody battles for ten years, eating and sleeping in the open, so what's all this nonsense of merging about? We can never give up the revolution in Northeast China. The Soviet side does not care about other people's problems; they only think of themselves. Their



attitude disregards the revolutionary principle that the independent nature of the revolution of every country should be respected. This issue must be submitted to either Stalin or Dimitrov for a solution.

It was learned later that both Stalin and Dimitrov supported the NAJAA's attitude. As a result, Lyushenko was replaced by Sorkin in the end.

At that time the Soviet side anxiously wanted to know my opinion about the issue. They tried hard to convince me that their proposal did not proceed from national selfishness. But their explanation reeked of an insistence that the revolutions in Korea and China could be successful only when their own country was safe and their own revolution was successful. I told them,

"There is some sense in your proposal, and we know the conditions under which you had to conceive it. But, it is as yet a unilateral and premature proposal. It is true that Japan is watching for a chance to invade your country, but there are no immediate signs that a war will break out. Defending the country where the revolution has been victorious is important. Nevertheless, what is more important is to promote the revolution in countries where it has not won victory. You seem to be slighting the revolution in Northeast China."

The Soviet side asked me whether I was opposed to any form of merger.

"No, I am not," I replied. "I am not opposed to a merger or forms of cooperation beneficial to both sides. What I am opposed to is an unreasonable merger through which one side slights the other or does not recognize its independence. The KPRA formed the Anti-Japanese Allied Army with Chinese comrades and is waging a joint struggle, and yet it is maintaining its independence. So there is no problem with the form of joint struggle. I am opposed not only to dissolving the KPRA in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army but also to placing it under the control of the Soviet army. This is because it would ignore our independence in its form and content. We can study further concrete ways and means how to effect a joint struggle of the KPRA, the NAJAA and the Soviet Far East Forces. We are of the opinion that the joint struggle, in its form and content, must not only be helpful to the Soviet Union but beneficial to the revolutions in Korea and China."

After listening carefully to what I said, the Soviet side replied that I had given them a clue to putting an end to the argument which had been going round and round in circles and to concluding the conference, adding that they had got a very helpful hint from my words that day. They told me they would further study the issue of independence.

Supporting their determination, I said, "Let us stop insisting on unilateral points and conclude the conference at an earlier date. Every hour is precious for us, as we have to return to the various theatres of war as soon as possible to conduct small-unit activities, build organizations and work with the masses. It doesn't stand to reason for communists to drag out a meeting wrangling over an issue. If everyone thinks reasonably on the basis of proletarian internationalism, no issue is impossible to be settled."

Zhou Bao-zhong and Zhang Shou-jian also wanted to know my opinion on the issue. I said to them: "If the independence of each force is recognized, I will not oppose an international alliance of our armed forces. The crucial point is the form of such an alliance, and this needs time for further study. Though unilateral, the Soviet proposal contains a seed of reason. So let us not reject the proposal out of hand. With a comradely, unselfish attitude we should give the fullest play to proletarian internationalism and finish the discussion as soon as possible for the common good."

My proposal was supported at the conference. Our principled stand shown during the course of the conference was a positive force for realizing unity and cooperation between the revolutionary armed forces of three countries - Korea, China and the Soviet Union.

Assured that our strategic policy of preserving and building the forces of the revolution and switching over from a large-scale guerrilla struggle to small-unit actions was correct in that it fully met the requirements of the new situation, the conference discussed in real earnest waging small-unit actions with the main emphasis on preserving the forces of every unit of the NAJAA and the KPRA.

The discussion of this issue took two days or so. A consensus of opinion was reached relatively easily, but opposition was also encountered. Some were of the opinion that the switchover was a retreat from the revolution. Others doubted that we could defeat Japanese imperialism by engaging in small-unit actions, as they were not still satisfied with the large-unit actions. They claimed that, when the comrades in China proper were fighting on a grand scale by moving in large units, we, having started the anti-Japanese struggle ahead of them, might lose face if we fought in small units.

It was misguided to think that we could save face if we fought in large units and would lose face if we fought in small units.

On the issue related to the policy of conducting small-unit activities, I had a great deal of discussion with the Soviet and Chinese comrades inside and outside the conference hall. As we had already adopted the policy of switching over to small-unit actions at Xiaohaerbaling so as to preserve and build the forces of the KPRA and had accumulated successful experience of these actions, the Soviet and Chinese people expressed considerable interest in my opinion.

To them I said, "The situation has changed radically, and we have suffered considerable losses. The issue of preserving our forces mustn't be neglected not only for the present situation of the revolution but for its future. Don't think that we can defeat Japanese imperialism easily. For the KPRA and the NAJAA to defeat Japanese imperialism and liberate their motherlands, they must preserve their forces and build them up. If we engage in small-unit actions, we can briskly build organizations for an all-people resistance and obtain food more easily. Moreover, such actions enhance mobility. We have waged small-unit actions since the summer of last year and scored inspiring successes. These actions are worth taking. We can take large-unit actions later if necessary.

However, although I explained the rationality of small-unit actions in some detail, this did not impress

those who saw the actions as a retrogression. So we discussed the matter a great deal. Referring to the situation prevailing in Korea, Manchuria and the Soviet Union, I pointed out how sensible it was to switch over to small-unit actions. In the course of discussing the situation, the differences of opinion were basically thrashed out.

At that time we discussed the situation in real earnest. We had held many meetings before on this issue, but we had not discussed the situation as earnestly and as long as we did at the Khabarovsk conference.

To those who insisted on large-scale actions, I said, "It is the Comintern's request that we refrain from large-scale actions. Behind this request are the aspirations and determination of communists of different countries to defend the Soviet Union and its achievements. If large-scale guerrilla actions exert a negative influence on the security of the Soviet Union, we should take this into due consideration, shouldn't we?" And to the Soviet delegate, I said, "You should not try to keep us here without good reason. We can't advance the revolution if we sit with folded arms, doing nothing, on the plea of preserving our forces. We'll continue to wage brisk political and military activities in small units in Korea and Northeast China."

All the other delegates from Manchuria expressed support for my insistence. Frankly speaking, the Soviet people wanted us at that time to spend an easy time in the Far East region, conducting training and minor military reconnoitering. That way, they thought, they could avoid giving Japan an excuse to invade the Soviet Union.

But we could not wage the revolution in such a passive way. If we spent our time engaged in that degree of activities, what would it be other than eating the bread of idleness? We concluded the discussion with the decision to put emphasis on small-unit actions, work with the masses, building organizations and fostering our strength. This coincided with the policy we had adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference.

The Soviet side promised that they would provide the NAJAA and the KPRA with bases in their territory. We decided to wage small-unit actions in the vast area of Korea and Manchuria with these bases as additional temporary ones.

After the conference the Soviet Union provided us with two bases in Far East - one being Camp South in the vicinity of Voroshilov, and the other Camp North near Khabarovsk. We first occupied Camp South with some forces from the 5th Corps of the 2nd Route Army of the NAJAA. The remaining forces of the 2nd Route Army and the 3rd Route Army were stationed in Camp North.

At that time I, as Commander of the KPRA, took charge of Camp South; some time later I formed the 1st Contingent involving the KPRA and some forces from the 1st Route Army and, as Commander of the Contingent, took measures to wage small-unit actions.

That we became able to take brisk small-unit actions in Korea and Manchuria from the new temporary bases in the Far East region can be called a turning point in the history of the anti-Japanese armed

struggle. Of course it was a tentative measure for the time being, but it was a meaningful first step towards developing the struggle to the point of winning the final victory in the anti-Japanese revolution.

Had we not taken these timely and active countermeasures as required by the prevailing situation and the developing revolution, we would not have been able to save the revolution from the imminent crisis nor win the final victory in the anti-Japanese revolution. In the course of waging a revolution, one faces constant difficulties and adversities. But there were no ebb tides or lulls in our revolution. We neither vacillated in the face of difficulties, nor yielded to distress, nor lost the initiative to the attacking enemy. Had we yielded to adversities or stood on the defensive even once, the enemy would have trampled on our revolution without mercy. We always turned misfortunes into blessings, and unfavorable conditions into favorable ones, with the determination and courage that we would neither yield nor retreat even though it meant our end.

The Khabarovsk conference, along with the conference at Xiaohaerbaling, gave a new direction to our revolution. These two conferences were important gatherings in that they defined the contents and form of the anti-Japanese armed struggle in the first half of the 1940s, and induced the Korean revolutionaries to strengthen, with a firm conviction in the liberation of their motherland, the independent forces of their revolution and at the same time meet the pending great event on their own initiative.

After the meeting at Khabarovsk, while conducting political and military training in the temporary bases in the Far East region, we forcefully pushed ahead with the armed struggle and revolutionary movement in the homeland, basing ourselves in the secret camps we had built on Mt. Paektu and various other places in the homeland, expediting the day of national liberation.

When the great leader was conducting positive political and military activities after advancing a new line, strategy and tactics, the armies and police of Japan and Manchukuo, on full alert, schemed in various ways to counter these activities.

The following materials graphically show how confused the enemy were:

"The elements of the Korean Communist Party plotting against Manchukuo under the leadership of the Soviet Union now are the remaining forces of the old 1st, 2nd and 3rd Route Armies. The center of those activities is Kim Il Sung....

"Kim Il Sung is the military chief of the Okeanskaya Camp under the direct control of the Soviet Red Army." (Case of Activities of the Rebellious Organizations of Koreans in Manchuria, Document of the Police Affairs Bureau of the Government-General of Korea sent to the chiefs of the provincial police bureaus, Showa 19(1944).)

"The strong bandit groups led by Kim Il Sung, Choe Hyon, An Sang Gil and Chai Shi-rong all entered the Soviet Union early this year and received various types of training in Voroshilov. After rearranging their forces and with a new policy they have been infiltrating Manchuria again one by one since April."

(Report from acting Mudanjiang consul Furuya, June 17, Showa 16 (1941).

# Remembering Kim Chaik

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I met Kim Chaik for the first time at a Comintern meeting in Khabarovsk, Siberia, where I also met Choe Yong Gon for the first time. That was one of the most memorable occasions in my life. Kim Chaik represented North Manchuria Communist Party Committee and the 3rd Route Army of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army (NAJAA). The meeting lasted several months - not just a day or two - and Kim Chaik and I met many times. I roomed with An Kil and So Chol and Kim Chaik often came to our room for chats for a few hours. I still remember our very first meeting.



*Lee Wha Rang notes: Photo: from left to right - Choe Yong Gon. Kim Chaik, Kim Il, Kim Il Sung and Kang Gun, on the occasion of the first production of burp guns in North Korea, 1949.*

Kim Chaik was always cool, almost to the point of being cold, and he was going bald already at 40. Strange though it may sound, even though I had not met him before, I felt like I had known him all my life; it was because I had heard so much about him and had looked forward to seeing him. After the usual greetings, I told him I considered him an old friend although we were meeting face to face for the first time. Kim Chaik said that he felt the same way. For years, Kim Chaik and I thought about each other.

I have been to northern Manchuria several times just to meet Kim Chaik and Choe Yong Gon. Also, Kim Chaik came to see me in Jirin in 1930. Choe Yong Gon wanted to join hands with me and sent his liaison officers to Jiandao four times. Whether we were in northern Manchuria or eastern Manchuria, all of us were concerned with Korean revolution and acted as true Korean revolutionaries and children of Korea; we devoted our life to liberation of Korea, irrespective of our organizational affiliation and main place of presence. We were genuine comrades-in-arms and yearned to work together as brothers for our common cause.

Why were Kim Chaik and Choe Yong Gon so envious of our activities in eastern Manchuria? It was because they missed working with Koreans. While the 2nd Brigade in eastern Manchuria was exclusively Korean, Chinese were in the majority in the 3rd and 7th brigades in northern Manchuria. They felt uncomfortable working with the Chinese whose language and customs were different, and so they could not help but be envious of the Korean units eastern Manchuria, where hundreds of thousands of Koreans lived; they wished they had units with Koreans in the majority.

"Why has it taken this long to meet Commander Kim Il Sung?" - Kim Chaik said aloud to himself after we had exchanged greetings at our very first meeting. For some reason, his muttering struck my heart. He held my hand for a long time and stared at me. I saw tears swelling up in his eyes and I realized how much he had missed being with Koreans. I, too, was overcome with tearful emotions. Right after Japan occupied Korea, Kim Chaik's father moved his family to Jiandao, Manchuria. He figured that Jiandao was a fertile land where Korean farmers could do well. Haksong area, where they were from, was also fertile, but they lived in poverty no matter how hard they worked the land.

Poor Korean farmers were forced to abandon their ancestral land and migrate to alien lands. Kim Chaik's parents mistakenly believed that once they made to Jiandao, all of their troubles would be solved. Jiandao was their promised land. There were three sons and farm labor was no problem. Unfortunately, the sons, whom they had counted on, left home to join the revolution.



*Photo: Kim Chaik.*

Kim Hong Son, Kim Chaik's elder brother, brought revolution to his family. During March First, Kim Hong Son marched in the street; he fought in the Battle of Quingshanli as an Independence Army soldier and joined the communist movement. Kim Hong Son was a teacher at Tonghung Middle School in Longjing, where many students came from Russia. It was probable that he learned of socialism from these students. He had worked as a district committee member of the Communist Party in Ningnan County for a while. Kim Chaik's younger brother was also a prominent revolutionary. Kim Chaik told me that he had once come across an article in a newspaper about his younger brother being held in Seoul's Sodaemun Prison, but that he did not know what had become of him. Kim Chaik worked the fields during the day and attended a night school; he became a revolutionary..

Kim Chaik joined General Federation of Young Koreans in Eastern Manchuria (GFYKEM). Later he joined Korean Communist Party. His Party cell was controlled 'Tuesday' faction. He was aware that Korean Communist Party, formed in 1925, was disbanded by Moscow owing to factional fighting; he made it no secret that he was a member of that ill-fated Party. In those days, Korean Communist Party controlled by 'Tuesday' group and 'M-L' group vied for influence in Manchuria. Kim Chaik was disillusioned by the quarrels within the Communist Party of Korea.

Kim Chaik was serving a prison term when he heard the news that Comintern had dissolve the Korean

Party. Even though he had no love for the Party leaders, he was shocked by the demise of the Party. He was lost and penniless, he did not know what to do. When he was arrested by the Japanese and tried, he had no money to hire a defense lawyer. But Ho Hun came to his rescue. Ho was a defense attorney and took on Kim Chaik's case pro bono. In fact, Ho Hun defended many revolutionaries free of charge and helped reduce sentences or get released. After serving his prison term, Kim Chaik stayed with Ho Hun's family for a few days. Kim Chaik decided to escape to Manchuria and Ho gave him food and money for his journey. They became close friends.

After Liberation, Ho Hun became the first Speaker of the Supreme People's Assembly and Kim Chaik became Vice Premier and Minister of Industry. How strange that a penniless man and his lawyer would become key leaders of Korea. When Kim Chaik became Vice Premier, he told Ho Hun - "Master Ho, you had defended me in court, but now you must prosecute me if I do wrong. If I make any mistake, whether as Vice-Premier or as a private citizen, please prosecute me without mercy."

Ho Hun, a jovial man, was a man of principle and would have actually criticized Kim Chaik, had he made mistakes in his official capacity. Kim Chaik had an excellent job as Vice-Premier and as a private citizen, and Ho Hun had no cause to go after him. In contrast, Park Hyon Yong was despised by him when Paek was Vice-Premier. Ho Hun told to be watchful of Park; Ho had some bad jibes on Park. Ho Hun wept loudly when he heard Kim Chaik died. Ho deeply grieved over Kim's death and said that I had just lost my right-hand man, who would be irreplaceable.

Kim Chaik once told me that he was embarrassed to receive such a kind treatment from Ho Hun and his family during his trial in Seoul: he said that he had done nothing worthy for Korea, instead had been a lackey in the service of factionalists before his arrest. Yet Ho Hun's family took a good care of him as if he had done something for Korea; he felt uncomfortable as if he were sitting on needles. "Even if I die one hundred times and come back to life one hundred times, I will live up to the people's expectations" was what Kim Chaik decided to do when he left Ho Hun's house for Jiandao.

When he arrived at Jiandao, he learned that his father and wife had died of illness during his absence, leaving his two infant sons homeless. He had no luxury to care about his personal tragedies, for he was informed that secret agents of the Japanese imperialists were about to arrest him. How cunning the Japanese imperialists were! They would arrest revolutionaries, torture them to near death and release them through the front door as a show of tolerance, and then take them in again through the back door. They were masters of such dirty tricks.

Kim Chaik was forced to leave his home after placing his sons in the care of his brother-in-law. Dressed in peasant's attire and with a shabby reed-hat on his head, he walked past the entrance to the village following a cow belonging to his brother-in-law. After reaching a hill, the cow bellowed ceaselessly for its calf left behind in the stable. The calf also cried for its mother. The cow was his cover, but he could not go on hiding behind the cow. Hearing the mother and her young calling to each other so dolefully, he thought of the sons he had left behind and started to cry uncontrollably. He felt sorry for the calf as well as for his sons, he told me. So he let the cow go. For the following sixteen years, he could not see his



sons. Only a revolutionary like Kim Chaik could endure such an ordeal. Once I asked how his sons were doing. He replied that he did not know and told me: "As long as my brother-in-law is alive, my sons would be OK, but if something bad has happened to his family, then my sons will be begging for food in streets. I only hope that they stay alive long enough to see the day of liberation and meet their worthless father."

In Ningan, Kim Chaik heard rumors about us. After leaving his sons, he went to Ningan, where he got connected with his former colleagues from his Communist Party days. They told him that a new movement, different from the ones of the old generations, had popped up in Jirin under Kim Sung Ju, who was popular because of his strong personality in spite of his tender age; he was told that Kim Sung Ju was arrested by Chinese warlords and then released; that it was not known where Kim Sung Ju was and what he was doing.

Jirin had many students from Ningan at that time and Kim Chaik must have heard about me from these students. Kim Chaik came looking for me in Jirin, but by that time I had already left Jirin. He instead happened to meet at a lodging some of my comrades, who had apparently been tailing him. After confirming his identity and hearing the purpose of his visit to Jirin, my comrades said to him, "Kim Sung Ju is not here at the moment. You seem to be in Jirin for the first time. Don't hang around here. Please leave now. In the aftermath of the May Massacre of communists, Chinese warlords are after revolutionaries. You will meet Kim Sung Ju some other day." They gave him some money and led him out of Jirin safely.

Kim Chaik returned to northern Manchuria, only to be arrested by the Kuomintang army. While he was behind bars, the September 18 Incident took place and he was released. But upon his release, he was arrested by the warlord police and sentenced to death. In those days, communists were hunted down like wild animals and butchered without mercy. Thus Kim Chaik was sentenced to die, although he had done no revolutionary work. He was led to a field to be shot, but at the very last moment, an officer came to his rescue and he was released.

Kim Chaik's spirit rose and his faith in revolution was revived. He told me that he had tried to wage the revolution since his teen years but all he had done was running away from police or languishing in prison; he said that he had done positive things only after he took up arms against the enemy. "The enemy regards unarmed revolutionaries as scarecrows". he said, laughing. He said that this was the most important lesson of his life. That revolution comes from the muzzle of a gun is a universal law of revolution and it took Kim Chaik half of his lifetime to learn this principle. Revolution must be waged with the force of arms, and the end of all forms of struggle for national independence and social liberation is decided generally by people's war. The basic cause of our victory in our anti-Japanese war was that we had our own armed forces. Of the anti-Japan activities of Rhee Syngman, Kim Gu, Yo Un Hyon and others, the Japanese feared our Korean People's Revolutionary Army (KPRA) the most. They regarded others as mere scarecrows..

The reason why the Japanese feared us the most was because we mounted effective military campaigns

against them; we did not rely on petitions, strikes, writings or empty speeches. The victory of our anti-Japanese revolution convinced us of the correctness of the principle that revolution must be waged militarily. After Liberation, we continued building a more powerful revolutionary army and channel all our efforts into this effort. A nation's power and prestige depend on its armed forces; strong armed forces secure a nation's survival and prosperity. No nation can be truly independent sans strong armed forces. Nations with weak forces inevitably become slaves of other nations. In this spirit, Comrade Kim Jong Il has been building up the Korean People's Army to be an unrivalled, ever-victorious army.

Kim Chaik spoke a lot about the evils of factionalism. He told me that factionalism led to his arrest and imprisonment; he said: "After serving in prison, I keenly realized that the communist movement could not be waged through conventional methods and that unless factions were eliminated, nothing, let alone national liberation and class emancipation, could be achieved. If it is true that the new force in Jirin is a new group of people of a new generation not tainted by old-time Korean Communist Party, then I will join hands with them without hesitation. That was why I wanted to see you."

He said that his true revolutionary career began when he organized a guerrilla unit in Zhuhe and began an armed struggle. His life before then was one of roaming and groping, he said. Since he began guerrilla war in Zhuhe, his contributions to revolutions of Korea and China became tangible; he was appointed key posts in North Manchuria Party Committee and the 3rd Route Army of the NAJAA. The Korean and Chinese revolutionaries and peoples in northern Manchuria unanimously respected him and loved him as a veteran revolutionary, only after he started partisan war.

"I have long looked forward to meeting you," he said. "Do you know how earnestly the Korean revolutionaries in northern Manchuria wished to see you? We fought always looking towards Mount Paektu where your unit was active. Had I met you in Jirin, Commander Kim, I would have spared all those mental agonies." He said that the news of our Pochonbo raid across Yalu was one of the best he had heard and he wanted to shake my hands and extend words of gratitude to me in the name of the Korean revolutionaries in northern Manchuria.

Kim Chaik, well-known for his taciturn demeanor, was unexpectedly sentimental and opened up to me. He said that he had heard a lot about our activities in eastern Manchuria and West Jiandao from the people I had dispatched to northern Manchuria; he told me that he liked the trait of unity between PRKA officers and men, between superiors and subordinates, and between the army and the people. He said that he liked the spirit of independence of my movement for liberation of Korea, in spite of the fact that we were in an alien land. Kim Chaik was well informed of my activities, even to a minor incident in which I repaired a guerrilla's broken rifle.

He said that he had regarded me as a model for his revolutionary struggle and daily life. Such was his modesty. Though he held me up as a model, frankly speaking, he himself was a paragon of revolutionaries. He had earned the reputation of being a fierce man, but he loved his men more than anybody else. Though he said he had been impressed by the anecdote about my fixing a rifle, there were as many uplifting anecdotes about his relationship with his men.

What is the power base of a revolutionary army?

It is love between comrades. You must always value and love your comrades. You love them as you would your own self. Nothing is more precious than revolutionary comrades in this world. This is what he taught his men. Once a guerrilla from another unit brought a document for him. Kim Chaik told the messenger to sleep in his bed while he read the document. Kim Chaik noticed that the messenger's clothes were torn and he mended them with his own hands. The messenger was from another unit, but Kim Chaik took care of him just as his own father or brother would have. After every battle, he congratulated his men, as a group, but individually, one by one. He praised each man in concrete ways "You did this and that well when breaking through the gate; you did such-and-such well when attacking the Manchukuo army barracks; you did this and that well and this and that wrong when shouting to demoralize the enemy." The soldiers fought more bravely after getting this kind of review.

Kim Chaik paid special attentions to soldiers who were somewhat deficient. After a soldier was criticized by his commander, Kim Chaik would meet him and examine him as to whether he had realized his mistake; if the man had not, he would talk to him until he saw what he had done wrong. Kim Tae Hong was a platoon leader under Kim Chaik. Once Kim scolded an assistant machine-gunner who had fired into the air, thus wasting bullets. He was a new recruit facing his first battle. Kim Tae Hong shouted - "You, coward! If your life is so dear to you, put down that gun and go back to your parents!" After the battle, Kim Chaik sent for Kim Tae Hong and told him: "Comrade Kim, you shall never treat your men in that way. He is a raw recruit, isn't he? How can you scold a man who is in battle for the first time? Instead of scolding him, you should first set an example." Thereafter, Kim Tae Hong never scolded his men.

Kim Chaik was not all affection and forgiving. He was a commander of principle; he persuaded, criticized or punished his men according to the situation. When someone made a serious mistake, he would subject him to a severe rebuke. This is what Jang Sang Ryong wrote in his recollection of Kim Chaik after his death: In the winter of 1942, Kim Chaik commanded a small unit in Manchuria, after the Khabarovsk conference; his unit was short of food and suffered from hunger. One day Jang went hunting off the secret camp. After many hours, he managed to bag a bear and a wild boar. After burying the games, he hurried back but he could not reach the camp before sunset; he was was exhausted and the way back to the camp was rugged. He decided to stay overnight in a hunter's hut not far from the camp and returned the next morning.

Kim Chaik had ordered his men not to use the hut because it might be used by enemy spies. Learning that Jang had stayed overnight in this hut, Kim Chaik summoned Jon Chang Chol, Jang's commander, and ordered him to call Jang to account for it; Kim said Jang was not fit to be a guerrilla. Jon Chang Chol asked him to forgive Jang this once, as Jang had so far fought valiantly for the revolution. But Kim Chaik told Jon, "No, I will not. Let him stand outside in the cold for three hours." Jon Chang Chol took Jang outside as ordered. But before two hours had passed Jang was in such a pitiable state that Jon Chang Chol begged Kim Chaik to let Jang inside, as he must have fully repented of his mistake by that time. Kim Chaik retorted that commuting a penalty given to a violator was in violation of discipline and had

Jon outside as well.

Kim Chaik let Jang into the tent the three-hour punishment and told him to eat his meal first. Jang sat down at the table but could not eat. He realized what he had done wrong. Kim Chaik sat next to him and said in a gentle voice: "You might think your mistake was not so serious. That's wrong. Why do I take it so seriously? It is because your mistake could have disclosed our camp to the enemy and ruined our revolutionary task, not to mention our life. This is why I ordered the men not to use that hut. However, you disobeyed an order of your superior and risked your life overnight. What would have happened if there had been spies there?" Jang carved every one of Kim Chaik's words in his memory, he told me.

Kim Chaik was a man of few words, but each word he spoke was so loaded that it was as inviolable as an article of the law. Once the enemy mounted a psychological warfare against us and spread false rumors that Kim Chaik had been arrested, that Park Kil Song had surrendered, that such-and-such unit had defected and that Ho Hyong Sik was killed and so on. The commanders and guerrillas knew that these were sheer fabrications. The commander of the 2nd unit decided to teach the enemy a lesson. He lured an enemy spy who was roaming about his camp and asked him to go down the mountain and negotiate with the military police for the surrender of his unit. The military police informed him, through the spy, of the place and time of surrender, promising him a generous reward.

The police, guided by the spy, appeared at the promised place at the set time. Grinning at the unit standing in lines in the forest, the police even waved at them. At that moment the guerrillas aimed their rifles at them, shouting, "Stay where you are!" The commander shouted, "You idiots! We came here not to surrender, but to capture you. Hands up!" The enemy leader protested. "I have heard that the communist army does not tell lies. How can you go against your promise? An army must keep its honor." "Shame on you," the commander replied. "How dare you talk about honor when you spread false rumors and tell lies every time you have a chance? As you have told so many lies, we decided to tell a lie, too." The unit returned with the captured police.

The commander was praised for his audacity. Earlier, Park Tuk Pom played the same trick and captured much needed supplies from the enemy, but he was criticized for his action. Kim Chaik gathered the officers of the 2nd brigade and criticized them severely, saying, "To think that the guerrilla army could lie like the enemy does! What on earth were you thinking of? However false your game was, how could you use the surrender of guerrillas as a trick? You are not worthy of being officers of a revolutionary army." He then demoted all the officers, including the commander.

You may think that Kim Chaik knew nothing but punishments. He did not hand out punishments willy-nilly. Let me tell you another anecdote. In one battle, a guerrilla was so excited that he left behind his knapsack full of grenades on the battlefield. His unit assembled and criticized him. Criticizing or punishing a guerrilla who had lost his rifle happened occasionally in the units of the revolutionary army. The guerrilla thought he deserved the criticism of his comrades-in-arms and swore that he would never do it again. But a senior political cadre suggested that a severe penalty be given him, making the atmosphere of the meeting threatening. Upon learning that the guerrilla was a new recruit, Kim Chaik

concluded that his officers were responsible for not training him properly and that the recruit should be given help, not punishment. He dismissed the suggestion of the senior political cadre. Had the issue finished there, everything would have been all right. But the political officer insisted that the man be executed and the new recruit deserted during the night. Thus, a problem that could have been settled without a hitch developed in a major fiasco.

The political officer became an object of scorn. All denounced him as an inhumane man. Some condemned him as a counterrevolutionary and others urged that he be punished. Upon learning of this incident, Kim Chaik took the blame on himself and said that it was his fault that this incident happened. He was the chief political officer and had failed to lead his men properly. That day he took the guilty political officer under his personal care and began to reeducate him.

He was impressed by my practice of being independent of foreign interference in Korean revolution. He reminded his Korean guerrillas that, although they were with a Chinese unit, Korean revolution must be carried out by Koreans themselves and that they should always remember that they were Koreans. Kim Chaik and I shared many things in common; revolutionary ideas, how to approach to the people, the stand on the spirit of independence, to the issue of the method and style of work, not to mention the issue of building the Party, the state and the army of Korea.

Kim Chaik was surprised that I knew so much about him. I told him that I, too, had followed his work. He replied with smiles on his face: "If two men, who have never met, care for and miss each other so much, then it is a predestined relationship." I agreed. It was in the summer of 1930 that he went to Jirin looking for me, it could be said that our friendship began then. His age and revolutionary feats made Kim Chaik the ranking cadre in the north Manchurian unit; in fact, he was a senior of all Korean military and political cadres of the guerrilla army in Manchuria.

Yet, Kim Chaik gave me the crown as the representative and leader of the Korean revolution and had presented me as such to the Soviet and Chinese peoples. Why did he trust and push me, nine years his junior, as the leader? He believed that there should be central leadership for the revolution, around which all revolutionaries can rally. He believed that I should be the leader. After we met at last, we became closest comrades; he followed and helped me ever since.

He returned to Korea after Liberation and devoted his all to building the Party, the state, the armed forces and industry. He worked tirelessly during the Korean War. He went wherever he was needed. When he was the Commander-in-Chief of our front armies in South Korea, he went as far south as Chungchong. He was in the frontline area with his officers and soldiers. When I went to the front for inspection, he scolded aides: "How dare you bring the Supreme Commander here of all places?"

Young communists of Korea looked up to for leadership in the 1930s in Jirin and early in the 1940s. Kim Chaik and other anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters placed me at the center for unity and cohesion and they worked hard to carry out our Juche revolution. This is how my leadership was formed in our revolution thanks to Kim Chaik. This is the main contribution he made to the communist movement and

the national liberation struggle of Korea.

At the training base in Siberia were guerrillas who had fought in northern Manchuria as well as in southern Manchuria. There were also Koreans who had grown up in Siberia. Had they remained loyal to their unit of origin, our ranks could not have been united, and the leadership center would not have been formed. But no provincialism or hegemony fights took place among the Korean communists at the training camp. Veterans such as Kim Chaik and Choe Yong Gon gave prominence to me from the outset, affirming my leadership.

After the Khabarovsk conference, Kim Chaik went back to Manchuria and spent most of 1942 and 1943 there. He commanded our partisans fighting in northern Manchuria. He did not come back to the base even after he finished his mission. By that time, Ho Hyong Sik and Park Kil Song, commanders of the units in northern Manchuria, were dead and Kim Chaik was reluctant to part company with his partisans. After the Soviet 88th International Brigade was formed, Kim Chaik was ordered to return to Siberia, but he stayed put claiming that his mission was not finished. The Brigade commander was angry at Kim's refusal to obey his direct order. I sent a telegram to Kim Chaik informing him of the new Brigade and suggested that he should return to Siberia, and he did. He refused to obey the Soviet command but obey my directives without hesitation.

While in Siberia, Kim Chaik did his best to protect me. When I led a partisan unit on a mission in 1941, he met the unit members without my knowledge and told them to protect me at all cost. When we were making preparations for the final operations against the Japanese troops in 1945, he called a meeting of Korean commanders in the brigade without giving me notice. The meeting discussed the issue of ensuring my personal safety. He told the commanders at the meeting: "Everyone must ensure the personal safety of Comrade Kim Il Sung. Comrade Kim Il Sung is the leader representing the people and revolutionaries of Korea, so we must defend him at the risk of our lives."

After the triumphal return of the soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army to Korea, he called another meeting on guarding me. "Returning to the motherland, we can see that the situation is more complicated than we have heard. The maneuverings of terrorists are threatening our safety. We must be on the highest alert, or else I'm not sure what might happen. Chief secretary of the South Pyongan Provincial Party Committee, Hyon Jun Hyok, was assassinated by terrorists. You must never let the news of General Kim Il Sung's triumphal return slip out. The time will come when the news will be made public, so until then you must keep it a secret. We must ensure General Kim's safety; we are his personal bodyguards." He took the initiative of organizing a body guard unit for me.

I have been spending a great deal of time working with the people after Liberation. I have been busy working with the people, the revolutionaries from south Korea and with foreigner guests. Though we had distinguished guests, we had no system in place to entertain them. We had no guest house where they could stay and most of them stayed at my house, where only boiled rice and plain soup were served. Everyone regarded this as normal, as it could not be helped just after liberation. But Kim Chaik thought otherwise. He worried no good liquor was available in my house. He argued that: "It is true that the

country is in a pitiful state and we have no money. But how can we go to the market to buy liquor each time a guest visits the General? When the Republic is founded, guests will come to see the General in droves. We have to build a distillery with our own hands and make liquor for our use. Besides, for the safety of the General, we should make our drinks." Such was Kim Chaik's concern for me.

Without my knowledge, he began to inquire into which liquor was the most famous across the country and who was its distiller and it was determined that the liquor made in Ryonggang was the best in liberated Korea. It was made by a man and his daughter. High-ranking Japanese and wealthy Koreans loved it before liberation. Kim Chaik went to Ryonggang to meet them. Moved by his words, the distiller volunteered his daughter to accompany Kim Chaik and make the drinks for the country. Her name was Kang Jong Suk.

Kang Jong Suk stayed with Kim Chaik, cooking and brewing liquor. She designed a distillery and Kim Chaik went to the market with another man and bought rice for the brew. Soon his house turned into a distillery. Kim Chaik proudly brought me the first bottle of his brewery. He filled a glass in full and said: "This is the first Ryonggang liquor Kang Jong Suk made for you." Kim Chaik was happy that I liked his brew. From then on, the Ryonggang liquor Kang Jong Suk made was served at state banquets. There was another happy ending: Kim Chaik and Kang Jong Suk got married. His dedication to my authority was such that whenever I phoned him, he stood up, adjusted his clothing and buttoned up his jacket before speaking on the phone. Even when he was sick in bed, he would stand on his feet to receive my phone calls, even when there was no one around.

The lowest period in my life was the days of retreats during the Korean War (Fatherland Liberation War). Although I announced that it was a temporary tactical retreat, some cowardly cadres thought the Republic was done for. When the enemy advanced to Sariwon, Kim Chaik, the Front Commander, formed a defensive line for Pyongyang in Junghwa, Sangwon and Kangdong. Reporting on the situation at the front to me, he said that he would reinforce the defensive line with the retreating units and defend the line to the last man; he requested that I leave Pyongyang with the staff of the Supreme Headquarters at once. A few days later he again phoned me to ask me to move the Supreme Headquarters to another place. I answered that he should also retreat before the enemy attacked. But instead of retreating, he sent me his Party membership card. He was set to fight to death defending Pyongyang.

I phoned him and said that I would not leave Pyongyang unless he retreated. Only then did he come to Pyongyang with his army. He took back his Party membership card when the Korean People's Army began the counteroffensive. Some people said he was a very stern, truculent man, but, frankly speaking, he acted severely only in front of idlers, sycophants, the discontented, the selfish, careerists and factionalists; he was boundlessly kind-hearted and modest in front of his subordinates and the people. As he so hated those who played a double game, Park Hon Yong was watched his steps when Kim Chaik was around. Kim Tu Bong, though Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, avoided Kim Chaik.

Kim Chaik was completely free from affection and hypocrisy. Immediately after liberation, his son, who

had been adrift in Manchuria, was reunited with him. The young man was in shabby clothes and wore straw sandals. Kim Chaik wanted to introduce him to me as he was, without first dressing him up in new clothes and shoes, as other parents would have done. He told his son: "Don't be ashamed of your straw sandals. You don't know what kind of man General Kim Il Sung is. Don't worry. You have so far lived barefooted, and you can't pretend to be a wealthy man all of a sudden. The General will be happier to see you in straw sandals and those clothes on your back. If you wore a Western suit and leather shoes, he would not be happy." When he appeared in my office with his son in straw sandals, the son he had met after 16 years of separation, I could not hold back tears. That day I shed more tears than Kim Chaik did. How copiously he must have shed tears in his mind! But his family reunion lasted only four years. Kim Chaik died because he overtaxed himself. He carried too large a burden on his shoulders.

I saw him last on January 30, 1951. At the time the Supreme Headquarters was in Konji-ri. That evening he came to me without an advance notice. He said that the 24th of the previous month had been Comrade Kim Jong Suk's birthday but he could not come to see me because he was busy, although he knew I would be lonely. He apologized and said that he had to come before the month had ended. I said to him: "In December last year we were in quite a hurry to drive out the Americans from the north of Korea. We didn't have time to visit each other, did we? Please don't worry about it." That day he was not like his usual self. He acted strange. I did not know why but he was strangely sentimental. He asked me to take a stroll with him, so I went outside with him. He told me that he did not know before the war that there was such a scenic place there and we should build an elegant rest home there after the war. I agreed. To be candid, we had been so busy after liberation building a new country that we failed to be concerned with scenic places and rest homes. As for our own recreation, we were content with going to Maekjon Ferry or Jangsuwon Bridge and dip our feet in the cool water.

I still remember Kim Chaik trying to hide his worn socks with gaping holes. I gave him a pair of my socks and said: "Don't overtax yourself with work. Take care of yourself. How can you stand the winter cold wearing torn socks? Please take care of yourself for my sake." That evening he wanted to dine with me, but Ho Ka I unexpectedly showed up with a report about Party work. He took a great deal of time over this report, without coming straight to the point and so Kim Chaik left Konji-ri without a meal. At the parting, he said to me: "We will be victorious over the Americans, General. Please don't work too hard, and look after your health." This was the last request he made to me, which moved my heart in a special way on that fateful day.

That day Kim Chaik worked late in his office and died of heart failure at his desk. When the Minister of Public Health and Director of the Medical Bureau, Lee Pyong Nam, told me that Kim Chaik was dead, I could not believe it. I could not believe that a man, who had talked with me just a few hours before, had died so suddenly. Disregarding my bodyguards' protest, I drove in broad daylight, despite the danger from enemy bombers, to the place where the Cabinet was located. Only then, did I realize that Kim Chaik was dead.

I regret very much that I did not make Kim Chaik stay with me the previous night. Had I done so, he would not have worked late into the night and he would not have had a heart attack. I also regret I saw him off without asking him to stay for dinner that night. On the day of his funeral, I touched his hands for



the last time before the hearse left, the hands I had shaken for the first time in Khabarovsk 10 years before. I had not forgotten the warmth of his hands at that time, but on the day of the funeral they were icy cold, the hands of Kim Chaik who would rush to me before any one else and clasp my hands whenever I returned from a field trip!

Kim Chaik lived all his life as my faithful comrade-in-arms. That is all the more reason why I cannot forget him. After his death, I looked after his sons as he would have done for my sons. I sent them abroad for study and arranged marriages for them. When his granddaughter was born, I congratulated them on her birth. I often invited them to my house and dined with them. Nonetheless, I could find no relief from sorrow, as I felt I had failed to do enough for them for Kim Chaik's sake. Whenever our revolution encounters trials and difficulties, I yearn for Kim Chaik.

When I visit his grave, I feel guilty about riding in a car, so I get out at the foot of Mount Taesong and walk up to his grave. Even if he is now in the world beyond, how can my love and respect for him change? I have experienced a lot while waging the revolution, and what I cherish most deeply is my comrades. For a person who has embarked on the road of revolution with a determination to dedicate his life to the freedom and liberation of his fellows, the most precious things are his comrades and their camaraderie. A faithful comrade can be said to be one's alter ego. I do not betray myself. If faithful and obliging comrades unite, they can prevail against Heaven itself. This is why I always say if one gains enough comrades, he can win the world, and if one is forsaken by one's comrades, one will lose the world.

The word "comrade" (dong-ji) means "like-minded". The mind is inseparable from ideology. The relationship between comrades formed through temporary interests or mental calculation cannot be solid; it breaks up easily, depending on the circumstances. But the relationship of comrades based on ideology and will is eternal; even bullets or gallows cannot break it. The Korean revolution has produced many comrades who showed noble examples of fidelity. They constitute a galaxy around us.

After Kim Chaik's death, we named Songjin, a city near his home village, the Chongjin Iron Works, an enterprise associated with his devoted life, and Pyongyang University of Technology after him; namely, KimChaik City, Kim Chaik Iron Works and Kim Chaik University of Technology. A military academy was also named after him. A large statue of him stands in KimChaik City.

I hope that the city, the enterprise and the university named after him will always take the lead in socialist construction. Kim Chaik hated following in the wake of others. He always stood in the vanguard. He had made significant contributions to our industry. Whenever I see factories and enterprises that perform poorly, I say to myself, "If only Kim Chaik were here. If only Kim Chaik were alive." When Kim Chaik was Minister of Industry, our industry ran smoothly. Some of our industry officials who are still active once had worked with him, and I hope they will not make his service to the building of our industry go down the drain.

## 23.3. My Love and Marriage

*Visitors to the Korean Revolution Museum find themselves attracted to a photograph, which bears an inscription by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung: "Greeting the spring in a foreign land." On a visit to the museum, he stopped in front of the photo and said that he valued it the most. When he recollected the anti-Japanese revolution, he often spoke about his memories of Comrade Kim Jong Suk. She was cherished in the great leader's heart as his dearest comrade, a never-to-be-forgotten comrade-in-arms.*

I posed for this photo when I was in Camp South. It was a temporary base near the town of Voroshilov for the units of the KPRA and the 1st Route Army of the NAJAA in their early days in the Soviet Union. It was also called Camp B. We spent a winter there and, then moved into Manchuria and the homeland for small-unit actions. In the summer of 1942 we settled down in Camp North after forming the IAF along with the NAJAA and units of the Soviet army to cope with the rapidly-changing situation in which the Soviet-German War and the Pacific War had broken out. Camp North was located near Khabarovsk. It was also called Camp A by the anti-Japanese fighters. After the Khabarovsk conference I went to Camp South.



*Photo: Kim Il Sung and Kim Jung Suk - a wedding picture. She cut her hair to pad his socks to keep his feet warm. Instead of a honeymoon, Kim went on a mission to Manchuria.*

Choe Hyon, who had arrived there earlier, came out a long way to receive us. He looked wide-eyed at me, as I was wearing a fur cap and fur overcoat. He burst out laughing, saying, "I was wondering who this gentleman was, and it turns out to be you, General Kim."

I still remember that occasion. He hugged me so tightly, I felt like choking. He said jokingly that he had heard that I was in a conference at Khabarovsk, and asked why the meeting had taken so long. A short way from Camp South to the east there was a small railway station on the line between Khabarovsk and Vladivostok. The soldiers of the KPRA assembled in the camp built more barracks, houses, stores, kitchens and ablutions. The barracks were

of the dug-out type, with bunk beds like those in the present barracks of the Korean People's Army. My men worked hard to construct them. They laid out a wide sports ground in front of the barracks.

In Camp South we studied political affairs a lot, while making preparations for small-unit actions in the homeland and Manchuria. In those days most of my men saw films for the first time in their lives. There we had no need to worry about food supplies. We were each served with about 200 grams of sliced bread at every meal. At first, the meals were not to our taste, as we were not accustomed to Western food and

the side dishes were not very good.

There was a truck in the camp which brought supplies to us from a nearby farm. Its driver was a Russian. Lee O Song followed him like a shadow to learn how to drive. Sometimes he followed him to the farm. In the course of this, he learned how to drive, and also how to drink. Apparently the driver was very fond of drinking. With this experience, Lee O Song worked as a driver for some time after liberation. He was mad about driving. But one day he ran into a fence while driving my car. After that, he was banned from driving.

Once after liberation the Soviet comrades who had been in Camp South visited our country. The driver was among them and met his old friend, Lee O Song, in Pyongyang. I will never forget the year when we spent the winter and greeted spring in the Far East region of the Soviet Union.

The year 1941 witnessed a great change in our revolution and great events breaking out all across the world. In June the Nazi army invaded the Soviet Union, and in December the Pacific War broke out with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour. Indeed, in 1941 mankind was plunged into innumerable sufferings and calamities. It was a year of misery, a year of conflagration, when human civilization that had been built up for thousands of years was crushed under Armour and artillery fire.

Viewed from the spring of that year, however, the Soviet-German War and the Pacific War were still in the future. We greeted 1941 full of optimism and confidence in the future. The time for the Korean revolutionaries to carry out the sacred mission they had assumed for the times and history, for their motherland and nation, was near at hand. That spring I thought a lot about our small-unit activities and future joint operations, and exchanged opinions with my comrades. At that time Kim Chaek and Zhou Bao-zhong stayed at Camp South for some time, and I frequently consulted them.

After the Khabarovsk conference we decided to form small units and dispatch them to the motherland and Manchuria. I made preparations to leave in command of a small unit. Pending our departure, Kim Jong Suk helped us in our preparations. By that time she and I were married. Fighting for the revolution, we had got to know each other, and while sharing life and death on Mt. Paektu, we had become friends, comrades, and life companions.

It was around the time of the Dahuangwai conference that I first saw her. I am not sure whether it was during the meeting or after it, but I went to Sandaowan in Yanji County. The Party secretariat was located in Nengzhiying, Sandaowan. I met her at a meeting of the officials of the secretariat held in Nengzhiying. She was working with the secretariat at that time.

Later, I met her again in Maanshan, as she had been enrolled in my unit. She, along with Kim Myong Hwa, greeted me in Manjiang, and I was very impressed with her appearance. That day I talked a lot with her. Through our conversation I learned that she had no one to rely on except her comrades-in-arms. From that time on, she fought shoulder to shoulder with us. In my unit she took part in the Battle of the Fusong County Town, and fully demonstrated her audacity and intelligence.

I should say that I owe my survival in that fierce battle to her. With seven or eight other women soldiers, she was preparing the morning meal on a col not far from the battle site. In the depression was a house in which they could cook, as the smoke from the chimney could not be seen by enemy observers. But the enemy pounced upon the col all of a sudden. If this strategic spot were to be occupied by them, we could be attacked from both sides. Sensing the critical nature of the situation, Kim Jong Suk drew her Mauser and, with the other women soldiers, delivered heavy fire at the enemy, mowed many of them down and beat the rest back. The battle made her the favorite of her comrades-in-arms.

That year (1936) we operated in Changbai. Then in March the next year we set out on an expedition to Fusong. I have often mentioned this arduous expedition. Frankly speaking, everyone, including myself, was tired out. Every night most of the exhausted men fell fast asleep. But Kim Jong Suk would sit up all night by the campfire, mending the torn clothes of her comrades. As they marched through rugged mountains, their clothes were easily torn. Ma Tong Hui, a recruit at that time, had a hole burnt in his cap from a campfire spark. Kim Jong Suk mended it neatly. As I learned later, she made everything tidy with the utmost care. That night I was moved by her kind heart, by the fact that she could not sleep in peace before she had helped others. This fact gave me a deep understanding of the woman.

That was why I readily agreed to the proposal of some commanding officers to assign her to an underground workers' group to be sent to Taoquanli. She did a lot of work in Taoquanli and Sinpha. And it was at this time that I found in her uncommon skill and ability as a revolutionary. She had an unusual ability to motivate the masses, awakening them to consciousness and enlisting them in action. The "testimonial for a good citizen" which hundreds of people in Taoquanli and its vicinity are said to have submitted to the police with their signatures when she was arrested by the Jingan army soldiers showed their affection for her.

How could she enjoy such trust from the people?

Because she had worked with her full devotion. Whatever she did, she threw herself into it heart and soul, unafraid of death. And this was why she could survive any danger. She was afire with love for the people. She thought her sacrifice for others was not in the least wasteful. It was her nature to go through even fire and water if it was for the sake of her comrades.

In April 1938 we had an encounter at Shuangshanzi on our way back from attacking the enemy in Liudaogou. The battle was so fierce, I myself took a machine-gun on the firing line and mowed down the enemy. As the enemy was closing upon us from all sides, we had no way out, nor even a chance to take a meal.

Then I felt something warm at my side. I felt in my pocket, and found dumplings in it. Glancing round, I could see Kim Jong Suk running about the battlefield, putting dumplings in the hands of the comrades. We continued fighting while eating the dumplings. The food was cooked by a spring at the foot of a cliff. There was no knowing how she had climbed up the perpendicular cliff carrying a pan full of dumplings. She carried food to her comrades even running about the battlefield like that, lest they should go hungry,

but she herself always went hungry.

Once the unit ran out of cereals, and had only potatoes to eat. If a man eats potatoes for several meals in a row, he gets tired of them and loses his appetite. Kim Jong Suk was sorry to see her comrades-in-arms with nothing but potatoes to eat for several days, and racked her brains about how to stimulate their appetites. She ground up potatoes and cooked pancakes out of them, or made cakes out of them stuffed with stewed edible herbs. From that time on, her comrades ate the potatoes with relish.

Kim Jong Suk lived all her life not for herself, but for her comrades. Her life started with love for her comrades, and developed on the basis of that feeling. In the course of this, she became a prominent revolutionary who displayed communist moral qualities to the fullest extent. All that she did throughout her life was for her comrades, her fellows and for the revolution. She did nothing for her own benefit. She never thought of herself at all.

"I can endure hunger, cold and pain. I am satisfied if my comrades do not feel hunger, cold or pain. If I can save my comrades from danger at the cost of my own life, I will face death with a smile, with no regrets." - This was her outlook on life. The story about a blanket is sufficient to illustrate how sincere and ardent her love for her comrades was.

Some time ago, So Sun Ok, one of her comrades-in-arms, came to Pyongyang from Yanji, China, to see me. She brought with her a blanket and a pair of binoculars. She had been a cook for the Headquarters of the main force of the KPRA. Her husband, Kim Myong Ju, had also fought in the main force as an officer for some time. He had been widely known for his nickname "Yanji prison". He had been in the 7th Regiment when we were operating in the Fusong area. Choe Hui Suk, on her way back from underground work in Yaofangzi, brought with her So Sun Ok. So Sun Ok, only 15 or 16 years old at that time, joined the KPRA. Choe also took with her So's nephew. The recruit whom Om Kwang Ho branded as an enemy spy in the Qingfeng secret camp was this very nephew.

Kim Jong Suk loved So Sun Ok dearly. When camping, she would sleep with So Sun Ok, some years junior to her, under the same blanket. Kim Jong Suk and So Sun Ok were the only women guerrillas near Headquarters. The blanket So Sun Ok brought with her to Pyongyang was the very blanket Kim Jong Suk had used with much affection. The blanket had always been on her knapsack. When it was difficult to recognize her because she was hidden by her large knapsack, I could tell who it was by the sight of the blanket. When So Sun Ok was leaving for a base for small-unit actions, Kim Jong Suk gave her the blanket as a memento. At the base were Kim Myong Ju and Hyon Chol. She must have married Kim Myong Ju at the camp.

On the day of her leave-taking So Sun Ok hugged Kim Jong Suk and wept without ceasing. Her departure was full of tears as the two women had slept under the same blanket. Kim Jong Suk was worried at that time over what to give her as a memento. Putting the blanket in her knapsack, Kim Jong Suk said, "Well, please take this as a memento. It's not a new one, but don't forget that it carries my warmth, the warmth of your elder sister, who has loved you so much."

The blanket came to me after half a century. Despite the passage of time, I could recognize the favorite blanket of Kim Jong Suk. The pair of binoculars was the one I had given to Kim Myong Ju. Had she had a thing dearer to her than the blanket, Kim Jong Suk would have given it to So Sun Ok without hesitation. She always said she was happier to give than to receive. It was her philosophy of life that she was much happier giving her tender feelings to others than receiving others' tender feelings, although the latter was also good. Her love for her comrades found a most distinct expression in her efforts to help me, with unstinted devotion. Loyalty to one's commander is in essence an expression of one's love for one's comrades.

One year we fought many battles in which we had to skip meals, as we had run out of food supplies. When I was commanding a battle someone put something in my pocket. I turned to find that it was Kim Jong Suk. After the battle I looked in my pocket. There were cracked pine nuts wrapped in paper. I asked her where she had got them. She only smiled. Later, the women soldiers told me that she had climbed pine trees to pick the cones.

She snatched me from the jaws of death on several occasions. She was always prepared to become a shield herself to protect me from enemy fire. During the battle on the outskirts of Dashahe, a critical situation arose around me. A group of enemy troops were approaching me stealthily, yet I was not aware of the situation for I was commanding the battle. But for Kim Jong Suk's help, I would have been killed. She shielded me with her own body and shot all the enemy soldiers. So I was saved miraculously. Similar things happened on several occasions.

The padded coat I wore in the mountains for several years was also made by her. Apparently she had heard somewhere that floss-silk was bullet-proof. So she gathered floss whenever it was available and made a padded coat for me. As she made the coat, stitch after stitch with the utmost care, sitting up late for several nights, fitted me perfectly, she was overjoyed.

When I sat up all night or went to sleep at bivouacs, I would spread on the ground the deer skin I was carrying with me and lie on it, covering my body with the padded coat. Then I would feel warm enough. Nowadays, women do not do much knitting, I was told. They do not take the trouble, because machines do the job nowadays. Whenever I see knitwear, I am reminded of Kim Jong Suk. She did a lot of knitting for me. I wondered how she could manage to find time from her cooking duties to knit, and where she obtained knitting wool. Anyhow she read books or did knitting whenever she had time.

It was not easy to obtain knitting wool in the mountains. In those days we had to fight a battle just to obtain a packet of needles. Nevertheless, Kim Jong Suk made padded overcoats and waistbands, because she worried about my health, as I had to eat, sleep and march in the open in all seasons, fighting the enemy. She knitted woolen stockings for me every year until the country's liberation.

I was sorry she took so much trouble for me, and I once asked her where and how she obtained knitting wool. She only smiled. I asked her again if she had woolen stockings of her own. She again did not answer. As I pressed her for an answer, she only said, "You are engaged in a great work, General, and

you needn't worry your head about such trivial things."

After liberation she again did knitting for me. If my socks were worn out, instead of patching them, she would unravel them, wind the yarn on a spool and knit new socks for me. She would work all night and put them by my bed in the morning. She could of course buy socks better than those in shops and markets, but she did not buy new ones. If a pair of new socks she had bought was worn out, she would unravel them and knit them again for me until the yarn wore out. She wanted to knit my socks herself. That was truly a womanly heart.

I once could not help becoming annoyed at her exceptional devotion to me. It was one winter - I cannot remember which year it was - when she gave me my clothes she had washed and then dried against her own body. She had tried to do it unnoticed by others, but the other women soldiers' high praise for her deed reached my ears. Dumbfounded at this unheard-of episode, I called her to Headquarters. I was near tears when I saw her face so pale from the cold. To think that she had done for me what my mother dared not do in her lifetime, I did not know what to say to her.

The devotion with which Kim Jong Suk undertook of her own accord the thing even my mother had not done, to sacrifice herself! I thought it must have been her warm feeling towards the man Kim Il Sung, as well as her revolutionary devotion to her Commander.

"Comrade Jong Suk, I respect your devotion to me," I said to her. "I am always grateful to you for it. But why on earth did you do this? What if you catch pneumonia? If I bask in your self-sacrificing devotion, do you think I will feel at ease? Don't do it again." Smiling, she said, "It is nothing at all if only I can see you, General, in good health...."

Though I was angry in front of her, I shed tears after sending her back. I don't know why, but I was reminded of my mother at that time. I felt as if Kim Jong Suk's kindness for me contained that portion of love my mother could not give me in her lifetime.

I can never forget the look of Kim Jong Suk trying, biting her lips, not to reveal the chill she was feeling as she had been deprived of the warmth of her body by the wet clothes.

In the subsequent years, too, she would dry my clothes with her body. All in all, she protected me from bullets, rain and snow, and from fits of cold with her body. Our contemporary historians call the road of anti-Japanese revolution we trod an unprecedented path. They are right. The anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans blazed a trail not only in the revolution but in love. Their life was trying beyond imagination, but love blossomed on the hard rocks of Mt. Paektu.

I believe that an important thing in human love - love between parents and their children, love between husband and wife, love between sweethearts, love between teacher and his pupils, and love between comrades - is the spirit of devotion. Throwing oneself into fire, facing the gallows or jumping into a hole in the ice if necessary in order to relieve the person one loves of hunger, pain and cold, even though one

feels hungry, cold and painful oneself - only this self-sacrificing spirit of devotion can create the most beautiful, ennobling and sincere love.

When I visited Mangyongdae on my return to the motherland after liberation, my family and relatives said that they had heard that I had married a good woman when fighting in the mountains. They asked where we had had the wedding ceremony, how it had been arranged, who had been the best man and who had provided the wedding feast.

I could not answer. I was suddenly choked, and found myself at a loss for words to answer these questions. Telling the truth would grieve my grandparents and make my kinsfolk feel sorry for me.

When we were fighting in the mountains, we could not afford to think of things like wedding feasts. Life was arduous and trying, and, worse still, we had not won back the country and were ashamed of being a ruined nation. So how could we think of things like wedding ceremonies or birthday parties? None of us wished for such extravagance.

A wedding ceremony in the guerrilla army was very simple. All that had to be done was just to announce that such and such comrades were married. We could never imagine such a ceremony as giving a party in wedding gowns as the young men and women do now. When we enjoyed fairly good conditions, a bowl of cooked rice was all that was served. If rice was not available, gruel was served, and, if even gruel could not be served, potato or maize was shared. For all that, no one complained. On the contrary, we took it for granted and regarded it as natural.

After the announcement of the wedding we went on with our usual life in the companies and platoons we belonged to. There was no exception even for commanding officers. Some couples went into battle immediately after their weddings and fell in action, and other couples lived apart, as they were given different missions.

On the day I married Kim Jong Suk, our comrades-in-arms tried to obtain something special for us, but to no avail. Where could they obtain anything when the whole unit had run out of food supplies and were going hungry? There was no wedding dress, no wedding cake, no master of ceremonies and no best man, but I will never forget that event. Kim Jong Suk, too, often recalled the day.

If they hear this, younger people may wonder how it could be so. But it could not be otherwise in the circumstances of those days.

The anti-Japanese guerrillas felt the worth of life in gladly accepting and enduring today's hardships for the sake of tomorrow's happiness. That was their joy of life. They lived in that way for the coming generation, for their motherland as we see it today.

In the days in the Paektusan secret camp and the training base in the Soviet Far East region, I thought of arranging proper wedding ceremonies for my comrades-in-arms after the liberation of the country. But I



found that I could not do as I had wished because, though the country was liberated, the people were not well-off and the food problem was acute. One day immediately after liberation Jang Si U called on me and protested that a veteran guerrilla intended to spend money belonging to the Party committee of South Phyongan Province on a man's wedding. When I asked him who the veteran was, he said it was Kim Song Guk.

I called Kim Song Guk to my office and ordered Lee Ul Sol to disarm him. I then reprimanded him, asking who had authorized him to meddle with the finances of the provincial Party committee.

Almost in tears, he said, "I wanted to prepare a wedding suit, quilts and a party for Son Jong Jun. As he has no relatives, what can he do if we do not help him?"

Nevertheless, I criticized him severely.

"I know full well that it would be nice to prepare these things for Son's wedding. But are we in a position to do so? If you had recalled even once the days when we held weddings without proper food, you would not have asked the Party for money. The country is in dire circumstances, so observe with care and be prudent in your behavior, as befits a veteran guerrilla."

Though I reprimanded him, I felt my heart ache. Frankly speaking, how laudable it was for Kim Song Guk to try to arrange a proper wedding ceremony for a comrade with whom he had shared weal and woe, joy and sorrow!

Many of the veteran guerrillas got married in the liberated motherland, but they all held their weddings in a simple way. This always weighed on my heart. This is why Comrade Kim Jong Il arranges parties for their 60th and 70th birthdays, and sends gifts to them. Kim Jong Suk, however, did not enjoy such things and passed away in her early 30s, leaving behind her this photo. It was by mere chance that she and I posed for it. But for the care of our revolutionary comrades-in-arms, she would not have been able to leave behind even this photo.

When I was making preparations to leave in command of a small unit, my comrades called on me one day and suggested having photos taken. They said that as there was no knowing when we would meet again, we should leave photos as souvenirs. They added that all that I needed to do was to pose, because they had borrowed a camera.

Going outside in my uniform, I found Choe Hyon waiting for me. It was still chilly, but spring air could be distinctly felt everywhere. Leaning on a tree on which spring tints were emerging, I posed with my comrades-in-arms for photo, as souvenir of our meeting in Camp South after a long separation as well as on the occasion of departing on small-unit actions. Others posed in groups of twos or threes.

At that time, some women guerrillas getting wind of our photography session, ran to me and said they also would like to get their photos taken. So I posed for a few photos with them. They then suggested to

me that I should have a photo taken with Kim Jong Suk. Hearing this, she grew shy and hid herself behind the backs of the women guerrillas. They pushed her forward to my side, smiling all the way. In order not to miss the moment, a comrade clicked the shutter.

That was probably the first time in my life that I had posed with a woman comrade individually. For Kim Jong Suk and me, it was as good as a wedding photo. In those days we were still young and vivacious. We had many dreams of a bright future. Though we greeted the spring in a foreign land, we were full of confidence and in high spirits.

For both of us, it was an unforgettable first spring that we greeted after our wedding. As I wanted to remember that spring forever, I jotted down on the back of the photo: "Greeting the spring in a foreign land, March 1, 1941. At Camp B."

I never imagined that this photo would remain in history to be displayed in such a large museum as the Korean Revolution Museum. We fought for the anti-Japanese revolution for 20 years, and it is regrettable that not many photos of this period remain. So, I am grateful to those comrades who suggested photo-taking to me. Kim Jong Suk wore her hair bobbed, like the other women guerrillas did. But you cannot see her hair style in this photo, for all her hair is covered by her cap. There was a reason for this.

That spring I went to Manchuria and the homeland with a small unit. As I was passing Hunchun across the Soviet-Manchurian border, I felt my feet growing warm. At first I took no notice, thinking that it was the result of the long march. But at each step I felt something warm and soft on my soles. So I pulled off my shoes, to find in them liners made with hair. Only then did I remember that Kim Jong Suk had been wearing her cap even indoors, and I realized that she had cut her hair to make the liners. She must have worn her cap because she was too shy to show her short hair.



*Photo: left to right, Kim Il Sung, unidentified, Choe Hyon and Ahn Gil.*

Those who posed for the photos with me that day are now all gone? An Kil, Choe Hyon, Kim Jong Suk. There were many of them, but they have gone, leaving me behind. The young tree which An Kil, Choe Hyon and I leaned against to pose for a photo must have become a giant tree by now.

I don't know how Camp South has changed. I should like to take time off to visit it some day.

Even after liberation, Kim Jong Suk attended me with all her heart.

How meticulous she was in taking care of me! She would change my collars once every few days. She starched them and smoothed them by pounding them with a club. This was because only pounded collars became soft and did not feel stiff to the neck. If starched collars are ironed, they become stiff, injuring the skin of the nape and restraining the free movement of the neck. She would pound the collars with a club only when I was not around. She did not do it even once when I was at home, lest it disturb my thinking.

I will tell you one more anecdote related with her faithfulness.

On the eve of national liberation I went to Moscow to participate in a meeting to discuss the campaign against Japan. One night, sleeping in a guest house, I had a dream: Kim Jong Suk carried armfuls of books into a spacious room and told me to read them as I liked, adding that I would not be able to read them all in my lifetime. I awoke from the dream and told my comrades about it. They interpreted it as meaning that I would be President. Interpreting the dream in this grand way, joking, for some minutes, they said I would be very lucky in the future, and congratulated me.

On my return from Moscow I told Kim Jong Suk about the dream. Smiling, she said it was a good omen.

As the months passed, the memory of the dream grew dim.

However, Kim Jong Suk did not forget it. When we were living in a house at the foot of Mt. Haebang after the liberation of the country, she filled the shelves of my study with books and asked me to read them to my heart's content now that the country had been liberated. At her request, she and I posed for a souvenir photograph. The photo still exists.

It may be said that Kim Jong Suk devoted all her life to me. Even after marrying me, she considered me as Commander, Premier and as the foremost leader. The relationship between her and me was that between the leader and the led, between comrades. She always said she was a soldier of the leader. She never addressed me in familiar terms; she only said "General" or "Comrade Premier".

One day after liberation, some women journalists called on her to introduce her to the public. She only said to them: "A fighter's life is enshrined in the history of his leader. Please write more about General Kim Il Sung." I think one can detect her exceptional personality in these words.

She passed away after experiencing nothing but hardships all her life. I felt so heartbroken at this, I strapped a watch to her wrist when bidding my last farewell to her. Could I repay her lifelong devotion to me with a watch? Or could I assuage the grief of losing her by such an action? Nonetheless, I would not have thought of doing it had the watch been an ordinary one with no story to it. It was a watch which had endured remarkable events.

One year my grandmother said to me that she needed a ladies' watch and asked me if I could buy her a good one even though it was expensive. I was puzzled at my grandmother, who had lived all her life

without even a wall clock, all of a sudden wanting a ladies' watch, and a good one at that.

I bought such a watch, and took it to my grandmother. I asked her what she needed it for. "I heard," she said, "that you got married in the mountains without any fine presents or a feast. This weighs heavily on my heart. A long time has passed since you returned from the mountains, but I haven't arranged a party for you nor have I had clothes made for you. So I want to have Jong Suk wear a watch. I would be happy if she wore a watch."

The watch Kim Jong Suk took with her when departing this world was the very same one. My grandmother's affection for her grandson's wife was really deep. This affection also represented that of my father and mother, who had died long before.

However, I did nothing for her. She had arranged a birthday party for me, though simple, every year, but while living with her for nearly ten years after our marriage, I had not arranged one for her. She had not even allowed me to mention her birthday.

As I felt sorry about having done nothing for her, I offered her a glass of wine when I dropped in at my old house for lunch on the day the Republic was founded, saying, "All these years you have taken so much trouble to look after me, but so far I have done nothing for you; I have only given you trouble. Today I wish to offer you a glass of wine."

She said, "What do you mean by saying that you have done nothing for me? You gave me wonderful presents by founding the Party, the armed forces and the Republic! You have made my lifelong wishes come true. I have nothing more to wish for."

In the year after Kim Jong Suk's death, women veterans collected money and presented it to the Party, asking that her grave be renovated. When the project started, I visited her grave on Moran Hill, and found that a steel fence, stone facing and granite steps were being built.

I said to the women veterans working at the construction site:

"Please don't take offence, but look at those houses over there. People are still living in those small houses. They lived shedding bitter tears in the past, suffering hardships, but they are not yet leading decent lives. We have not yet reunified the country. If Jong Suk knew you were decorating her grave with granite slabs in these circumstances, how sorry she would be for the people! If you really want to pay tribute to her, you can plant trees and flowers around her grave and, when you recollect her, bring your children here to have a rest and look after her grave. This is the way to express your true feelings for her. Stop the project at once, and send those granite slabs to other construction sites."

Though she dedicated her all to the well-being of her comrades and fellows all her life, she did not leave a single penny or any property for her son and daughter. The money she spent came out of my salary and the house and furniture she used all belonged to the state. If there is any heritage she left with us, it is that

she brought up Comrade Kim Jong Il to be the leader of the future, and presented him to the motherland and the Party. You say I brought him up to be my successor, but in actual fact the foundation was laid by Kim Jong Suk. This is the greatest service she rendered for the revolution.

On her last day she sat Kim Jong Il by her side and told him to support his father loyally and inherit and consummate his cause. This was her last will. Three hours later, she breathed her last.

I still frequently recollect her. She wore chima (the traditional Koreskirt) and jogori (the traditional Korean jacket for women) for several years. For some reason, however, it is more often in military uniform than civilian attire that she appears in my mind's eye, mostly shivering From cold, as she did when she came to me with my clothes she had dried in her bosom.

It is still heartrending for me to remember how she looked.

## 23.4. The Days of Small-Unit Actions

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At times the publications on the payroll of Japanese imperialism gave wide publicity to the effect that the units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army had been routed if their commanding personnel fell in action. Even though they knew full well that large forces of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army were putting up resistance as ever, the army and police of Japan and Manchukuo, including the headquarters of the Kwangtung Army, too, said that the guerrillas had been wiped out in the early 1940s.

If their claim that the anti-Japanese armed units had been routed and an end had been put to our resistance was true, then why did Nozoe move his headquarters from Jirin to Yanji, the theatre of operations of the KPRA, and mass his troops northeast of Mt. Paektu, the troops that had been enlisted to attacking Yang Jing-yu? And why did he throw into "punitive" actions against the guerrillas not only the forces of the Kwangtung Army and the puppet Manchukuo army and police, but also the rabble of the railway guards and Concordia Association?

Even in the days of small-unit actions, we fought continually. While avoiding meaningless clashes, we struck the enemy hard when necessary. Of course, we avoided fighting large battles. We instead channeled great efforts into political work with the masses and reconnoitering. We also sent a great number of small units, groups and political workers to the homeland to make preparations for an all-people resistance.



*Photo: Kim Il Sung in the days of small-unit operations.*

The sizes of small units and groups were different according to the situations, but usually small units consisted of 10 to dozens of men as well as groups of only several men. They were armed lightly to suit their missions and duties. After their formation, we defined their tasks and their areas of operation. According to the tasks assigned, some small units and groups conducted mainly political work, some performed military actions and some were engaged in reconnaissance. But the tasks were not immutable. They executed other tasks than their own as well, according to the circumstances. For instance, the reconnaissance groups would sometimes conduct political work or the groups engaged mainly in military actions might do political work and reconnoitering at the same time.

As they were being formed, we directed efforts to building temporary secret bases on which they could rely. The typical ones built after the conference at Xiaohaerbaling were those situated near

Daomugou in Yanji County, near Mengshancun in Helong County, Huanggouling in Antu County, and Jiapigou in Wangqing County. A large number of such bases were built in the homeland - from Undok, Sonbong, Musan and Rajin to deep into the peninsula. There were secret camps in which small units could stay, and places where communications could be exchanged, where secret meetings could be held and where supply goods could be stored.

After the conference at Xiaohaerbaling the great leader, in command of some men from the Guards Company, fought a successful battle at a swamp near Huanghuadianzi, Antu County, setting an example for small-unit actions. He recollected the battle as follows:

The battle fought near Huanghuadianzi was the first one after our switchover to small-unit actions after the Xiaohaerbaling conference. After the conference I went to Hancongou with about a squad of my guards. On our return, we came across the enemy near Huanghuadianzi and fought a battle there. Every scene of the battle still remains vividly in my memory. The name of Huanghuadianzi, like those of Matanggou and Nanpaizi, has a story attached to it. When we asked the local inhabitants what the name of their locality meant, they gave different answers. Some said that it meant a swamp full of chrysanthemums others replied that it meant a swamp full of day lilies, and still others said it originated from the love of a boy and a girl. We did not know which interpretation was right. We had passed through the place several times, and found that there were not many chrysanthemums or day lilies there. But there was a swamp. The battle was fought in the swamp.

Hwang Sun Hui was one of our company. I had given her the task of conveying the policies discussed and decided at the Xiaohaerbaling conference to Choe Hyon. Though small in build, she was agile and had a lofty sense of responsibility. She knew well where Choe Hyon's unit was.

As dusk was falling, we took a break on the mountainside behind Huanghuadianzi.

I thought about how to pass through the swamp. There was a wide ditch across it and a log bridge across the ditch. Foul water of uncertain depth was flowing along the ditch. If we crossed the log bridge and then a couple of mountains, we could go straight to Daomugou in Yanji County, that we had decided upon as a temporary secret base beforehand.

Nevertheless, over the bridge the enemy could have been lying in ambush. As I was gazing at the far end of the bridge, I spotted, as I had expected, a flashing light on the other side. I wondered if it was a firefly at first, but it was without doubt an enemy flashlight, I decided. We could get to Daomugou only by crossing the log bridge, but we were in a fine fix as the enemy soldiers were entrenched in darkness. The situation could be likened to the Korean proverb that "You will meet your enemy on a narrow bridge."

In the days of armed struggle I was surrounded by the enemy and placed in the jaws of death on several occasions, but I think this was the first time that I felt so hemmed in that I could not find a way out.

If we could not cross the bridge, we would have to make a troublesome detour of several miles. We had

to continue our march straight ahead at all costs. As I stood there silently sizing up the circumstances, my men were holding their breath in suspense.

After a while, I decided to dash across the bridge before the enemy could notice us, and gave my men the order to start marching. We all crossed the bridge safely, but as soon as I, bringing up the rear, entered the bushes on the other side of the bridge, enemy machine-gun fire rang out.

I ordered my machine-gunner to return the fire, and diverted the column to the high road. Jon Mun Sop and Hwang Sun Hui guarded me at the risk of their lives. It was quite a critical moment. One false step and we might fall into the unfathomable marsh, and in the meantime enemy bullets were raining all around us. But we escaped the trap with no casualties. It was really a godsend.

Had we been thrown into confusion by the prevailing situation or failed to make a decision in time, we would not have been able to escape from the enemy's trap, and suffered great losses.

When we were marching towards the high road, I got the report from the scout that the enemy had appeared in front of us. No doubt the main force of the enemy, which had been standing by, had been alerted by the shots at the bridge.

I ordered my men to rush back to the bridge. Firing at the enemy soldiers at the bridge and those on our tail, we slipped away to one side, to a mountain. I then gave an order to take a break.

We took a short rest on the ridge of the mountain. Meanwhile, the enemy forces from the bridge and from the high road fell into an exchange of heavy fire.

The people in Antu told us later that the enemy suffered many casualties in the exchange of fire between themselves. The two enemy contingents accused each other of firing first, and wondered whether they had seen ghosts cross the bridge.

Later we killed many enemy soldiers at Facaitun, Yanji County, and near Wudaoyangcha, Antu County. In the battle fought at Facaitun we employed, unlike at Huanghuadianzi, a combination of raids by three parties and telescoping tactics. In this battle, too, the enemy suffered heavy casualties by shooting at each other.

We fought such battles almost every day. Some days a number of small units pooled their forces to attack a large target. As we fought large battles now and then, with the main emphasis on small-unit actions, the enemy did not realize that the People's Revolutionary Army had switched over from large-unit operations to small-unit actions.

After being informed through Hwang Sun Hui about the policies adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference, Choe Hyon and his men conducted efficient small-unit activities. His unit first attacked the enemy at Guangshengtun and Xiaochengzi in Wangqing County in a large combined force and then



dispersed into small units to strike the enemy here and there.

Small units led by O Paek Ryong fought in Yanji, Helong and Antu; those led by Kim Il and Sun Chang-xiang in Hunchun and Dongning; and those led by Han In Hwa, Park Song Chol and Yun Thae Hong in Dongning, Ningan, Muling and Wuchang.

The whole region of Northeast China and the northern border area of Korea seethed with the activities of the small units and groups.

On the small-unit actions he personally commanded after the Khabarovsk conference, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung recollected as follows:

In the days before the conference, the small units and groups operated mainly in the northern border area of Korea and Northeast China. After the conference, they made their way into the depths of Korea, expanding their activities as far as the points of military importance on the southern tip of Korea and even in Japan proper.

The contents of their activities were varied. They built Party organizations and underground revolutionary organizations or rebuilt those that had been destroyed in the homeland and Northeast China, put in order or reformed the remaining armed units, and set up a systematic and unified leadership over the organizations for an all-people resistance.

In addition they reinforced the secret bases in the different parts of the homeland, built new temporary secret bases as required by the situation, and recruited in the homeland and Northeast China patriotic young and middle-aged people to expand the ranks of the KPRA and train military stalwarts. At the same time they conducted on a wide scale a struggle to harass the enemy in the rear and weaken their war capabilities by raids, ambushes and subversive actions. They reconnoitered the enemy's military establishments, bases and strategic points, and strove to cause chaos in the enemy ruling system and military forces.

The units of the NAJAA also took part in the small-unit actions in those days. The theatres of these actions were allocated as follows: The units of the KPRA and the 1st Route Army and some units under the 2nd Route Army were to operate in Korea and southeastern Manchuria; the remaining main units of the 2nd Route Army were to operate in the area from north of Lake Xingkai to Donggang; and the units under the 3rd Route Army, in such counties as Qingcheng, Tieli and Hailun.

Going to Mt. Paektu and back to the temporary base in the Soviet Far East region, I guided the small-unit actions in Korea and southeastern Manchuria, and at the same time promoted military and political studies.

We ensured that those who had returned to the base from small-unit actions participated compulsorily and without exception in political studies and modern-warfare training. In Camp South it was decided

that I should first go to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu and to the homeland in command of a small unit consisting of a relatively large force of men. It would be followed, depending on the circumstances, by the small units led by Choe Hyon and An Kul. We defined the theatres of our actions and tasks.

In April 1941 I left the base with a small unit. Our task was to establish contact with the small units and groups operating in southeastern Manchuria and provide them with unified guidance. Another important task was to rebuild the revolutionary organizations that had been destroyed, build new ones, expand the armed ranks with young people recommended by secret organizations, and train these young people to be cadres needed for the final campaign for the liberation of the country and for the construction of a new country. We also decided to find out the whereabouts of Wei Zheng-min.

The situation in the homeland and Manchuria in those days was threatening. From the early spring of 1941, the Japanese imperialists set out on new "punitive" operations. The "Nozoe Punitive Command" was disbanded and its authority was transferred to the headquarters of the Kwangtung Army. Then the main units of the Kwangtung Army and all the "punitive" units under the headquarters of the military districts of the puppet Manchukuo army and the headquarters of the Kwangtung military police went on a rampage of "punitive" actions against the People's Revolutionary Army.

That was why some commanding personnel counseled me to take all precautions, as they were worried about my going to the enemy area in command of a small unit. Kim Chaek, too, was apprehensive about my safety at first.

Before leaving, I appointed Ryu Kyong Su company commander and Kim Il political instructor. Jon Mun Sop was appointed my orderly. When Jon's appointment was announced, Kim Chaek gave him strict instructions never to be as much as an inch away from me.

An Yong was chosen as wireless operator of the small unit.

An Yong had operated in eastern and northern Manchuria. As a teacher for several years, he had educated children in the spirit of patriotism. While working in eastern Manchuria, he had organized an itinerant troupe and conducted mass enlightenment work. He was a man of wide knowledge and rich life experience. At the time he worked with the masses in northern Manchuria, he worked both as a kitchen helper and as a day laborer in an opium field. We chose him as our radio operator because when he had been fighting in the unit in northern Manchuria he had taken a six-month radio-operating course in the Soviet Union. He sported a bushy moustache, about which he was often teased.

The number of men in the small unit would have been about 30. We wore Japanese-style uniforms, so that we looked like Japanese.

In the dead of night in early April we crossed the border. Then we marched to the northeast of Mt. Paektu through the sites of our former bases.

We had lots of things to do northeast of Mt. Paektu.

After we had abandoned our guerrilla bases in eastern Manchuria and moved to West Jiandao, the enemy had committed full-scale destruction in eastern Manchuria and northeast of Mt. Paektu. In order to repair the damage, we had again gone to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu after the operation in the Musan area, and exerted a positive revolutionary influence in the area.

Availing themselves of our temporary stay in the Soviet Union the enemy had again massed regular troops northeast of Mt. Paektu and raised a whirlwind of wholesale destruction. They then cried, "Peace has been secured in eastern Manchuria."

For the revolution northeast of Mt. Paektu to be brought to an upswing once more, the KPRA had to make its presence felt through the audacious activities of its small units and groups. By demonstrating that the KPRA was still active, we were fully able to arouse the masses again.

We planned to raise a revolutionary upsurge in Antu, Wangqing, Yanji, Hunchun and Dunhua, and then proceed to Mt. Paektu to build more revolutionary organizations in West Jiandao and in the homeland while strengthening the forces for all-people resistance and selecting hundreds of patriotic young people for training in the Paektusan secret camp and the base in the Soviet Far East region as military and political cadres.

After a forced march lasting several days after crossing the border, we arrived at a valley not far from Daheixiazigou.

Once some Koreans living in Yanbian brought me a video tape they had recorded, saying that while exploring an area bordering three counties?Wangqing, Dongmng and Hunchun?they had discovered a camping site of the guerrillas. I watched the video tape and recognized the area as the one our small unit had used as a temporary secret base.

When we arrived at the valley we had run out of food.

I sent Kim Il and some other men to raid the gold mine near Jinchang, Wangqing County, obtain food and conduct work with the masses there.

In the vicinity of the base, Jon Mun Sop caught a big bear. Several men had to carry it to the base on a pole. We extracted a pailful of grease from the bear.

Some days later, Kim Il returned with food. Crestfallen, he reported to me that Jang Hung Ryong had been killed on the mission. It had been because of Ji Kap Ryong that Jang had been killed. Ji had stubbornly insisted on having a meal on the way back from the raid on the gold mine, and the party was delayed for about an hour, during which the pursuing enemy surprised them.

Regretting that he had not refused Ji's request to take a meal, Kim Il said he was ashamed to face me. Jang's death tore our hearts apart. We felt even sadder as we looked back on how he had made painstaking efforts to make up for his mistake when he had been given a penalty concerning an incident involving an ox. Coinciding with Jang's death, a guerrilla of Chinese nationality was captured by the enemy. The result was that the whereabouts of our unit was revealed. The enemy pursued us tenaciously, saying that Kim Il Sung had reappeared.

I thought that the news of our reappearance would rather serve our purpose. If the enemy made a commotion about this, then it would be known to the people, and in the long run it would be tantamount to making public the struggle of the KPRA. In fact, the enemy was giving publicity to our struggle!

To cover our traces, we crossed a pass and marched towards Taipinggou. In early May we arrived at Jiapigou, Wangqing County. There I parted with Kim Il. He was to operate with a group which had a temporary secret base at Jiapigou. In the areas of Luozigou and Tumen-Jiamusi, the theatre of the group's operations, there were many organization members we had trained with great efforts in the days of the guerrilla bases. Telling Kim Il that Choe Chun Guk's family would be living somewhere around there, I asked him to establish contact with them.

An Yong, the radio operator, was to remain at the Jiapigou base with two of his assistants. The base played the role of an intermediary liaison center. I left Jiapigou with about 20 men for the wide areas on the Tuman northeast of Mt. Paektu. We planned to operate circling around Dunhua, Antu, Fusong, Helong, Yanji and several other counties in eastern Manchuria.

Passing through Dunhua County, we built a base at Hancongou, Antu County, and set up a liaison center. I had met Wei Zheng-min last at Hancongou. By the time we arrived at Hancongou the season had changed. The forests were thick and it was hot at midday. From there I dispatched groups for political work to Changbai, Dunhua and Chechangzi, as well as to the homeland and Mt. Paektu.

Han Chang Bong and Han Thae Ryong were dispatched to the Changbai area. Their task was to guide the activities of the secret organizations there and to locate the families and relatives of guerrillas, link them to organizations and send them to the homeland. Changbai was home to many of the soldiers of my unit. If their families and relatives were all affiliated with organizations and planted in the homeland, they could play an important role in forming organizations for the all-people resistance movement. I gave the two men the task of selecting excellent young people and sending them to our base in the Soviet Far East region. I told them in detail whom they should contact in Taoquanli and Changbai, and in other places. I ordered them to make inroads into the homeland after building up underground organizations there and entrench themselves among the working class.

Jon Mun Sop and Kim Hong Su went to the head of a valley in Chechangzi and dug up the weapons and maps we had buried there previously and returned with them. Those who had been to Dunhua brought an old man with the surname of Park from a forest near Dahuangou. He had been eking out a living by hunting wild animals. He had in the past been affiliated with the Anti-Japanese Association, an

underground organization, in Huadian County.

I had a long talk with the old man. He said that the mountains were crawling with the Japanese "punitive" troops and their stooges. He added that we should take care as the huts of charcoal burners and opium growers, as well as the huts where biers had been kept and caves were all occupied by enemy spies. Complaining that underground work was quite difficult as the enemy had locked up all the local people in internment villages, controlling their travel and making them keep watch on one another, he said he would, for all that, do his best for the benefit of the guerrillas.

Frequenting the Dunhua County town and the internment villages, the old man brought us a list of those connected with our organizations, and the food and goods we needed. On the basis of the materials he obtained, we rebuilt the organizations in this area rapidly. Later, the old man was arrested by the enemy and executed.

In this way, we enjoyed the active support and cooperation of the people in the days of small-unit actions. This support proved to be a great encouragement for us in our difficult struggle in the enemy area. This was clear testimony to the fact that the people had already been aroused to engage in all-people resistance.

While expanding the network of underground organizations, we endeavored to find the whereabouts of the remaining units under the 1st Route Army and Wei Zheng-min. First we reorganized ourselves into three teams and operated in the counties of Dunhua and Huadian, the Antu area, the area north of Helong County and the area of Fusong County.

In those days Ryu Kyong Su did his work faithfully, despite many hardships. In order to get to Jiapigou in Huadian County, he had to cross the swollen Fuer River. But the river was impassable. Finally, he ran out of food and he had to return. Going hungry for several days and worried about his failure to perform his task, he fell ill.

But someone had to go to Jiapigou, come what may. I decided to go there personally, leading a small unit. On hearing this, Ryu Kyong Su, who had been bed-ridden in a corner of the tent, struggled to his feet and approached me, saying, "You mustn't go. I'll try again." My efforts to dissuade him proved futile, and eventually I could not but accede to his request.

In every man's life there is a moment when his character is tested. Each second and each minute of our do-or-die guerrilla struggle was such a moment. We experienced scores of times a day the moment when we had to make a decision whether we would dedicate our lives to the struggle or abandon it.

Whenever he was faced with a critical situation, Ryu Kyong Su threw himself into it as if he were a human bomb. So I always sent him to the tightest corner. Assigning simple tasks to his comrades-in-arms and shouldering difficult tasks himself, giving others the credit for successes and trying to discover the cause of any mistake within himself when anybody had to be called to account, and willingly receiving

reprimands or penalties - this was Ryu Gyong Su's personal appeal and an important reason why he was loved by all.

When he was leaving for Jiapigou, I ordered that he be given all the food we had. Behind my back, he asked Jon Mun Sop whether there was any food left for me. As Jon Mun Sop, at a loss what to say, was hesitant, Ryu reprimanded him for his failure to do his duty as my orderly, and poured out grain back from his knapsack.

Having performed his task, Ryu Kyong Su returned after several days. He had apparently undergone such great hardships that he fell unconscious as soon as he saw me. I pulled off his shoes. Gangrene had already set in in his feet, and bloody puss was oozing out. As I spooned thin gruel into his mouth, he managed to open his eyes and gave me the report of his work.

In the vicinity of Jiapigou they had met a peasant who had had contacts with the guerrillas. But the peasant had given them a wide berth. Failing to meet Kwak Ji San and others, they had roamed about and only heard the rumor that Wei Zheng-min had died. Though he had done his best, Ryu Kyong Su was very sorry that he had not performed his tasks to the full.

Ji Kap Ryong, who had been to Wangbabozi with another group, surrendered to the enemy. The trials of 1941 were a touchstone that distinguished once again who was a true revolutionary and who was a sham revolutionary.

These trials and examinations continued without interruption until the day of the country's liberation. The anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans who returned to the liberated motherland are precious men and women tested in trials one hundred times, nay, one thousand times. Soon after Ji Kap Ryong's betrayal, the enemy, aware of our whereabouts, swarmed into our base like wolves. In command of the unit, I broke through the enemy's encirclement and headed for Antu via Dashuhe and Xiaoshahe.

Working in the large area of Antu and Fusong, we concentrated on the work of expanding the organizations we had formed previously. Through the members of the organizations we came to know that Wei Zheng-min had died of illness and a rumor was circulating that a notice carrying his photo was put up even in the town of Mingyuegou. We also obtained the information that 30 or so guerrillas were operating in the areas of Nanhamatang and Beihamatang, and in the vicinities of Mingyuegou and Yanji. So we decided to do more work in this region. I dispatched a team to the areas of Shahezhang, Nanhutou, Dahuangwai and Beihamatang. I myself headed for Mt. Paektu with the remaining men.

In the Kanbaeksan secret camp I called together the heads of small units, groups for political work and revolutionary organizations, and gave them the task of holding fast to the Juche-oriented stand as required by the prevailing situation and of briskly conducting ideological education to consummate the Korean revolution by our own efforts. I also told them to make preparations for selecting excellent young people in the homeland and West Jiandao and giving them training in our base in the Soviet Far East region, and organize the work of the all-people resistance by training many men in the Paektusan secret

camp and in the area of Mt. Kanbaek.

Following the meeting, we went to Onsong and guided the work of organizations in the homeland in this direction. Our way back after operating in the area of Mt. Paektu was not smooth, either. Startled by the gunshots raised by our small units, the enemy were making desperate efforts to trace us. In those days the enemy "punitive" troops were everywhere to be seen on high roads, on mountain tops, in valleys, and so on.

Laotougou in Yanji County was an enemy stronghold. As the military police and special units of the Kwangtung Army, the puppet Manchukuo army and police were entrenched there, it was difficult to pass through it. Nevertheless, without passing through it, we could neither reach the mountain that led to the forest in Sifangtai nor go to the assembly place of our small unit.

We decided to try to pass through it by night in our Japanese military uniforms. But to our regret, the day broke before we could cross the railway line at Laotougou. We had to stop marching in the daytime and hide ourselves in a safe place. We looked down from a mountainside at some houses along a main road, and a railway station not far away. We made up our minds to enter the houses and wait for dusk to fall.

I quartered my men in the houses, and I myself stayed in a house on the road. One man, disguised as a Chinese peasant, kept watch while weeding in a nearby field with a hoe, while the others all rested. At noon, men in yellow clothing flung open the door of the house I was staying in. They were surprised to find several men in military uniform in the house. When the man leading them attempted to turn back, one of my men poked a rifle into his back.

I told the man to come inside. Apparently they had taken us for Japanese soldiers. I asked him who he was. He said he was head of the Concordia Association and had come to the village on receiving a report that Kim Il Sung's unit had appeared there. I told him point-blank that we were the KPRA. Hearing this, the man trembled. I learned valuable information from him.

From a newspaper he had brought with him I learned for the first time that the Soviet-German War had broken out. He told me that the Japanese had become agitated all of a sudden and were massing their troops in the Soviet-Manchurian border area, and a rumour had it that a Soviet-Japanese War would break out before long. I told him to go to the police after we left the village and report that Kim Il Sung's unit had passed through Laotougou in broad daylight.

Receiving the report, the enemy were said to have made a great fuss, crying how could it happen that Kim Il Sung's unit had taken a meal and had a siesta under their very noses. Without suffering any loss, we arrived at Jiapigou, Wangqing County, the assembly point. Kim Il and his men, who had returned after completing their mission, joined us there.

Following a meeting in June, I called another meeting of the heads of small units at the end of July in Jiapigou. The aim of the meeting was to conduct ideological education among all the officers and men

and members of small units of the KPRA in relation to the situation that had changed rapidly in the international arena with the conclusion of a neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan and the outbreak of the Soviet-German War.

A heated discussion arose among the members of small units about the outbreak of the Soviet-German conflict. Some said the conflict would open a bright vista for our revolution; some judged that if the Soviet Union had to sustain a pincer attack in the east and in the west by two powers, it would exert a negative influence on our revolution; and still others were of the opinion that the impact of the world situation on us should be judged only when the Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union became a reality.

It was in order to unify these opinions as soon as possible, instill in my men confidence in the victory of the revolution and rouse them to make better preparations for meeting the great event of national liberation on our own initiative that I convened the meeting. At the meeting we reviewed the activities of the small units and groups that had been dispatched to different places, and discussed the course of our future activities. Throughout the meeting, I stood by my principle:

"We must not vacillate whatever the change in the general trend.

Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union is just digging its own grave. If Japan invades the Soviet Union, it will also be tantamount to digging its own grave. But Japan has no strength to do so. Look at the balance of forces between the powers. Even if the earth changes to whatever form, fascism will go to ruin, and democracy will emerge victorious. A bright vista will be opened for our revolution. So we must not vacillate or be hesitant in the face of temporary difficulties. We must hold fast to the banner of the revolution. We must cherish our convictions and the confidence that we will liberate the country and consummate the Korean revolution by our own efforts."

At the meeting I indicated the course of our future small-unit actions. I said that we had to harass the enemy continually in their rear while avoid-ing reckless frontal confrontation and engagement with the enemy, whose forces were stronger than ours, so as to preserve our forces. I stressed that we should raid and destroy the enemy's convoys and supply bases, and that we should also intensify reconnoitering and political work with the masses for the campaign for liberating the country.

In early August we raided a road construction site between Wangqing and Luozigou. In those days the Japanese imperialists were massing large numbers of troops in this area, which was close to the Soviet-Manchurian border area. We thought that if we raised gunshots in this area where the enemy soldiers thronged, the echo would be a great one. If we were to raise gunshots, we would raise them in the heart of the enemy area? this was our intention.

I sent two parties in two directions to cut off the enemy's retreat. Then we, disguised as Japanese soldiers, made an appearance at the construction site in fine array, disarming the road guards in an instant and bringing the enemy soldiers in the barracks under our control. We finished the battle so quickly that the road builders, perplexed, gazed at us vacantly. Only after Ryu Kyong Su shouted, "We are Kim Il Sung's



guerrillas," did they rush to us from all sides and hug us.

After doing political work with them, we passed through the area north of Wangqing County and reached a mountain top overlooking the village of Taipinggou.

I was told that many rumors about us circulated in Wangqing after the battle.

From the top of the mountain I looked down on the village through binoculars. I could see the houses of Lee Kwang, O Jung Hup and Park Kil Song. I could even see O Jung Hup's father walking up and down in his yard.

I gave Kim Il the task of establishing relations with them, and building secret organizations in this area.

Later Kim Il formed an underground organization keeping contact with O Chang Hui, O Jung Hup's father, and Park Tok Sim, Park Kil Song's father. He also planted secret organizations among the peasants in Nanbeidadong, and among the workers at the Xiaowangqing railway station. O Jung Hup's father told Kim Il that, with the rumour that Kim Il Sung's unit had now advanced to Mt. Paektu circulating, the local people were highly elated and full of confidence in the victory of the revolution.

The small units of the KPRA conducted on a considerable scale military and political activities to foil the enemy's operations in the border area between the Soviet Union and Manchuria, where the unit-train transportation and mobility of the enemy troops were brisk. It was in those days that our small units made the enemy military trains collide with one another in the yard of the railway station in Tumen and raided the enemy troops on the move in Toudaogou, Helong County, and in Wangqing County.

Concluding with success the small-unit actions in the homeland and Northeast China, we returned in August to the base in the Soviet Far East region.

In order to consolidate these successes, I came to Manchuria once again and even to the homeland in command of a small unit in mid-September 1941. The important mission at this time was to establish relations with the small units led by An Kil, Kim Il and Choe Hyon, analyze what they had reconnoitered, give on-the-spot guidance to the small units and groups active in the areas on the Tuman and different parts of the homeland, and instill in them the conviction of sure victory. This was of great importance in expanding the theatres of activities of small units and groups deep into the homeland, preparing for the great event of national liberation and getting forewarning of Japan's plan to invade the Soviet Union.

Before departure, I saw to it that An Yong met his wife. Lee Yong Suk, An Yong's wife, was in Camp North. She had married him, the night school teacher of her village, on the advice of her parents and fought together with him in Choe Yong Gon's unit. After her husband had gone to the Soviet Union to learn radio operation, she had not heard from him. How eagerly he must have wanted to see her, as he had heard she was in Camp North! So I told him to meet his wife. In the heart of a man who goes on a

difficult mission there must be no clouds. After seeing her he seemed to have been further encouraged; he was all smiles.

Near the camp site we had set up in Wangqing there was a river. Lee Tu Ik and Jon Mun Sop caught fish there. They were both good at angling. The river was swollen after heavy rain. While angling, they caught a bear that was licking up red ants on a rotten stump.

We dismembered the bear and put some of its meat in the river. Mountain water is so cold that it preserves any meat put in it. Wheat flour kept in a deep pool does not degenerate, either. If it is put under the water in bag, it looks as if it would be soaked with water, but this is not true. Only the outer surface gets wet, by about one centimeter, and its inside remains intact. Life in the mountains is, as a matter of course, inconvenient, but there are knacks and methods peculiar to this sort of life, making it more comfortable.

One day I called the commanding personnel of the small units together and analyzed what they had reconnoitered so as to discuss the situation. They produced much interesting material. They were unanimous in their opinion that we should wait and see whether Japan would invade the Soviet Union or not, and it seemed that it would not happen in the foreseeable future.

As evidence, An Kil reported about railway wagons. According to him, the Japanese police had gathered local people together and told them that a war against the Soviet Union would break out sooner or later, and so they must build dugouts and roads. But investigation of railway goods wagons revealed that the open wagons transported guns, tanks and the like, but most of the covered wagons were empty.

The information Choe Kwang's small unit had gathered in the area of Mudanjiang was also interesting. From a mountain near a railway station they monitored through binoculars how many enemy troops were being massed in the border area every day.

Whenever a train pulled into the station, Choe Kwang counted how many soldiers disembarked from each coach. One day he spotted an officer stepping down onto the platform with a cigarette between his lips. He engraved the officer's face in his memory, apparently because he was especially arrogant in his behavior or he gave himself airs with a cigarette. The next day, Choe Kwang saw the officer again on the platform.

He had been doubtful at first, as he wondered how could a man who had got off the train the previous day get off again today. But he was the same officer. That day too the officer was smoking a cigarette. Only then did Choe Kwang realize that the enemy was carrying the same troops in covered wagons back and forth every day to fool the guerrillas. It was a valuable information.

On his return to the base my men said, jokingly, that he could gather such information only because he was a heavy smoker. They said he could pay attention to the officer because he could not keep his eyes off the cigarette between the officer's lips, and so he easily realized he was the man he had seen the

previous day.

Thanks to cigarettes, he gathered good information. He was once punished also because of cigarettes.

He became the leader of a platoon of the Young Volunteers' Corps at the age of 16. Because of his lack of years his men treated him as a neophyte. In order to show that he was a grown-up, not a novice, he began to smoke. After a few years he became addicted to cigarettes, and if he had no cigarettes in hand, he would get sick.

Once he returned to his unit after a battle carrying a case of cigarettes on top of a sack of wheat flour. The unit called a meeting of Party members and punished him. The meeting decided he deserved punishment as he had brought cigarettes, which could not be eaten, when he could have brought one more sack of wheat flour at a time when food was running short.

Through summing up all the information we had gathered in those days we came to the conclusion that Japan was not ready to invade the Soviet Union, and its endeavor to pretend to be massing its troops on the Soviet-Manchurian border region was a trick to hide its plan of southward military expansion. We could guess that Japan was making preparations for a southern attack, not a northern one. This proved a great help to the Soviet Union in its formulation of a military strategy against Japan.

On the way back to the base in mid-November, we dropped in at Yonbong, Saeppyo County. After my venture, several small units pushed into the homeland and Manchuria.

At the end of 1941 a small unit led by Kang Kon staged a large-scale ambush on an enemy train near Xinjiandian on the Mudanjiang-Jiamusi line, destroying the passenger cars carrying Japanese officers and freight cars carrying armoured vehicles and gasoline.

In the early spring of 1942 Park Song Chol's small unit operated in the areas of Dongning, Ning'an and Jiaohe Counties. Contacting guerrillas fighting in Laosongling, Ning'an County, in Qinggouzi, Jiaohe, and in Wuchang County, they expanded their ranks and conducted small-unit actions until September, fighting battles continually, before returning to the base. The small unit led by Chai Shi-rong of the NAJAA achieved great results in Ning'an and Muling Counties and along the Mudan River.

Reviewing the success achieved in the first stage of small-unit actions, I thought that our making sorties into the homeland and Manchuria from the temporary base in the Far East region of the Soviet Union was a correct strategy. Above all, we experienced in person that the switchover from large-unit actions to small-unit actions in the new situation was a timely measure and that we could deal heavy political and military blows to the enemy, and inspire the people to anti-Japanese resistance through small-unit activities no less effectively than we could through large-unit actions.

These successes inspired all our commanding personnel and rank-and-file soldiers with a firm conviction in the final victory.

Our small-unit actions demonstrated to our fellows in the homeland and abroad that the revolutionary army was as hale and hearty as ever, defeating the enemy and winning one victory after another, and that, if all people were united around the revolutionary army and conducted nationwide resistance, they were fully able to defeat Japanese imperialism and greet the day of national liberation.

The army and police of Japan and Manchukuo that had been assuming an air of triumph as if they had annihilated the guerrillas to the last man through the "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area" and large-scale "punitive" actions were hemmed into a tight corner by our adroit small-unit operations. Around the time when the JAF were formed, the small-unit actions of the soldiers of the KPRA became more brisk.

With an eye to the pending final campaign against Japan, we directed our main efforts to military reconnoitering and preparations for an all-people resistance campaign, and at the same time expanded the small-unit actions in breadth and depth.

The small-unit actions were conducted by putting the main emphasis on the actions of the small units comprised of soldiers of the main unit of the KPRA and combining them with military reconnoitering by the KPRA soldiers attached to the detachment of the IAF. This method of operation, acting independently and when necessary supporting and cooperating with each other - proceeded from the conditions on the ground and the requirements of the political and military situation that prevailed in those days. It enabled us to consolidate and further expand the political and military successes of the activities of the small units.

The small-unit actions conducted after the formation of the IAF were characterized by sticking to the principle of giving priority to group activities while combining them with the activities of larger small units. In accordance with this principle, in military operations we directed our main effort to the activities of groups and combined them, as appropriate, with raids and ambushes by small units.

Following are documents on the intensification of the activities of small units and groups of the KPRA: "Kim Il Sung, Choe Hyon, Chai Shi-rong and others who found their way into Manchuria again have realized the disadvantages of armed resistance and strongly show the tendency of mainly conducting strategic activities involving the destruction of important military, industrial and economic installations, turning the masses into Reds or inspiring them to revolt, and subverting our soldiers." (Report from Mudanjiang acting consul Furuya, June 23, Showa 16 (1941).)

"In early 1942 the Korean guerrillas performed some combat operations in northern Korea, destroying 22 Japanese planes and two hangars, and sinking two oil-tankers and fishing boats." (V. Yarovoy, Korea ,p. 44, September 1945, the Soviet Naval Forces Press.)

The small units dispatched to the homeland and Manchuria also worked to demoralize the enemy forces. Through their energetic activities, war-weariness grew rampant among the Japanese soldiers, and many

young Korean people drafted into the army deserted with their weapons and joined our groups one after another. Some pilots of the enemy air corps rose in revolt and defected to the People's Revolutionary Army.

The greatest success we achieved through small-unit actions was foiling the enemy's attempt to annihilate us and making ample preparations for greeting the great event of national liberation while preserving and accumulating our forces.

These political and military successes proved a great asset for expediting the dawn of the liberation of the country.

## 23.5. Trust and Treachery

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Recently our newspapers have been again carrying the reminiscences of the anti-Japanese guerrillas. This is a very good thing.

The reminiscences are precious treasures of our Party, each with a high educational value. How fine The Conviction of Victory is! In the 1960s our people read these reminiscences a lot. They had a strong impact on our postwar economic reconstruction and industrialization. The more difficult the situation and our struggle, the more reminiscences like The Conviction of Victory we must read, because vacillators tend to crop up in such circumstances.

When our revolution was faced with severe trials like the Arduous March, stragglers, deserters and capitulators began to appear among those whose confidence in the victory of the revolution was shaky. Vacillators and deserters also appeared in our ranks when a neutrality pact was signed between the Soviet Union and Japan. Ji Kap Ryong, who appears in The Conviction of Victory, was one of those deserters.

The neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan was signed in April 1941, in the days when I was operating with a small unit. On his way back from a visit to Germany, Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka dropped in at Moscow and concluded the neutrality pact. Its repercussions reached our People's Revolutionary Army. The gist of the treaty was that the signatories should maintain peaceful relations, respect the integrity and inviolability of each other's territory, and observe neutrality when either party engaged in hostilities with a third country.

As you can see, the treaty had no article that dealt with the Korean question. So there was no reason for the treaty to upset Koreans in particular. Nevertheless, a considerable number of Korean revolutionaries were disappointed on hearing the news of the treaty. They had been considering the Soviet Union as their most reliable ally and, as the ally had joined hands with Japan, their mortal enemy, they thought that everything was hopeless. They became disheartened, as they had interpreted the clauses on respect for each other's territory and maintenance of peaceful relations in the treaty as a declaration that the Soviet Union and Japan would not engage in a war against each other.

This judgment produced, in the long run, pessimism, defeatism and capitulationism in corners of our ranks. After signing the treaty with the Soviets, the Japanese gave wide publicity to it. They carried in their newspapers a photo of Stalin meeting Matsuoka. This photo had a strong psychological impact on fence-sitters among us. However, could the basic revolutionary stand of Korean communists change because their neighboring countries had signed a treaty?

Did we rely on a big country when we were starting the revolution? No. We started it with belief in ourselves. After starting the armed struggle, we received no aid, not even a single hand-grenade, from our neighbors. We waged the armed struggle, carried on Party building and conducted the united front movement by solving everything by our own efforts and by believing in the strength of our own people.

In the course of this we entered into a joint struggle with the Chinese people and formed an allied front with the Soviet people. An ally would be welcome, but it wouldn't matter if there were no ally. That was our consistent stand. That was why, from the first day of the armed struggle, we educated the army and the people in the spirit of independence and equipped them with the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance. We stressed time and again that independence meant life, that dependence on foreign forces meant the lot of slaves, that self-reliance would lead us to prosperity, and that we could neither liberate the country nor build a new country without relying on ourselves.

But some commanding officers paid little attention to education in the spirit of liberating the country by our own efforts and the spirit of self-reliance; they only stressed the contradictions between the Soviet Union and Japan, and the greatness of the Soviet Union. This permitted the germs of worship of great powers to infiltrate the minds of men like Ji Kap Ryong - the idea that only a war between the Soviet Union and Japan would create a decisive opportunity for liberating Korea and that we could defeat Japan only with the help of such a great power as the Soviet Union.

The Japanese foreign minister's visit to Moscow to sign the neutrality pact with the Soviet Union was no more than a smokescreen. The Japanese were always looking for a chance to push north, in other words, to attack the Soviet Union. Japan and Germany had agreed in secret to cooperate in an attack on the Soviet Union, and planned to divide the vast territory of the Soviet Union into two parts, with the Urals as the demarcation line to be occupied by each from the east and west, respectively.

However, Japan was not yet strong enough to invade the Soviet Union. So the southward policy got the upper hand. It was Japan's intention to occupy Southeast Asia, store up sufficient strategic reserves and then march into the Soviet Far East and swallow up the region as far as the line of the Urals only after Nazi Germany had inflicted fatal wounds on the Soviet Union. The strategy could be likened to the proverb, "waiting for a persimmon to ripen and fall of its own accord." Japan's signing of the neutrality pact with the Soviet Union was a contortion in her timetable.

As German forces invaded the Soviet Union two months after the signing of the pact, Japan immediately ordered her Kwangtung Army to stage "special exercises". This was as good as a preliminary order for a war against the Soviet Union. During these exercises the strength of the Kwangtung Army on the Soviet-Manchurian border doubled. This revealed what the Japanese really had in mind. The mere fact that Matsuoka, the mastermind of the neutrality pact, asserted that a war against the Soviet Union was imminent shows how cunning and brazen-faced the Japanese ruling circles were.

Was the Soviet Union fooled by this trick of the Japanese? It knew Japan's strategy too well for that. Seeing, however, that Japan was taking the initiative in proposing to maintain peaceful relations and respect each other's territorial integrity, the Soviet Union, that had been guarding against a possible pincer attack from the east and west by Japan and Germany, felt that this was a lucky chance. In those days the Soviet Union was faced with an unprecedented threat of invasion by Nazi Germany. The large German forces massed on its western frontier might attack at any time. Japan's professed neutrality in this

situation, in spite of her covetous eye on Siberia, gave the Soviet Union the respite of a possible delay in having to fight a two-front war.

When Matsuoka was leaving Moscow, Stalin was said to have seen him off at the railway station. This fact eloquently spoke of the mental state of the Soviet leadership on the eve of the Soviet-German War. So how ignorant it was to think that the Soviet Union had become a friend of Japan by signing the neutrality pact! The more tense the situation is, the soberer must be the estimate and judgment of it. If you take a phenomenon at its face value, failing to see through its essence, you are liable to make a fatal mistake. Ji Kap Ryong made such a mistake. Ji Kap Ryong's defection was also called the Wangbabozi incident.

The incident took place in the spring of 1941, when I was operating in the Antu area in command of a small unit. From a base in Hancongou, I was directing small units and groups operating in different areas. The greatest difficulty we had at that time was the fact that all the local people were confined in internment villages. We had to get in touch with them, but it was not easy.

The only way was to obtain help from the hunters, charcoal burners and medicinal-herb collectors who used to roam the mountains. Hunters caught deer from early spring to autumn. They caught them by digging pits, in which they placed metal-tipped stakes, and then covering them with thin twigs and grass before spreading salt on top. Deer which stepped on the grass to lick the salt would fall into the pit and get pierced by the stakes. If we dealt with these hunters tactfully, we could get in touch with secret organizations and learn the enemy's movements.

I divided the small unit into several groups, which I dispatched on missions to different places. Ji Kap Ryong and Kim Pong Rok were sent to Wangbabozi to work among the local inhabitants and obtain food. Headquarters ordered the leaders of these small groups to report the results of their work once every five days. But no report came from Ji's group. This was unusual. I had to send a responsible man to find out the situation with Ji's group, but I had no one. At that very moment Ryu Kyong Su's group returned to Headquarters. Kim Ik Hyon and Xu Baoren, a soldier of Chinese nationality, were the other members of Ryu's group. The three of them were tough men, as hard as birch trees, but their appearance was appalling.

They said they had experienced manifold hardships; they had run out of food; they had had to make a detour twice as long as planned, because the Fuerhe River was swollen; and one of them had suffered from cramp in his stomach. To make matters worse, they had encountered an armed band of immigrants from the Ryukyu Islands in Japan disguised as peasants when they were passing Dapuchaihe or somewhere. They had had a hard time of it pursued by these people.

On hearing about this armed band, I thought the Japanese imperialists were really nasty and cunning. Ryu Kyong Sn and Kim Ik Hyon told me the story in turn.

The band numbered about 100. As they wore peasant clothes and were sowing seeds, our men thought



they might obtain food with their help. This got them into trouble. Hiding by the roadside, our men watched for a chance. When they saw a man walking to the edge of the field, they told him that they were anti-Japanese guerrillas, and asked him if he could help them buy food. But the peasant did not understand them. Perceiving that he understood neither Korean nor Chinese, they thought he must be deaf. So they tried gestures. Only then did he understand.

The peasant walked slowly back into the field, and then all of a sudden shouted something. Immediately, the men in the field scattered here and there and took up rifles from behind piles of stones and bushes. They pounced upon our men, firing and shouting. Simultaneously, two machine-guns began to fire.

They were almost trapped. They ran for more than a mile, and sank down exhausted as soon as they had thrown off their pursuers. By chance they found some potatoes in a field, boiled them and ate them. They could not find the owner of the field, so they wrapped in oil paper 50 yuan to pay for the potatoes, fastened it on a pole and set the pole at the edge of the field so that the owner would notice it. In those days a draught ox cost about 50 yuan, and they left 50 yuan as the price of a few potatoes!

The fact that they encountered a band of Ryukyuan immigrants armed even with machine-guns speaks volumes about how trying the circumstances were in the days of small-unit actions. In order to disintegrate the revolutionary ranks the enemy enlisted every means and method conceivable. When he knew that somebody had to go to see what was the matter with Ji Kap Ryong's group, Kim Ik Hyon, though utterly exhausted, volunteered for the mission. The next day, I dispatched him to Wangbabozi.

Kim Ik Hyon found that Ji Kap Ryong, out of defeatism, had totally neglected the assignments entrusted to him by Headquarters. Ji was spending most of his time, from morning till evening, looking down at a village from the top of a mountain. Having gone hungry for four days, Kim Pong Rok was lying in a lean-to. He told Kim Ik Hyon that he had not performed his mission, and felt too listless to go to Headquarters to make a report.

When Ji Kap Ryong returned to the hut, Kim Ik Hyon reasoned with him: "Nearly ten days have passed since you came here on a mission. Is it right just to hang around here without making a report to Headquarters? Let's meet hunters this very evening and set to work." Ji Kap Ryong said the situation was dangerous so they had to wait. However hard Kim Ik Hyon tried to persuade him, it fell on deaf ears.

The next morning, when Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok went to wash their faces, Ji Kap Ryong took their rifles away from them. He said to them: "I have followed the armed ranks for nearly ten years. In the course of this I have tasted all possible hardships, but I have endured them with the hope that the day of Korea's independence would come after the hardships. Now this dream has come to naught. You know that the Soviet Union and Japan have concluded a neutrality pact. I used to believe that deep-rooted hostile contradictions exist between them, and a war will break out between them before long. I had hoped that in the event of such a war we could defeat the Japanese army in cooperation with the Soviet forces and liberate the country. But this is now out of the question. I can't engage in this absurd struggle any longer. Worse still, I have had a relapse of a disease. So I'm going home."

Kim Ik Hyon asked him if he really meant what he said.

"Yes. I have made my mind up after thinking it over carefully for several days. Follow me if you also want to go," was his reply.

"If you want to go," retorted Kim Pong Rok in tears, "go alone. If I have to die, I'll die at the side of the Comrade Commander. The future of the revolution may seem gloomy, but how can you desert him?"

Ji said, "Though I desert, I'll never commit foul crimes like Lim Su San. Believe me, wherever I go, I will live like a man."

Kim Ik Hyon berated him: "However gloomy the future of the revolution is, we can't follow you and desert the Comrade Commander. How immoral it is to follow a man when the times are good and desert him when the times are bad! You say you will live like a man. But you will see after going down the mountain that you will not be able to live a manly life however hard you may try. From the moment you lay down your arms, your life will be worth no more than a pebble. Look what became of Lim Su San, Choe Yong Bin and Kim Paek San. So don't go over to the enemy on any account. Give us our rifles back."

Saying that his mind was made up, Ji told them he would not give them their rifles back until he had descended the mountain safely and that he would hang the rifles on a bridge not far away from the hut before going on his way.

After Ji went away, Kim Pong Rok went to the bridge and returned with the rifles. Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok left for the rendezvous. As they had not eaten anything for days and encountered enemy soldiers on their way, they arrived at the rendezvous much later than the set date. So they could not meet the messenger I had sent there. It was a rule in our guerrilla army that Headquarters would move to another place after a small unit had been dispatched and a messenger had been sent to the former site of Headquarters.

Though they failed to meet the messenger, the two men did not leave the place. Eating grass boiled in water, they waited for the opportunity to get in touch with Headquarters. When grass is boiled in water with salt in a pail, the water becomes green. They lived on that water. One time they boiled an ox bone discarded several months previously. Something like rice was floating in the soup. They were maggots, not grains of rice. After eating the soup with the maggots, they swooned.

On the verge of death from hunger after some days, they wrote a message on a tree after scraping some of the bark away. They wrote with a piece of charcoal they had found at the site of the campfire that Ji Kap Ryong had deserted, and Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok had died of hunger. They then lay in the bushes side by side, waiting for death. Had we not sent Jon Mun Sop there at that time, the two men would have died right there.

Reading what was written on the tree, Jon Mun Sop called out their names as he searched for them. But the two men had no strength to respond. Jon Mun Sop found them only after hearing a faint groan. Jon Mun Sop took a great deal of trouble to bring the two comrades-in-arms to Headquarters. In the end he grew so worn out he could hardly move his legs. With all his strength he brought the two men to Headquarters. Only after we poured some spoonfuls of thin gruel into their mouths did Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok gain consciousness.

This is the story of the Wangbabozi incident. We learned serious lessons from this incident. The most serious lesson was that we should teach our men to refrain from worshipping great powers, and believe in their own strength.

Ji Kap Ryong's desertion was the consequence of his lack of confidence in the victory of the revolution as well as the result of his worship of the Soviet Union. Some commanding officers inculcated in their men illusions about the Soviet Union, telling them that a war would inevitably break out between the Soviet Union and Japan owing to the contradictions between them, and that Japan would then be defeated. Such talk led to this nasty incident.

It is true that some of our men entertained illusions about the Soviet Union. Around a big power there are always people who follow it meekly or who idolize it. That was why some people thought that the prospects for our revolution were dim when they saw the photo of Stalin meeting Matsuoka, and in the end thought of deserting.

In order to ensure that such an incident as Ji Kap Ryong's desertion would not occur again, we put forward the slogan, "Let us carry out the Korean revolution by our own efforts!" and strongly promoted the struggle to eliminate the worship of great powers.

The other important lesson we learned from the Wangbabozi incident was that a revolutionary's faith was his lifeblood, and that his life would come to an end when his faith withered away.

Ji Kap Ryong deserted because he had lost confidence in the victory of the revolution; Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok returned to Headquarters without defecting because they continued to cherish their faith even though they almost starved to death, believed even when waiting for their end lying in the bushes that though they might die, the revolution would emerge victorious. Faith is the lifeblood of revolutionaries.

Where does confidence in the victory of the revolution come from? It comes from one's belief in one's own strength. A revolutionary can stick to his faith only when he firmly believes in his leader, in his own strength, and in the strength of his collective, his fellows and his Party.

A man embarks on the road of revolution with a definite faith. How long he holds fast to this faith depends on how it is tempered. Faith tempered lackadaisically will soon degenerate. Political and ideological training through organizational and ideological life and revolutionary practice is the way to

temper one's faith.

Some people think that a man with many years of revolutionary activity has naturally a strong faith, but this is not true. A man who does not cultivate himself well may be weak in his faith despite the long period of his revolutionary career; and a man who persistently cultivates himself can be strong in his faith despite the short period of his revolutionary service.

In regard to the length of his revolutionary career, Ji Kap Ryong was quite senior to Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok. He had fought in the guerrilla army for nearly ten years. By that time, Kim Ik Hyon had served in the People's Revolutionary Army for four years. Kim Pong Rok was no more than a new recruit, with two years of service.

Who, then, became a turncoat? Ji Kap Ryong, with many years of service, deserted, but his juniors, Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok, remained faithful. This means a man who has forsaken his faith becomes degenerate no matter how many years of service he has and no matter how great his achievements.

Having fought in the guerrilla army from its early years, Ji Kap Ryong had been appointed company commander for his exploits. But when days of trial arrived, he began to vacillate. At first he did not perform his revolutionary duty faithfully, on the pretext of having a stomachache. So women guerrillas made a waistband for him. Sympathetic to the supposedly ailing man, we took special care of him. But in the end he ran away, unable to endure hardships.

He had fought bravely when he had faith, but when he lost the faith, he became a straggler and betrayed the cause.

Lim Su San became a renegade, not because he had a short record of revolutionary struggle; he could even be called a veteran in view of his years of revolutionary struggle. In 1933 when Park Song Chol, who had been working at a mine in Badaogou, went to Cangcaicun to join the guerrillas, Lim Su San was already the political instructor of the 2nd company of the Yanji guerrilla unit there. He scolded Park Song Chol for not coming through the proper organizational channel, and told him to go back.

Before becoming a guerrilla, Lim Su San had finished the middle-school course and taught at a school. He was very tall, taller than Kim Il. For his good looks, knowledge and eloquence, he won the favor of his comrades-in-arms in his early days in the guerrilla army. But his true nature gradually began to show itself. Guerrillas whispered behind his back that, for all his oratorical skill, he was a coward.

In one month in the spring of 1938 we raided Liudaogou twice. Why? It was because the first odds-on battle commanded by Lim Su San had ended in a debacle. Liudaogou was a walled town with about 1,000 houses. On receiving a report that there were not many enemy troops there, Lim Su San immediately attacked the town with his regiment. As soon as the battle began, they encountered an unexpected force of enemy troops, who had arrived at the town after our scouts had reconnoitered it.

When Lim's regiment entered the walled town, the enemy soldiers were having a party. They could have been wiped out without much effort. But Lim Sn San was intimidated by the numerical superiority of the enemy force, and quickly ordered the regiment to retreat. This order threw the regiment on the defensive. Bewildered, our men stopped fighting, and the enemy, taking advantage of this opportunity, soon switched over to the counteroffensive, firing machine-guns. In the end the regiment withdrew from the town in failure.

After this battle, the enemy gave wide publicity to the effect that they had repulsed the guerrillas' attack. On hearing this, the people became dispirited. Lim Su San's error in the first battle at Liudaogou damaged the reputation of the People's Revolutionary Army, so I organized another attack on the town. Under my command, the unit attacked the walled town and occupied it at a stroke. Thenceforth, the enemy ceased their propaganda.

At a meeting of the commanding officers, we criticized Lim Su San for his mistake. When analyzed ideologically, cowardice was the basic cause of his mistake. However, Lim Su San did not rectify his shortcoming even after he was criticized. At the time of the Arduous March he lived in indolence in a service camp without executing the tasks Headquarters had assigned to him. At a meeting held in Beidadingzi, he was again criticized for not reforming himself. Some suggested demoting him from the post of chief of staff. But I gave him another chance.

He betrayed our confidence. Wearying of the protracted armed struggle and alarmed at the appearance of the "Nozoe Punitive Command" and its unprecedented size, he trembled with fear. Then taking the opportunity of performing a mission solo at the secret camp in Dongpaizi, he defected to the enemy. Not only did he run away alone, but in collaboration with the enemy he helped the "punitive" force to set up an ambush around the secret camp and capture many of our comrades. He even led a "punitive" force to our Headquarters in an attempt to capture me.

I don't remember seeing much of him firing on the battle line. On the plea of doing political work, he always sought shelter from bullets. When he surrendered, the enemy were as triumphant as if they had caught a tiger alive, saying that a very important person had defected with many of his subordinates from Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army to the Empire of Japan.

To be frank, his surrender did send a certain shock through our ranks. Their faces serious, all my men were sullen for days. His surrender actually did our unit a considerable amount of harm. For all this, I did not become alarmed or disheartened. Lim Su San was a degenerate. By a degenerate I mean a man who is ideologically rotten. Such a man does only harm to the ranks.

The appearance of traitors in the course of the revolution is a universal phenomenon that can be seen at any time. The history of the international communist movement not only celebrates men like Stalin, Zhou En-lai, Thalmann and Che Guevara, it is also stained by traitors to their leaders and their cause.

Bernstein and Kautsky worshipped Marx and Engels, but they are recorded in history as traitors. They

betrayed Marxism as well as Marx and Engels, their mentors and seniors in the revolution. Trotsky, who once held an important post in the Bolshevik Party, became an enemy of the Soviet state. Zhang Guo-tao defected from Mao Ze-dong and the CPC to Chiang Kaisek. All these traitors ended their days in misery. But did those revolutions get frustrated or retreat because of their betrayals? Each time the turncoats were removed, the revolution developed and surged up with fresh vitality. After the removal of Trotsky, how remarkably socialist construction was promoted in the Soviet Union!

Trotsky thought that without him, everything Stalin did would fail, and the Soviet state would go to ruin. But the Soviet people built their country up to be the leading socialist power in the world, as well as a global power. After Zhang Guo-tao deserted the CPC and became a Kuomintang parasite, the Chinese revolution did not wane; on the contrary it continued its upward spiral and achieved nation-wide victory.

Though Lim Sn San, after defecting to the enemy, divulged the secrets of our Headquarters and did us harm as a guide for the enemy "punitive" forces, the KPRA became neither weakened nor disrupted. Our ranks united more solidly and our revolution, preserving its own purity, made a strong dash towards its ultimate victory.

Traitors to the revolution also appeared during socialist construction in our country after the war. Choe Chang Ik, Yun Kong Hum, Lee Phil Gyu and others attempted to place obstacles in the way of our people's forward movement. Having failed to realize their factional scheme, they chose to betray the Party and their motherland. As they dropped away, our revolution made a fresh upsurge and ushered in the era of Chollima. Since then the world has called our country Chollima Korea.

There were traitors also in the ranks of the nationalist movement.

Choe Nam Son was one of them. It is well-known that he was one of the drafters of the Declaration of Independence at the time of the March First Popular Uprising. I once read his travelogue of Mt. Paektu, and found that every word and every sentence were filled with his patriotic spirit. However, this famous patriot suddenly abandoned his conscience and faith, and followed the road of betrayal. In the early 1940s, when the anti-Japanese armed struggle was undergoing most severe trials, he wrote pamphlets with our names in big letters, urging us to surrender, which the Japanese dropped from the air.

A typical pamphlet written by him and few other pro-Japanese elements reads in part: "You young men who are eating and sleeping in the open, roaming about desolate mountains and fields aimlessly!

"You wretches who are unable to see the light of modern civilization in the wilderness of the primeval forests, throwing your precious lives away as if they worth nothing, all because of a blind belief! The day has come at last when you have to put an end to your lives of misery. Which do you want, to live or to die?

"Oh, young men who are wandering in the forest, "Read this letter and make up your minds right now. Rush to the road of revival. Feel shame at your shameful deeds, and repent of actions that need repenting

of. Break with your unstable lives, unprecedented in the world, right now and return to the warm embrace of your compatriots. In this way you can devote your valor and chivalry to the sacred cause of building a new East Asia. It is not too late.... ... Headquarters of the Association for Supporting the Special Operations in the Southeast Area Adviser Choe Nam Son Director Park Sok Yun... ... ." (Magazine Samcholli, No. 1, pp. 206-09, Showa 16 (1941).)

In the KPRA there was a physician in his fifties. He was called the "Chungchong Province doctor". His real name was Ryu Han Jong. While following my unit for some months, he treated wounded guerrillas in various places. Associating with him at this time, I found him to be an upright man. By means of a few gold needles and a scalpel, he treated every type of wound. As he was so skilful and, moreover, as he was so sincere, he was respected and loved by all the guerrillas. I also respected and loved him. Once I obtained a bear skin for him because he often slept in the open. I made sure that when my men captured booty after attacking towns, they took medicines and medical instruments needed by the doctor.

As his health broke down, we sent him back to his home in early 1940. Frankly speaking, to live the life of a guerrilla in the mountains at his age was difficult to do with mere will or determination. Three months later he came to us again. With tears in his eyes, he said, "These past months I have lived a comfortable life, eating the food my wife cooked. But I could hardly swallow it. If I were to stoop to keeping myself safe and sound at home, how could I call it a proper life?"

It was a noble way of thinking, peculiar to men with unstained con-sciences. But it was not suitable for him to stay with us because of his health. I still remember how hard I tried to persuade him to go back home. He finally did go back, but reluctantly.

Immediately after liberation, he called on me with his daughter. My happy reunion with him is still fresh in my memory. Squeezing my hands, he said in tears that he had nothing to regret now that he had seen me in good health. I told him that as the Japanese had been driven out, he should participate in the building of a new country with me.

He settled down in Pyongyang, working for the association for supporting revolutionaries and at the Pyongyang Institute as a surgeon. His daughter became a typist in the clerical section of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea. His two sons joined the Korean People's Army, and fell in action.

As you can see, how remarkable the contrast is between him and men like Choe Nam Son, Lim Su San and Ji Kap Ryong! When Lim Su San, devoid of faith, was thinking of deserting, the doctor joined the guerrillas. When Choe Nam Son was scattering over Manchuria and Mt. Paektu leaflets he had written urging us to surrender, the doctor came to us again and volunteered to rejoin the guerrillas whom he had taken leave of a few months before, with a yearning for the life of guerrillas, the life which Choe Nam Son described as "unstable" in the "primeval forests".

An ordinary doctor as he was, how noble he is in contrast to Choe Nam Son, Lim Su San and Ji Kap Ryong! He appears noble because of his pure conscience.

According to my experience, those who betrayed the revolution without any regret were those who moved with the trend of the times without any faith - grumblers, chance elements, careerists, the feeble hearted, and those who participated in campaigns because they thought that it was the popular thing to do.

Those who neglect their duty, those who are irresponsible in their work, those who are always complaining of one thing or another, pulling faces when given tasks, those who are glib in talking about revolution in front of others, but busy feathering their own nests behind the scenes, those who take credit for work done by others without any hesitation, and those who tell lies, feeling no prick of conscience, will also abandon the red flag and defect to the enemy's camp as soon as they have a chance to do so.

A common feature of these types of men is that they are without exception devoid of conscience.

If a revolutionary abandons his conscience, what remains in him? Nothing. His ideals, ideology and moral fibre will all break up. If he forsakes his conscience, his personality will also be deformed.

That one must be a man before being a revolutionary means that one must be conscientious and faithful to morality. Only a man with conscience can be moral and loyal. A man without conscience is devoid of morality, loyalty, self-sacrificing spirit, sense of justice and sincerity. Comrade Kim Jong Il's remark that loyalty to the leader must be maintained as one's faith, conscience, morality and everyday concern is an aphorism.

Only a man with conscience can become a revolutionary. If his conscience becomes stained, his faith also becomes stained; a crack in his conscience means a crack in his faith and the paralysis of his fighting spirit. This is why from the moment he abandons conscience, a revolutionary ceases to be a revolutionary and becomes a good-for-nothing.

We cannot go the same way or eat from the same pot with those who have lost their conscience. From the moment they have forsaken their conscience they dream different dreams from ours and play double games. We must break with them, or else we will suffer a great harm.

The moment his conscience began to deteriorate, Ji Kap Ryong lost the qualities of a revolutionary.

It was during the battle at Liukesong that I found something insidious in him.

The target of the main attack in that battle was the enemy barracks, and Oh Jung Hup's 7th Regiment and Hwang Jong Hae's unit were to perform the mission. When the battle started, thunderous gunshots rang out from the barracks, and after some minutes suddenly stopped.

This meant that the barracks had fallen. But a few minutes later a machinegun started firing from there. I wondered what that meant, and immediately sent Ji Kap Ryong to ascertain the situation. But turning back halfway, he rushed back and plumped himself down, wailing that he had been wounded. I found that the wooden stock of his Mauser had been shattered by a bullet, but there was no wound on his body. He



might have got a bruise when he fell down from the shock of the bullet hitting the wooden stock.

I realized that he was scared, so I sent Ji Pong Son and Kim Hak Song on that mission. Braving a hail of bullets, the two men dashed there and returned with a report that the remaining enemy soldiers entrenched in a secret passage under the barracks were putting up resistance. Without delay, I sent an order to withdraw our men from the barracks and put down the enemy in the underground passage by flame tactics.

But Oh Jung Hup fell before my order reached him. On his own judgment he employed the flame-throwing tactic, but he was fatally wounded while searching the passage in haste, without withdrawing his men.

Had Ji Kap Ryong not turned back halfway, but run to the enemy barracks and confirmed the situation, my order would have been conveyed to Oh Jung Hup without delay, and the accident might not have happened. Every minute and even every second counts in a combat situation. It was because Kim Hak Song and Ji Pong Son were late in carrying out the mission Ji Kap Ryong had failed to perform that Oh Jung Hup was hit by enemy fire from the underground passage.

At that time Ji Kap Ryong had already lost the conscience of a soldier. If another man had been on that mission, he would not have turned back, even if he had received a serious wound.

What a great disaster the irresponsible and cowardly conduct of a man with a guilty conscience caused!

Those who abandoned their conscience and betrayed the revolution ended their days in misery, without exception. History has passed a stern judgment on those fellows. Even those who were pardoned for minor offences did not hold their heads up again as long as they lived.

In contrast, the people bestowed their highest acclamations on the fighters who cherished revolutionary consciences and held fast to their faith till the day of victory, and crowned them with laurels.

Park Song Chol, who had been rebuked by Lim Su San for volunteering to join the guerrillas without going through the proper organizational channel when he came to the guerrilla zone from a mine in Badaogou, followed the thorny path of struggle to the end and returned to the motherland. Today he continues to work for the revolution in an important government post.

One year, while on a march, Park Song Chol, after receiving permission from his commander, dropped in at his house. For several years after joining the army he had been anxious to know how his family were getting on. As his unit was marching past his home village, he just wanted to see his kinsfolk.

On entering his house, however, he found himself in a fix. Taking their child on her back, his wife insisted on following him to the guerrilla army.

He tried to dissuade her, saying, "Are you mad? How on earth can a woman with a child go with the guerrillas?"

But she would not let go of his belt.

It seemed that persuasion was no use, and she might burst into tears if he went his way, pushing her away violently. If she did so, the whole village would soon know all about it, and then the enemy would learn of it and arrest her and the child because they were the family members of a guerrilla.

As he was at a loss what to do, his mother reasoned with her daughter-in-law.

"If you don't behave yourself, you may have your husband killed," she said. "Suppose he fails to catch up with his unit by the appointed time, then he will be branded as a deserter. That would mean that he would become a traitor. Do you want that?" His wife only shed silent tears. For all that, she would not release her grip on his belt. This time Park Song Chol's mother scolded him.

"If a man leaves his house for a great cause, then he must do so resolutely. Why did you creep into the house at night, only to raise a fuss? Don't show your face again in this house. If you come again before the country's liberation, I'll break your legs."

Only then did his wife let go of his belt.

He was so moved by his mother's words that he left the house there and then.

In terms of their knowledge of affairs, can Park's mother and wife be compared to Lim Su San? But in terms of their view of and attitude to the revolution, they were teachers incomparably superior to Lim Su San. How beautiful was his wife's aspiration to fight as a guerrilla carrying their child on her back, and how ennobling and sublime was the will of his mother who threatened his son that she would break his legs if he appeared in the house again before the country was liberated!

On the day Kim Ik Hyon was awarded the title of Vice Marshal of the Korean People's Army, I recalled the day when he had come to the Diyangxi plateau at a tender age to volunteer for the guerrilla army, and the day when he had written his will on a tree after scraping some of the bark away and waited for the moment of his death from hunger in some bushes while coming back to Headquarters, spurning Ji Kap Ryong's urgings to desert.

It was because Kim Ik Hyon was prepared for death and was not afraid of it that he could survive and become known to posterity.

Kim Ik Hyon was a fine guerrilla, and Jon Mun Sop, who brought Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok back to Headquarters, supporting them all the way, was also tenacious and steadfast in his comradely loyalty. Tears were streaming down his face when he brought the two unconscious comrades-in-arms back to

Headquarters. The haggard looks of the two men were too heartbreaking for him to hold back tears.

Had Jon Mun Sop been a man of feeble revolutionary conviction, devoid of loyalty and conscience, he would have deserted his comrades in order to escape hunger himself. A little way from the mountain, he could have gone anywhere he wanted. There were no wire entanglements, fences or watch-towers. If he had thrown away his rifle, descended the mountain and sealed a document with his thumb, then he could have eaten his fill and slept comfortably on a warm floor.

But Jon Mun Sop did not take that road. Carrying his comrades-in-arms piggyback in turn, he returned to Headquarters. Subsequently he followed me unwaveringly and remained faithful to the revolution.

We must bring up large numbers of men of unshakable faith like the veteran fighters of the anti-Japanese revolution, who adorned their lives with brilliance. Revolution and the cause of socialism cannot be promoted only with desire. Only when we cherish a strong faith can we defend ourselves and safeguard socialism.

Only those who have the faith that they can survive even though they go hungry for a hundred days, those who can endure with a smile a thousand days of difficulty in order to live a single day of dignified life, those who believe that, though they become a handful of dirt in a desolate forest on a lonely island, their organization will find them and remember them, and those who are prepared to blow themselves up or to stand on the gallows without hesitation so as to remain faithful to the leader who brought them up and to their comrades, can always emerge victorious.

The more difficult the situation of the country is, the more efficiently the education in confidence in the victory of the revolution and in the cause of socialism must be conducted. I respect and love the people with strong faith.

## 23.6. Formation of the International Allied Forces

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As the 1940s approached, the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle entered a new stage of development, when it became capable of opening up a decisive phase in the course of accomplishing national liberation. An important aspect of our struggle during this period is the fact that we organized the JAF in the Soviet Union with our Chinese and Soviet comrades-in-arms in the summer of 1942 and engaged in political and military preparations in every possible way in order ultimately to annihilate the Japanese imperialists.



*Photo: An IAF mixed unit of Chinese, Korean and Soviet personnel.*

The fact that the KPRA formed the JAF with the armed forces of the Soviet Union and China and waged a joint struggle with them can be viewed as a new stage in the development of the Korean revolution.

Our revolution set as its immediate task the driving out of the Japanese imperialists and the liberation of the country.

With the formation of the IAF we were to carry out national liberation and concurrently the world-historic task of ultimately wiping out Japanese militarism.

With the organization of the IAF, a great change took place in our armed struggle. It can be said that, with the formation of the allied forces as a turning point, we switched from the stage of our joint struggle with the Chinese people to the stage of extensive joint struggle, which meant an alliance of the armed forces of Korea, China and the Soviet Union, the stage of a new common front joining the mainstream of the worldwide anti-imperialist, anti-fascist struggle.

The first half of the 1940s can be said to have been a period when the KPRA was making final preparations for the great event of national liberation on its own initiative while consolidating its ranks and preserving and training the hard cores in areas favorable for launching decisive and final offensive operations.

We organized the IAF with our Soviet and Chinese comrades in July 1942. Following this, we strengthened our own forces for the Korean revolution in every possible way and, at the same time, made a contribution to the annihilation of the Japanese imperialists and the victory against fascism in the Second World War through a joint struggle with the international anti-imperialist forces.

It is precisely because of this that some diplomatic and military documents of the Soviet Union read that we went to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1942 and made preparations for joint military operations to

rout the Japanese imperialists.

The great leader recollected as follows the historic necessity of the formation of the JAF, to be composed of some units of the KPRA, the NAJAA and the Soviet Far East Forces, as well as the process of their development.

A great change was taking place in international situation at the time when we established our temporary base in the Soviet Far East region and carried out vigorous small-unit activities in Northeast China and within the homeland.

A neutrality pact was concluded between the Soviet Union and Japan in April 1941. There had been a deep-rooted antagonism between these two countries since the days of the Russo-Japanese War. There was ample potential danger of this antagonism leading to a new war between them. Nevertheless, they were carrying on their political and military diplomacy in the direction of avoiding an immediate clash.

Germany and Japan were the most bellicose countries in the world, and the Soviet Union was on the utmost alert against them. The Soviet Union tried in every possible way to prevent an invasion by Hitler's Germany, that had emerged as the shock force of anti-communism, and concluded a non-aggression treaty with the latter to avoid a possible war, or at least delay it. Then it turned its attention to preventing a Japanese attack. The conclusion of a neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan was the temporary outcome of this policy.

In concluding this treaty, each of the two countries aimed at holding the other side in check. The treaty did not provide a guarantee against a war between the Soviet Union and Japan.

A war broke out between the Soviet Union and Germany in June 1941.

I summoned all the members of the small units and said, "It is not surprising that Germany, which promised non-aggression, has invaded the Soviet Union. Hitler cannot act otherwise. Shaking hands with others when they face them but surprising them behind their backs are the true colors of the imperialists. However, Hitler has made a blunder. By invading the Soviet Union, Germany is digging a grave for Hitler." Then I emphasized that, no matter how the situation changed, we should make full preparations for the final showdown in accordance with our policy.

Owing to fascist Germany's unexpected pre-emptive attack, the military strength of the Soviet Union suffered a grave loss at the beginning of the war, and the Red Army had to retreat temporarily without having the time to reverse the unfavorable tide of war. The German army occupied Kiev, Kharkov and Minsk, one after the other, and closed in upon Moscow and Leningrad.

Later I worked out a plan for our activities to cope with the new situation created by the outbreak of the war between the Soviet Union and Germany. Following this, I went to Khabarovsk and discussed, with military cadres of the Soviet Union and China, the matter of promoting cooperation between the armed

forces of the three countries.

In December 1941 the Japanese army unleashed the Pacific War, with a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, a US naval base in Hawaii.

The outbreak of war between the United States and Japan greatly agitated us because Japan, a party to the war, was an enemy that had occupied our country.

The provocation of a new war by Japan before it had finished the Sino-Japanese War was a rash venture. It was impossible to understand why Japan, an island country, which cannot subsist without bringing such strategic materials as petroleum, rubber, iron and others, from foreign countries, had launched such a strike.

It was self-evident that Japan would squander its national power in the war against the United States.

Anyway, the fact that Japan dashed into a large trap, the Pacific War, of its own accord provided a good opportunity for us Korean revolutionaries to speed up the final showdown. We foresaw that a war would break out between the Soviet Union and Japan, too, sooner or later. If this happened, Japan would have to fight three major wars at the same time - against China, the United States and the Soviet Union.

In such a case, we would be able to carry out the final operations for national liberation against the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria and the Japanese troops stationed in Korea under more favorable circumstances.

Our thoughts were concentrated on how we could defeat the Japanese imperialists and liberate the country even a single day earlier. Needless to say, we had to strengthen our own forces for the final showdown. We could not wait, with arms folded, for others to make a gift of independence for us. The support of friendly nations is effective only when our own forces are strong.

We also made due efforts for solidarity with the international anti-imperialist and anti-fascist forces. In those days the Far East region of the Soviet Union was an important rendezvous for the anti-Japanese forces of three countries - Korea, the Soviet Union and China. In what form and how we would maintain our relations with the armed forces of the Soviet Union and China was important.

This was because the main group of the KPRA was fighting, frequenting the temporary base in the Far East area in company with their comrades-in-arms of the NAJAA. Realizing an effective alliance with the armed forces of the Soviet Union and China was also an important strategic problem in creating the international circumstances needed for strengthening, expanding and consolidating the driving force of our revolution.

By the way, the form of our alliance with these armed forces had to be decided by ourselves to meet the interests of each nation as well as the common interests of the revolution in the three countries.

We had already had the experience of organizing the NAJAA together with the armed units of China and waging a joint struggle while maintaining the identity of the KPRA. The joint struggle waged by the armed forces of Korea and China against the Japanese imperialists, the common enemy of the peoples of the two countries, fully met the objective requirements of the anti-Japanese revolution, not to mention the interests of the revolutions in the two countries. The joint struggle of the communists of Korea and China was a model of bilateral military relations.

Now that the armed forces of Korea and China had another base in the Far East region and, moreover, the Soviet Far East Forces were on our flank, we had to wage our joint anti-Japanese struggle wider and deeper, and develop it to a new stage.

This was not only necessary for the Korean revolution itself, but also conformed to the strategies of China and the Soviet Union as regards Japan.

I regarded the IAF as an ideal form of alliance between the armed forces of Korea, China and the Soviet Union. Kim Chaek, Choe Yong Gon, An Kil, Kang Kon and some other Korean comrades supported my idea of forming the IAF. They unanimously said that the sooner this idea came to fruition the better, and authorized me to discuss the matter with the Soviet and Chinese comrades.

At one time a considerable number of Chinese comrades took a negative attitude towards the suggestion of the Comintern and the Soviet military authorities to set up a new military system with some of the anti-Japanese armed units in Manchuria and the Soviet Far East Forces, and carry out joint activities, claiming that this was premature. This was due to the fact that some of those in authority on the Soviet side put forward unilateral demands. Nevertheless, later when we worked out a fully-fledged plan for the formation of the IAF and submitted it for discussion, they broke from their former attitude and were unanimous in admitting that an alliance of the armed forces of the three countries was an urgent task.

The Soviet military authorities also supported the idea.

It was when I met high-ranking Soviet military personnel in Camp South in the spring of 1942 that I had a more detailed discussion with the Soviet side on the formation of the LAF.

That day, General Sorkin, who was in touch with us on behalf of the Comintern and the Soviet military authorities, told us in vivid detail about those who had fought heroically in the battle to defend Moscow and the distinguished military services of the Siberian divisions that had displayed prowess in the defense of Moscow as well as in the counterattack. He also told us proudly about the history of the Soviet Far East Forces. He was extremely proud of the Far East Forces and the Siberian divisions that had taken part in the battle to defend Moscow.

When I proposed my plan for the formation of the IAF, General Sorkin expressed his agreement, saying that it was a very good idea, and that the most appropriate measure needed in the present situation was

the organization of the allied forces. He went on, "To tell the truth, I also thought that such a measure would be needed sooner or later.

However, I was unsure whether I would gain the understanding and support of the Korean and Chinese comrades, and whether, instead of appreciating this and supporting me, they would perhaps mistake me for a great-power chauvinist. Therefore, I have been hesitating."

I thought there was some profound meaning in what he said. So I said to him: "Winning independence by one's own efforts is our invariable principle. Nevertheless, this does not exclude international cooperation or alliances with the international revolutionary forces.

Why should we oppose internationalism in the true sense of the word, something beneficial both to the revolution in one's own country and the world revolution? In order to defeat Japanese imperialism, a formidable enemy, we should combine our efforts. Even a large country like the Soviet Union should receive assistance from other countries if this is necessary.

Receiving help from other countries or fighting in alliance with their revolutionary forces is not flunkeyism. I consider that flunkeyism is an ideological tendency which regards genuine internationalism to be only the idea of receiving assistance from others without believing in one's own strength or only to help the revolution in other countries, while abandoning the revolution in one's own country."

General Sorkin conveyed the content of his talk with me to the Soviet military authorities and the Comintern, and brought up with them the matter of forming the IAF as an urgent matter for discussion.

What situation would be created if the war between the United States and Japan were still continuing after the war between the Soviet Union and Germany ended? Our common opinion was that the Soviet Union would then participate in the war against Japan. Although the Soviet Union had concluded a neutrality pact with Japan, it had to make thoroughgoing preparations for war against that country in case of an emergency. Realizing an alliance with the international anti-Japanese forces was an important policy pursued by the Soviet Union in its preparations for this war.

Thanks to the congruence of the political and military requirements of the Comintern and the Soviet Union itself with our strategic plan, the formation of the IAF was able to proceed comparatively smoothly.

Around mid-July 1942 we held a final discussion on the alliance of the armed forces of Korea, China and the Soviet Union with the military cadres of the Soviet Union and China, and made a decision to establish the IAF on the precondition that the identity of the KPRA and the NAJAA would be preserved.

On July 22, 1942 I met General Apanasenko, Commander of the Soviet Far East Forces, together with Thou Bao-zhong and Zhang Shou-jian.



With a round oval face and sharp eyes, he was a man of sturdy physique and a veteran general in his fifties. Shaking hands with me, he said he was pleased to meet the Young General of the Korean guerrilla army.

In the office of the Commander we also exchanged greetings with Lieutenant General Nichev, Chief of Staff.

Apanasenko said that the formation of the IAF through the incorporation of the revolutionary armed forces of the Soviet Union. China and Korea would be of great importance not only for the revolutionary struggles of Korea and China, but also for the security of the Soviet Union and its operations against Japan. Then he expressed his confidence that the IAF would fulfill their historic mission successfully.

He went on that the IAF, when formed, would play an important role in training a large number of military cadres needed for the national revolutionary wars in Korea and China, and that the Korean and Chinese units of these forces would constitute a decisive force for the liberation of Korea and Manchuria.

That day Apanasenko reiterated the need to make full preparations to cope with a war at any time, by heightening the intensity of the training and improving its quality. He guided us to a room where a large operations map was hanging on the wall.

He said he would like to know about the guerrilla movement conducted by the KPRA and the NAJAA as well as about our plans for future operations, and asked us to explain the military and political situation in Manchuria and Korea.

Zhou Bao-zhong stepped towards the operations map and summed up the activities of the 2nd Route Army of the NAJAA. He also expressed his views with regard to the future operations for the liberation of Northeast China.

At that time I explained the activities of the KPRA and the 1st Route Army of the NAJAA and their actual situation, as well as making clear the military and political problems that had to be taken into consideration without fail in order to annihilate the Japanese imperialists and liberate Korea.

Apanasenko asked for a detailed explanation of the deployment of the Japanese troops in Korea, the situation of the anti-Japanese forces in Korea itself and of the prospects of their development, as well as of the possibility of joint operations with the Soviet Union. I gave him detailed information on these points.

Zhang Shou-jian explained the situation of the 3rd Route Army.

Apanasenko was kept comparatively well-informed of the military situation in northern Manchuria.

It was agreed, through our discussion with Apanasenko, that the Soviet side would provide various kinds

of weapons and military equipment, clothes, provisions and other supplies for the IAF. Moreover, we decided to call the allied forces the Independent 88th Brigade of the Soviet Far East Forces formally and agreed on calling them Infantry Special Brigade 8461 outside the ranks.

We organized the IAF on a brigade scale on the principle of reduced formation, to keep their existence and activities secret and disguise them thoroughly. I was in command of the 1st Contingent, composed of the KPRA and the 1st Route Army of the NAJAA. This contingent was made up mainly of the Korean section of the IAF. In those days we symbolically fixed the military ranks of the military and political cadres of the KPRA, lower than the actual ones, to protect their personal safety from the espionage and subversive activities of the enemy.

Simultaneously with the formation of the IAF, we all gathered at Camp North. As a result of the organization of the allied forces, the military and political situations in the Far East region changed in favor of the world revolution.

First of all, the Soviet Union benefited greatly from this. The Soviet Union secured military and political forces capable of coping with the aggressive moves of Japan on its own initiative, and came to have new special units exclusively serving the military operations in Northeast China and Korea.

The existence of the IAF also created favorable conditions and circumstances for the Korean and Chinese revolutions.

Because it was to act in concert with the Soviet Far East Forces, the KPRA was able to have, within the framework of regular armed forces, the ability as well as the equipment to carry out the most up-to-date operations needed for liberating the country. Moreover, we could make adequate military and political preparations and acquire real power, all needed for accomplishing the task of national liberation on our own, in the Soviet Union until a great event took place.

I met Apanasenko again at the Headquarters of the IAF after their formation. At that time he came to Camp North in the company of the military commissar and other personnel of the general staff, as well as with personnel of the political and supply departments.

The same day, the IAF held a parade. The Korean Contingent stood in the van of the parading ranks. This contingent was good at marching. That day's function could be called a kind of celebration in honor of the birth of the IAF. In company with Apanasenko, we also took part in a luncheon. Apanasenko told us about his past life that very day.

He was a veteran fighter who, following the October Revolution, had fought against the White army to defend the Soviet power as well as against the German occupation army. During the Civil War he was already in command of a cavalry division. At one time he was Commander of the Central Asian Military District, before he became Commander of the Far East Forces. Ever since the early days of the Far East Forces, the Soviet authorities had attached great importance to them. All the commanders of these forces

were renowned men of real ability. Many of the successive Ministers of Defense and high-ranking military cadres of the Soviet Union hailed from these forces.

At the beginning of 1943, Apanasenko was transferred to the post of Deputy Commander of the Voronezh front, one of the most important fronts during the war between the Soviet Union and Germany. In the summer of that year he fell in action. At the news of his death, all the officers and men of the IAF gathered and looked back in grief, upon the memory of this man who had given support and help to the Korean and Chinese communists. The love of communists for their comrades-in-arms transcends nationality.

In those days we regarded the crisis of the Soviet people as our own national crisis. I still remember how a large number of officers and men from the KPRA and the NAJAA petitioned to be allowed to go to the western front when the Soviet army was in a dire situation there. Nevertheless, each time the Comintern and the Soviet authorities turned down their petition, saying that these soldiers had an important historic task to liberate their own countries.

We ardently defended and valued the Soviet Union, the citadel of socialism and our only bastion. At that time all communists thought that if the Soviet Union collapsed, socialism would also be mined and it would be impossible to defend world peace.

The biographical dictionaries of many countries claim that I took part in the fierce battle to defend Stalingrad, commanding a large unit composed of Koreans, and was awarded the Order of the Red Flag for my exploits in that battle. Some articles claim that my unit was active in the first line in the operation to capture Berlin.

I was awarded the Order of the Red Flag from the Soviet Government, but I did not take part either in the Battle of Stalingrad or in the capture of Berlin. I don't know where the authors of the dictionaries got such materials. But anyway, it is true that those articles reflect something of the climate in the training base, seething with enthusiasm to join the war.

The existence of the IAF struck terror into the hearts of the Japanese imperialists who were afraid of the alliance between the armed forces of Korea, the Soviet Union and China. Conversely, it gave unbounded confidence to our people. The enemy produced numerous materials with regard to the fact that I had set up a training base in the Soviet Union and made preparations for the final operations against Japan. They read in part:

"Kim Il Sung's movements: Kim Il Sung, now staying in the Soviet Union, left Khabarovsk last summer and went to Yanan. There he met such leaders of the CPC as Mao Ze-dong, He Long and Kang Sheng, and held a number of discussions with them on the cooperation between the Army of the CPC and the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, before and after the outbreak of the war between Japan and the Soviet Union, as well as on the future activities of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. Then he met a Korean CPC member in the vicinity of Yanan, and they exchanged opinions on various matters.

"Towards the end of last year, Kim Il Sung returned to the Soviet Union from Yanan by air. He is now in the neighborhood of Khabarovsk and devoting himself to intelligence and ideological work regarding Manchuria and Korea. Moreover, it is said that he has admitted about 300 people, including Korean and Chinese communist bandits, and Korean and Manchurian recalcitrant and captives who had entered the Soviet Union, to the training camp in the vicinity of Khabarovsk and, under the guidance and with the help of the Khabarovsk Red Army, is giving training and education to them so that they will be able to enter Manchuria all together before and after the beginning of the war between Japan and the Soviet Union, and carry out the task of harassing the rear of the Japanese army." (Information sent by the chief of the Namyang police station to the chief of the police department of North Hamgyong Province, February 21, Showa 19 (1944).)

"Kim Il Sung is said to be in Yanan now and sending troops to Rehe Province. Moreover, there are four divisions formed entirely of Koreans in Nikolayevski (in the Maritime Province of Siberia). When a war breaks out between Japan and the Soviet Union, these troops will land in the area of north Korea as a death-defying corps or descend on Korea by parachute." (A file of cases (4) on seditious actions for harassing the rear and staging an armed uprising during the Great East Asia War, centering around graduates of Kyongsong University, Kowon police station, Showa 20 (1945).)

"It seems that a man who came back across Siberia has said that there is an encampment four kilometers in circumference in one place in Siberia, and that there is a Korean flag flying there, and that he has seen Korean soldiers guarding it." (Monthly Report by the Special Political Police, p. 79, Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, Showa 19 (1944).)

The news of the formation of the IAF exerted a favorable influence on the anti-Japanese patriotic forces fighting in Northeast China. Many times the soldiers of the NAJAA in Manchuria crossed the river and joined the allied forces in groups of two or three. Sometimes soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army rose in revolt against the officers and joined the allied forces.

Once, I cannot remember whether it was before or after the organization of the allied forces, one company of a regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army stationed in Donganzhen, Raohe County, executed their commander and Japanese officers, and crossed the Ussuri River in a wooden boat bringing with them a large number of rifles, machine-guns, grenade throwers and other weapons. We warmly welcomed them and enlisted them.

Following the formation of the IAF, we intensified combat and political training, and accelerated preparations for our operations against Japan. The most important task confronting us in those days was to consolidate the ranks of the KPRA politically and militarily. It can be said that the fundamental principles of military operations are identical for any kind of war, be it an ancient war, a mediaeval war or a modern war. What is important is how to have a command of the means of war as they develop and how to organize cooperation and joint operations between various services and arms.

We made serious efforts to master modern tactics, and our efforts were redoubled following the formation

of the JAF. The capability of the soldiers of the KYRA for using modern tactics freely was raised to a considerable level through training and studying at the training base.

At the same time as perfecting the guerrilla tactics which they had practiced on the wide plateau around Mt. Paektu, they familiarized themselves with modern tactics to meet the requirements of a regular army. By doing so, they admirably played their political and military roles as the main force of the Korean revolution.

The Soviet Far East Forces also made great efforts for the rapid improvement of the fighting efficiency of the JAF. Around mid-November 1942, Apanasenko organized a military exercise of a brigade of the Soviet Far East Forces stationed in the south, and invited the leading commanders of the allied forces to inspect it. That day we went from Khabarovsk to that brigade in an armored train. On the following day, the brigade held a winter exercise. A large number of armed forces including four infantry battalions as well as tank, artillery, mortar, signal and anti-tank gun battalions took part in the exercise.

It was the military exercise of a large scale we had ever seen, so it aroused our curiosity and interest. The task given to the brigade was to attack and annihilate the enemy on a hill and capture the hill. The attack, which started at noon, was over only at four o'clock in the afternoon. Later, we also inspected the military exercise of another brigade stationed on the Amur River in the suburbs of Khabarovsk. The brigade was assigned the task of mustering the unit around a village called Belizovka and getting ready for battle. That exercise, too, left a deep impression on us.

In Khabarovsk we also inspected a parade of the units of the Far East Forces. I quite envied the various kinds of modern military equipment and combat material that had been mobilized for the military exercises and parade. "When shall we be able to have such a modernized army?" This is what I thought of most during my inspection of the military exercises and parade. My resolve to build a regular army immediately after liberating the country was strengthened during my stay at the training base in the Far East region.

Thanks to the serious efforts of and cooperation between the military commanders of Korea, the Soviet Union and China, the IAF were able to develop, in a short time, into armed forces capable of coping with modern warfare. Even when the Soviet Union badly needed the strength of another single regiment or a single battalion because of the extremely difficult situation at the front, it never touched the allied forces, but helped them so that they could make full preparations for the showdown against the Japanese imperialists.

Soviet military personnel frequently told us about how much Stalin valued the officers and men of the KPRA and the NAJAA. They told that Stalin had said that all the soldiers of these armies were valuable people who would make a major contribution to liberating their own motherlands and building a new country, and that, therefore, they should take care of these soldiers lest there should be a single loss.

The formation and development of the IAF in the Soviet Far East region served as a good model for

uniting the resistance forces of Czechoslovakia and Poland in Europe. Simultaneously with the conclusion of the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in 1943, a unit of Czechoslovaks was organized in the territory of the Soviet Union to take part in the joint struggle against Hitler's Germany, together with the Red Army. The Czechoslovak brigade took part in a number of military operations such as the battles to liberate Kiev and Belaya Serkovi, and made many brilliant achievements.

Poland also created, in the territory of the Soviet Union, an army to fight against fascist Germany. The Polish corps participated in a series of military operations to liberate Poland from the claws of the German fascist occupation troops, beginning with the battle to liberate Lublin.

The news of the dissolution of the Comintern reached the training base in May 1943, when we were active in the Soviet Union following the formation of the IAF. People at the base wondered why the Comintern, which had existed for over 20 years as the leading organ of the world revolution, had been dissolved in the middle of the Second World War, when international solidarity and cooperation were most urgent for a showdown against fascism.

It was in 1919 that Lenin organized the Comintern. I think there were two reasons for its dissolution: One was that, while the Comintern was leading the world revolution, in various countries communist parties and revolutionary forces grew so strong that they were able to promote revolution in their own countries independently in accordance with their own line and relying on their own efforts, even without its centralist leadership and involvement.

Another reason was that the existence of the Comintern was an obstacle to realizing a more extensive, worldwide anti-fascist alliance. The anti-fascist alliance during the Second World War was a new aspect which transcended differences in ideas and social systems. The stand which transcended ideas and systems and was taken by the countries forming the alliance in the confrontation with fascism made possible the alliance between the Soviet Union, a socialist country, and the United States, Britain and France, capitalist countries, as well as the cooperation between communists and bourgeois Right-wing politicians. This situation made them reconsider the existence of the Comintern, the mission of which was to oppose imperialism and to communize the world.

We admitted that the dissolution of the Comintern was an opportune measure which fully conformed with the requirements of the international communist movement and the development of the situation prevailing at that time. We felt great pride in the fact that, from the outset of our struggle, we had done everything independently at every revolutionary stage, adopting our own strategy and tactics and building the revolutionary force by our own efforts instead of by relying on the strength or line of others.

The dissolution of the Comintern, however, did not imply the demise of international solidarity and cooperation among communists. We continued to adhere to the independence of our activities within the IAF, but we still strengthened solidarity and cooperation with our foreign friends as ever.

The military and political activities conducted by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung with the Soviet Union as the stage were a matter of great international concern. The Japanese military, police and intelligence service obstinately attempted to spy on the movements, organizational structure and activities of the KPRA.

Extremely nervous over the disorganization of the Comintern, the Japanese imperialists formed various judgments and speculations concerning the future trend of the policy of the communist movement in Korea and, in particular, the activities of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung.

Following is a paragraph from Dissolution of the Comintern and Prospects published by the Japanese imperialists: "Korea is a colony of the Japanese Empire. Therefore, its immediate strategic objective will be to defeat Japan in the current war, and win national liberation and independence above all else. With regard to the task of the armed struggle, the activities of the Korean volunteers under the leadership of communist bandit Kim Il Sung in Manchuria or the CPC are the expression of this policy. The present movement in Korea will be dependent on the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union. The situation will change suddenly and result in a head-on clash between these two countries.

It is evident, from the example of the countries occupied by Germany, our ally, that in the latter case the movement will degenerate rapidly into terrorist activities or assume the form of an armed struggle." (Continued Issue of Thought Bulletin, p. 131, the Ideological Department of the Criminal Bureau of the High Court, October, Showa 18 (1943).)

The Japanese imperialists could not but admit that the communist movement and the national liberation movement in Korea, being the struggles of the Korean people themselves, would display the characteristic of independence, irrespective of the existence or dissolution of the Comintern, and that the armed struggle led by the great leader would become a very great force when it was allied with the international anti-imperialist forces.

The strenuous efforts exerted by the Korean communists for the organization, strengthening and development of the IAF serve as a model of correct combination of two principles - the principle of the independence and identity of each country and that of international solidarity and cooperation in the revolutionary struggle.

The success and experience gained in those days when we organized and strengthened the JAF became a valuable asset for us in keeping and expanding the united front with the socialist countries and other international revolutionary forces maintaining the Juche stand in the complex political situation following the war, not to speak of the days of final showdown to annihilate the Japanese imperialists.

## 23.7. With My Comrades-in-Arms of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army

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During my days in the IAF I was in close contact with and in the same ranks as Zhou Bao-zhong, Zhang Shou-jian, Chai Shi-rong, Feng Zhong-yun and many other comrades-in-arms of the NAJAA. A long time has passed since then, but I still remember what happened in those days.

Zhou Bao-zhong was in the most frequent contact with me of all the commanders of the NAJAA. My intimate friendship with him started in the first half of the 1930s, when we were working for a united front with the National Salvation Army in Jiandao. I worked with him on the Anti-Japanese Soldiers Committee and together we fought the Luozigou Battle. When we were in Wangqing, we conducted two expeditions to northern Manchuria and each time we carried out joint operations with Zhou Bao-zhong's unit. However, I lost contact with him after we moved the theatre of our activities to the area of Mt. Paektu and West Jiandao in the latter half of the 1930s.

"There are many roads, but one gate." Zhou Bao-zhong always quoted this maxim whenever he parted from me. This implied that, though the theatres of our activities and the courses of our struggle were different, we were sure to meet again some time, for we were both fighting against the Japanese.

When he met me just before the Khabarovsk conference, he said, "You see, Commander Kim, what did I say? Didn't I say there are many roads, but one gate?" and burst out laughing. My meeting with him moved me deeply, for it was effected after the interval of several years.

"Since I heard the news of Commander Yang's death, I've always been worried about the personal safety of my comrades in southern Manchuria. I heard the Japanese imperialists had put a large price on your head, Commander Kim, but you've admirably overcome critical moments. I know well that southern and eastern Manchuria are very dangerous theatres of war. I am delighted to see you alive and well here in Khabarovsk. I've anxiously waited for your arrival," Zhou Baozhong said with great sincerity.

He looked much older than before. His face vividly betrayed the hardships and sufferings he had undergone in the vast forests and snow-covered plains.

When I told him that he must have had a very hard time, he said, "Our hardships are nothing. They can't be compared with those experienced by our comrades in southern Manchuria. We wholeheartedly admire you for having won victory after victory without yielding to such great hardships. The people at the Comintern and commanders of the Soviet army also praise you very highly."

At this time the Comintern was hurrying to begin the meeting of the commanders of the guerrilla army in Northeast China and the representatives of the Soviet Far East Forces. Therefore, Zhou and I largely talked about matters concerning the meeting.



Zhou Bao-zhong's ideological problem was how to combine the national and international duties of the revolution, as well as independence and international solidarity in the revolutionary struggle. He eagerly desired to have contact with the Central Committee of the CPC, but he was anxious because he could not do so. It was natural that he, a member of the CPC, had taken pains for many years to develop the revolution in Northeast China under the guidance of the Party Central Committee.

Zhou always gave priority to contact with the Central Committee of the CPC and strove to achieve solidarity with the Soviet Union. This was the general attitude of the Chinese comrades fighting in Northeast China.

At one time the Comintern and the Soviet military authorities had wanted to put the NAJAA under the command of the Soviet Union. Therefore, it was understandable that Zhou Bao-zhong worried that they might try to do so again.

That day Zhou and I reached a consensus: Military and political cooperation and assistance between us and the Soviet Union were urgently needed in view of the prevailing situation. However, the specific form and method of the cooperation and assistance should be settled by properly combining the interests of the revolution in each country with those of the world revolution. In other words, they should be realized by way of maintaining the independence of the NAJAA and the KPRA.

Winding up our talk, Zhou said, "I believe that the speech of the representatives of southern Manchuria will be very important at the forthcoming negotiations. I have complete trust in you, Comrade Kim. In the days of the Anti-Japanese Soldiers Committee, too, you gave the keynote speech each time, didn't you, Commander Kim? Let us work in the future, as in the past, joining our efforts to meet the new situation." He sincerely trusted me.

Zhou defended the Soviet Union and always supported the socialist system established there. Nevertheless, he was extremely displeased with the slightest expression of chauvinism in the speech or behavior of people in that country, or in the way they dealt with matters. I told him that if he, while strictly adhering to the principle, displayed the spirit of comradely cooperation with generosity, he would be fully able to help them correct their misguided attitude and solve such knotty problems in time.

Zhou nodded and said, "You are really experienced, Commander Kim." I replied, "It's not that I am so experienced, but that you lack one type of experience. You've not shared lodgings with others as we did." To this he said, "That's right. You Korean comrades underwent great hardships in eastern Manchuria because of the 'Minsaengdan' problem."

Already when he was active in Jidong, Zhou criticized the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle for having been conducted in an ultra-Leftist way and blamed the East Manchuria Special District Party Committee for this because, he asserted, this was due to its error. Since his days in Jiandao, he had been taking a comparatively fair attitude towards the struggle of the Korean revolutionaries.

I mentioned earlier the fact that, following our formation of the ARF, Zhou actively backed the activities of a branch of this association organized in a unit of the NAJAA under his command. This happened in December 1936. His attitude was an expression of international support for and solidarity with the Korean revolution.

Zhou's friendly attitude towards the Korean revolution can be attributed to the fact that we had helped him with sincerity from the first days of the guerrilla movement and exerted a favorable influence on him through a number of joint operations.

During the first expedition to northern Manchuria we helped him by transferring the majority of the expeditionary force to his unit. At that time we conducted a number of joint operations with our comrades in northern Manchuria.

During the second expedition to northern Manchuria we organized the joint general headquarters of the 2nd and 5th Corps and carried out large-scale joint operations. Zhou Bao-zhong was the commander, I, the political commissar and Ping Nan-yang (Li Jing-pu), the deputy commander. The six units under the general headquarters were each assigned to their respective areas of operations. Zhou Bao-zhong was in charge of the Antu unit in the west, and I took charge of the Weihe unit.

We organized a headquarters for each region, such as the headquarters of the western front and those of the central front. We attached a number of units to these headquarters and carried out joint operations in the area between Fusong and Muling.

Such were the close relations between Zhou Bao-zhong and me. Probably because of these ties, in the days of the IAF Zhou discussed with me all problems, both major and minor. Even when he had some problem to discuss with Soviet people, he first asked my opinion. When I asked why he did so, he replied that this was because he had been accustomed to listening to my advice since his days in Jiandao.

In the days of the IAF, Zhou, regardless of the differences in our ranks, always respected me as the Commander of the KPRA, the leader of the Korean revolution and the representative of the Korean side in the allied forces. We worked in concert, supporting and helping each other like the cochairmen of some organizations usually did, because we respected each other. The relations between Zhou and me were comradely and fraternal ones based on deep respect and trust.

I had a good impression of Zhou mainly because he, more than any one else, highly appreciated the exploits of the Korean communists and other Korean people who had played the role of vanguards in pioneering and developing the revolution in Northeast China. Once he said that there were two things that he could never forget. One of them was that it was Koreans who played a vanguard role in the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggle.

His attitude to the Korean revolution was clear. He regarded it as natural for the Koreans to fight for the Korean revolution, and always asserted that the revolution in Northeast China would have been

inconceivable without the Koreans.

He said that the KPRA was the 2nd Corps of the NAJAA, and always extolled the alliance between the anti-Japanese armed forces of Korea and China that existed in the course of their common struggle.

Pointing out the vanguard role played by the Korean communists in the revolution in Northeast China, Zhou Bao-zhong said, "The strong guerrilla army in eastern Manchuria built in 1932 and the guerrilla armies in Panshi, Zhuhe, Mishan, Tangyuan and Raohe established in 1933 were all founded by the Korean comrades and the revolutionary masses of Korea. In later days they developed into the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. There were many fine Korean comrades in the 5th Corps, too. The leading military and political cadres at various levels of all the corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, such as commanders of corps, chiefs of political departments, platoon leaders and instructors, were all Korean comrades."

The following letters Zhou sent to Wang Xin-lin clearly show how much he respected and how highly he appreciated the great leader. They read in part:

"Kim Il Sung is the best military cadre ... and the finest of all the Korean comrades. He can carry Out very important activities in the southern part of Manchuria, in the eastern region of the Yalu River and in the northern area of Korea." (Zhou Bao-zhong to Wang Xin-lin, July 1, Juche 30 (1941).)

"Kim Il Sung is now the only important cadre in the 1st Route Army in southern Manchuria. After the death of Yang Jing-yu and Wei Zheng-min, Kim Il Sung alone continues to shoulder the responsibility for the leadership of the guerrilla movement in southern Manchuria and for all affairs concerning southern Manchuria as a whole." (Zhou Bao-zhong to Wang Xin-lin, September 15, Juche 30 (1941).)

What I regarded as another good thing in Zhou Bao-zhong was the fact that he always adhered to principles in the revolutionary struggle and fervently championed the revolution in his own country. He did not tolerate the tendency to subordinate the Chinese revolution to the revolution in the Soviet Union or make it the latter's appendage. He stood for solidarity with the Soviet revolution and for the defense of the Soviet Union based on proletarian internationalism, but he always maintained the independence of the Chinese revolution and its independent development.

Zhou's principled stand towards the revolution was identical with ours. My view is that the worth of a revolutionary is directly proportional to the firmness of his independent stand towards the revolution. The firmer his independent stand, the higher his prestige is. When our independence is unshakable, the revolution is ever-victorious.

In the days of the IAF, Zhou Bao-zhong always called me Commander Kim. However, when he came to Pyongyang following Korea's liberation, he never called me that. Although he asked me to call him Commander Zhou in a familiar way, as in former days, he always called me Comrade Premier.

I requested that he call me Commander Kim as before, because I was not accustomed somehow to being called Comrade Premier and also because I thought that by this we might create an unnecessary estrangement. However, each time he would stiffen his expression and say, "No, I shouldn't."

Sometimes Zhou and I argued. Once he persisted in his own opinion it was not easy to exact a concession from him, for he was so obstinate. I did not concede readily, either. Nevertheless, in the long run we would reach a consensus, regulating our assertions and supplementing one man's view with the other's opinion. In this way our friendship became firm and we came to understand each other more fully.

Zhou and I frequently had private talks, too. Zhou's main topics of conversation were his family and comrades. He had a little daughter whose name was Zhou Wei. She was born when he had already reached the age of 40, so he loved her very much. The more she frolicked, the greater was his pride in telling me about her. Each time he boasted about her, there was the pleasant smile of a happy father on his face.

Zhou and his wife, Wang Yi-zhi, served in the same unit for a long time. They were married in the thick forests of northern Manchuria.

Whenever Zhou talked about his wife and daughter, his eyes became bright. He was fond of private talks. Sometimes he advanced his opinion about the peculiar way of life of the Nanay people residing in the neighborhood of his unit or about a Russian couple in a boarding house in Khabarovsk. His powers of observation and description were admirable.

Once he told me about the cockfight holiday which was celebrated in his native village in Yunnan Province. According to him, in his home province people dressed themselves in new clothes on February 8 by the lunar calendar, and held cockfighting competitions in the streets. The people of that region adored chickens. According to a legend, their ancestors became prosperous by raising chickens. There was even a saying that they maintained their families by relying on chickens.

Zhou said that, though they could not rely on chickens to tide over the national crisis, he would be as brave as a fighting cock in repulsing the enemy.

to his obligations. He knew how to show good will to a man of good will and offer sympathy to a sympathetic man. The latter half of his life shows this clearly.

He took particular trouble with his work in the IAF for many years. He strove with devotion for the development of the Chinese revolution, but he was always faithful to his internationalist duty. If he had ignored his duty to the world revolution, attaching importance only to the revolution in his own country, or if he had remained indifferent to the latter, talking bombastically about the former, he would not have deserved lengthy recollection.

Whenever Zhou Bao-zhong dispatched small units to Northeast China to maintain a strong life-line for

the guerrilla movement, I felt he was a true son of the Chinese people. And whenever I saw him striving for the friendship and solidarity of the various national units within the allied forces as well as for the defense of the Soviet Union, I realized he was a genuine internationalist fighter.

He was efficient in managing the ranks and economic life of the IAF. There were many complex problems in the allied forces, an aggregation of different national units. He was involved in almost everything, ranging from the formulation of the training programme, the guidance of the training and personnel matters to the construction of a club.

One day a deserter was a source of his worry, and another day he was bathed with sweat because of a traffic accident.

In the early days following the formation of the IAF, he had some trouble because some Soviet officers would not cooperate with him. However, the strict demands on the part of the Soviet military authorities completely changed the Soviet officers' attitudes. Zhou Bao-zhong always strove to lead his men by personal example.

When parachute training was held in Camp North, he took part in it in company with his men from the first day. One day he nearly lost his life when his parachute failed to open. Fortunately, his backup parachute opened, and he escaped with only a shoulder injury. Once some Chinese comrades requested me to advise Zhou not to parachute any more, but I did not do so for I knew too well that such advice would fall on deaf ears.

In the spring of 1951 Wang Yi-zhi, the then chief of the Women's Federation of Yunnan Province, came to see me at the Supreme Headquarters during her visit to Pyongyang as a member of a group of sympathizers. Seeing me, she shed tears, saying that she was glad to find me healthy despite the fact that I was shouldering the heavy burden of the hard-fought war. Then she said, "Bao-zhong begs you never to go to the dangerous front, but take the utmost care of your personal safety."

I was grateful to Zhou for this, so I said to Wang: "Convey my thanks to Commander Zhou upon your return, please."

Wang Yi-zhi replied, "This is Bao-zhong's request and, at the same time, mine. We Chinese are now greatly concerned about your personal safety, Comrade Premier." According to her, in the days of the JAF, too, Zhou Bao-zhong could not bring himself to go to bed and was worried about me, going in and out of his room all night, if I did not return from my small-unit activities on schedule. Our friendship transcended borders and nationalities.

The great leader parted with Zhou Bao-zhong at a new turning-point in our history, when the anti-Japanese revolution emerged victorious and the colonial rule of the Japanese imperialists was abolished. Nevertheless, fellowship and visits full of militant friendship continued between the two in later years.

In recollecting how his intimate friendship with Zhou Bao-zhong continued after liberation, the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung said:

After liberation I met Zhou Bao-zhong on several occasions, twice in our country and for the last time in Beijing.

Zhou paid his first visit to our country in the early spring of 1946. I met him in Namyang. At that time he was fighting against the Kuomintang reactionaries as deputy commander-in-chief of the Northeast Democratic Allied Army (NDAA) and commander of the Jirin-Liaoning military district.

As Chiang Kaisek, in his opposition to the communists, attacked the liberated area by mobilizing all the troops of the Kuomintang army, the mainland of China was again drawn into the vortex of a civil war. Saying that the situation in Northeast China was very critical, Zhou explained to me the balance of power between friend and foe as well as the military and political situation.

After the Japanese imperialists were forced out, there was a political vacuum in Manchuria for some time. Chiang Kaisek's Kuomintang and the CPC waged a fierce struggle to control this area. Both of them regarded Manchuria as a pivotal region for the seizure of the whole of Chinese territory.

The newly-formed NDAA had to fight hard against a formidable enemy as the Kuomintang, with the active backing of the United States, hurled hundreds of thousands of troops by sea, air and land into Manchuria.

Zhou Bao-zhong wanted to meet me in order to request urgent assistance to cope with this situation. It was also around that time that Mao Ze-dong sent Chen Yun to Pyongyang to request our support. Chen had for some time been chief of the organization department of the Central Committee of the CPC, and had then been appointed deputy secretary of its Northeast Bureau.

I readily promised Zhou Bao-zhong that we would help solve all the problems raised by our Chinese comrades-in-arms with regard to the operations to be conducted in Northeast China, and render them the utmost assistance. Actually, our situation in those days did not enable us to extend help to others. Nevertheless, we did not take our conditions into consideration at all. From the point of view of our revolution, too, we could not tolerate Northeast China falling under the rule of Chiang Kaisek.

In those days some 250,000 young Koreans were directly taking part in the battles to liberate Northeast China. Among them were Kang Kon, Park Rak Kwon and Choe Kwang, the finest military and political cadres of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

Wang Yi-zhi also visited our country on a number of occasions bringing Zhou Bao-zhong's requests concerning the operations to liberate Northeast China. Her first visit was either in the summer or autumn of 1946. At that time the NDAA unit of the Liaodong military district led by Xiao Hua attacked Anshan and Haicheng. Simultaneously with this attack, a unit of the Kuomintang army stationed in these areas

rose in revolt.

Greatly startled at the news, Chiang Kaisek launched a violent offensive, threatening to annihilate the unit unless it capitulated. The unit retreated to the border between Korea and China. However, they could not move farther because the Yalu River blocked their way. Zhou Bao-zhong sent Chinese representatives to our country one after another to discuss the measures to rescue the rebel unit. Wang Yizhi also visited Ranam as one of those representatives. In the end, we allowed the unit to enter eastern Manchuria via our territory.

It was in early 1947 that I met Wang Yi-zhi in Pyongyang. On behalf of Zhou Bao-zhong, she first thanked me for helping them in various ways in the operations to liberate Northeast China. Then she said, "We have to evacuate wounded soldiers, families of soldiers and service personnel numbering over 20,000, as well as strategic materials amounting to 20,000 tons, to a safe place. To this end, we again request passage through Korean territory. We need your help, General Kim."

I readily complied with her request, and saw that relevant measures were taken immediately. Wang Yi-zhi repeatedly expressed her gratitude, saying, "All the people in Northeast China will remember your favour, General Kim."

The same day I asked Wang Yi-zhi whether she still had with her the watch Lim Chun Chu had given her as a souvenir when we parted with her in the Far East region. She said with a smile that she had given it to a man from the Soviet Union.

I could not understand why she had given away the watch she had called a symbol of friendship between Korea and China, and which she had said she would wear until her dying day.

As a matter of fact, the watch was Lim Chun Chu's favourite. The day we were leaving the training base, Zhou Bao-zhong and Wang Yizhi did not let us go easily, expressing deep regret at our parting.

That was when Lim Chun Chu gave his wristwatch to Wang Yi-zhi. At first, she was unwilling to take it, as in those days a watch was a rare treasure. I told her to take the watch, saying it would prove its worth some time in the future. Only then did Wang accept the watch.

She related how they had seized the Changehun radio station after the liberation of the city, and that she had been in charge of broadcasting and had also taken part in the transportation of weapons from time to time. She added that the watch had been of great help to her. According to her, when they were engaged in the transportation of weapons, a motor transport convoy of the Soviet army had given them a great deal of help. She said she had given the watch to the leader of the transport convoy as a souvenir.

Wang Yi-zhi said the watch had, in the final analysis, become a symbol of the militant friendship between the peoples of China, Korea and the Soviet Union.

At that time we did not let her return straightaway to Northeast China, but got her to rest for some time because she was not in good health. During her stay in Korea, she toured Moran Hill and some other places in Pyongyang.

In later days, too, Wang Yi-zhi came to Pyongyang to solve the difficult problems in the transport of strategic materials. Wang Xiao-ming and Peng Shi-lu were also staying in Pyongyang around that time. The three of them enjoyed a touching reunion as comrades-in-arms from the days of the JAF.

I think it was probably in the summer of 1947 that Zhou Bao-zhong sent Wang Yi-zhi to me again. The NDAA had killed or wounded 80,000 enemy soldiers and liberated 42 cities and towns in battles that lasted for 50 days. However, the situation at the front was still tense at that time. The officers and men of the democratic allied army had great difficulty because of a shortage of shoes. Wang said that a large number of the officers and men were marching barefoot through mud and gravelly places. She came to see me in order to solve the problem of shoes.

I gave an emergency order to all the shoe factories to discontinue the production of other shoes but make only those to be sent to our Chinese comrades-in-arms.

According to Chinese information on the operations to liberate Northeast China, our country carried, for the NDAA, materials amounting to 210,000 tons in the first seven months of Juche 36 (1947) and in the following year it transported 300,900 tons of materials.

A total of 18 NDAA units passed through Korean territory in the latter half of Juche 35 (1946), and the number of NDAA personnel who went to the base in Northeast China via Korea during the first nine months of Juche 36 (1947) amounted to more than 10,000. Nearly 9,000 people crossed the Tuman River via a bridge at Namyang in Juche 37 (1948) to go to Northeast China. Moreover, a number of representatives of Chinese democratic parties, non-party representatives and those of overseas Chinese went to Harbin via Korea to take part in the new political consultative conference. It is said that the number of cadres of the CPC who passed through Korea on business was even higher.

In the autumn of 1948, immediately after the liberation of Northeast China, Zhou Bao-zhong visited our country again in the capacity of chairman of the Jirin provincial government and concurrently deputy commander-in-chief of the Northeast China military district, accompanied by Wang Yi-zhi and his daughter Zhou Wei. He paid that visit to express his gratitude to us for offering material and moral aid to them in the operations to liberate Northeast China. The large amount of flour Zhou brought with him by train at that time was part of the expression of his thanks.

I sent Zhou and his wife to Mt. Kumgang, with Kim Chaek as a guide and companion. The couple enjoyed themselves at the hot spring rest home in the mountains for some time. Upon their return from Mt. Kumgang, they expressed their delight and admiration at the autumnal tints.

Upon their return to Pyongyang, still accompanied by Kim Chaek, they visited Mangyongdae as well as



the graves of my father and mother.

After that, Kim Jong Suk and I took them to visit An Kil's grave and posed with them for a souvenir photograph.

Even now, when I recollect Zhou Bao-zhong, I look back upon what happened once during the second stage of the Fatherland Liberation War. This took place when we started our temporary retreat.

One day two strange young men came to see me and gave me a letter from Zhou Bao-zhong. They were Koreans named Hyon Ju Yong and Kim Kil Ryong. They had been working as Zhou's aide and driver. respectively, since the time he took command of the operations to liberate Northeast China. Zhou had taken them with him when he was moved to the post of vice-chairman of the Yunnan provincial government. They said that at the news of the People's Army retreating. Zhou had urged them to go to Korea without delay.

In his letter, Zhou Bao-zhong wrote that although he was far away, he was always in a Korean trench in his mind and that he entrusted to me two young men, who were intelligent and had a high sense of responsibility. Zhou's letter really gave me great strength at a time when the country was undergoing a severe trial.

Friendship between revolutionary comrades is just like this. The militant friendship and comradeship we showed each other with pure hearts in Jiandao and northern Manchuria, as well as at the training base in the Far East region, could not change no matter how much time passed.

Love for comrades-in-arms is rock-solid. This is because it has been cultivated amid gun smoke and because it encourages people even to plunge into fire and sacrifice their lives for the sake of their comrades.

Being loyal to his obligations is really noble for a man. Because of loyalty man becomes a noble being, and because of faithfulness human life becomes as beautiful as a flower garden.

I met Zhou Bao-zhong for the last time during my visit to China in December 1954. At that time he was recuperating in the Jieshou Hall in the Summer Palace, because his chronic heart disease had become worse. He said Premier Zhou En-lai had ensured that he was brought to Beijing and given medical treatment there.

Upon seeing me, Zhou embraced me with tear-filled eyes. That iron man shed tears continually on that day. His mind seemed to have become very feeble, probably because he was bedridden. Nevertheless, he first inquired after my health and said that I must have had a very hard time during the three years of war.

Zhou did not discontinue literary work even on his sickbed, and left behind him a thick book entitled The Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Warfare in Northeast China and the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. He passed away

in February 1964 after a prolonged illness, ten years after our meeting in the Summer Palace.

On the day when I sent a telegram of condolence, I could not bring myself to work. Unable to do anything, I recollected Zhou Bao-zhong pacing up and down my office.

In the days of the IAF I also met Chai Shi-rong again. I still vividly remember how he hugged me tightly and called me "Old Kim", "Old Kim", and rubbed his rough cheek against mine. He was about 20 years older than I, and so I asked him if, by addressing me as a senior, he intended to make me, Kim Il Sung, an old man, and exploded with laughter. To this he said, "Age doesn't matter, because you, Commander Kim, are a senior who led me to become a communist."

Chai Shi-rong's real name was Chai Zhao-sheng. He said he had been chief of a police station somewhere in Helong County before the Japanese army conquered Manchuria. When the September 18 incident occurred, he organized a small armed unit with other policemen and rose against Manchukuo and the Japanese.

I became acquainted with Chai Shi-rong in 1933, when he was commanding a unit of the National Salvation Army in the area of Wangqing. Following our success in realizing cooperation with Wu Yicheng's unit, we had gone to meet Chai Shi-rong, but did not succeed in the negotiations with him at that time. Nevertheless, in later years Chai Shi-rong allied with the communists. Eventually, he became a communist and established a close friendship with me. We jointly waged the battle of the Dongning County town and the Luozigou Battle.

In later days, Chai Shi-rong moved the theatre of his activities to northern Manchuria and became commander of the 5th Corps of the NAJAA. During our second expedition to northern Manchuria, we conducted a number of joint operations with his unit. At that time Chai Shirong was in command of the headquarters of the central front. Our joint operations were conducted in the areas of Emu and Ningan.

Respecting me as a revolutionary senior, Chai was always deferential in my presence. Whenever this happened, I felt his noble personality. After the formation of the IAF, I and Chai Shi-rong were put in command of the 1st Contingent and the 4th Contingent, respectively.

Now Chai Shi-rong has also become a man of the old times. I do not know in which year he passed away. When I look at the photo I had taken with Chai at the training base in the Far East region, I still feel deep emotions. It is a vivid picture which shows how communist ideology transformed a man.

Once Hu Zhen-yi, widow of Chai Shi-rong, visited Pyongyang with her son. She had gone to the training base after serving for some time in the 5th Corps of the NAJAA.

When gray-haired Hu Zhen-yi entered the Kumsusan Assembly Hall with her son, I pictured Chai Shi-rong in my mind.

Among my Chinese comrades-in-arms in the days of the IAF, there was also Feng Zhong-yun, who was political commissar of the 3rd Route Army of the NAJAA. Feng had been secretary of the Party branch committee of Qinghua University. He had been a teacher in Harbin for some time. After embarking upon the revolutionary road, he had been engaged in Party work in the North Manchuria Provincial Party Committee and in various counties under it. He had been imprisoned on two occasions, had been punished for an error in Party work and had twice received bullet wounds.

Feng Zhong-yun worked in the Soviet Union from the autumn of 1939 to February 1940 in order to solve the problem of military and political solidarity between the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement in Northeast China and the Soviet Union. He made great efforts to arrange the joint conference of the North Manchuria Provincial Party Committee and the Jidong Provincial Party Committee held at the beginning of the 1940s, as well as the meeting with Soviet authorities convened later.

In the days of the IAF, he had been chief of the intelligence section of the political department and had also taught politics to officers.

When he was at the training base in the Far East region, Feng ate his heart out because he did not know whether his wife and children, from whom he had parted a long time before, were alive or dead. Sometimes when he could not bring himself to sleep or when he was gloomy at the thought of them, his comrades said that they must be dead in all probability, and advised him to marry another woman and settle down.

Feng, however, flatly refused to do so even if he had to live as a widower all his life. His noble and upright qualities as a revolutionary and human being were also expressed in the fact that he steadfastly remained faithful to and loved his wife, though there was little hope of their reunion.

I still have a picture in my mind of Feng humming a forlorn Chinese love song as he took a stroll one evening.

It is said that, following China's liberation, Feng had a reunion with his wife whom he had longed for so earnestly, and lived together happily once more.

Like Zhou Bao-zhong, he always extolled the heroic struggle of the Korean people and the KPRA with feelings of deep respect and gratitude.

When he was chairman of the Songjiang provincial people's government, he wrote a book titled, Brief History of the 14-Year Struggle of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army. Following is an extract from this book:

"The predecessor of the 2nd Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army was the east Manchuria guerrilla army. The East Manchuria Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army was originally divided into four anti-Japanese guerrilla battalions?the Yanji, Wangqing, Helong and Hunchun guerrilla battalions. The majority of the

population in the Jiandao area were Koreans. Hence, Koreans constituted the core of the east Manchuria guerrilla army.

"Under the command of General Kim Il Sung, a prominent national hero of Korea, this army advanced to Antu, Linjiang, Changbai and the Yalu River, and met Yang Jing-yu, commander of the 1st Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, a fraternal army.

"Moreover, under the leadership of General Kim Il Sung, they organized the Korean army for the restoration of the fatherland. They crossed the Yalu River and advanced deep into the northern area of Korea on a number of occasions to conduct operations. There they fought several bloody battles against the Japanese imperialist aggressors and secretly formed the Korean people's underground organizations of the ARF.

"After liberation, all the Korean people, young and old, men and women, unanimously welcomed General Kim Il Sung, enthusiastically shouting, 'Long live the national hero General Kim Il Sung!'"

Feng, after serving as chairman of the Songjiang provincial people's government, was consecutively head of the Beijing Library and Vice-Minister of Irrigation and Electricity in later years. When he worked as vice-minister, he frequently visited our country to discuss the problem of the common use of a power station by Korea and China.

When Feng came to our country in September 1958 as head of a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Irrigation and Electricity, I met him at the Suphung Power Station. I still remember how, following our inspection of the facilities of the power station, we climbed the dam and, looking down upon the beautiful scenery of Lake Suphung, discussed the matter of jointly building a new power station on the Yalu and increasing cooperation between the two countries in the field of the generation of hydroelectric power.

Feng is said to have died in prison in the spring of 1968, after being persecuted on a false charge of being a Rightist during the "cultural revolution".

Xue Wen, Feng Zhong-yun's wife, visited our country in company with her children on my 80th birthday. Feng had longed for her so earnestly when he was at the training base in the Far East region.

Xue Wen had worked at the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee during the anti-Japanese war. She was of short stature and looked sincere.

According to Xue Wen, Feng Zhong-yun was rehabilitated at the end of 1977, nearly ten years after he had died in prison, and was buried at the revolutionary martyrs cemetery on Mt. Babao on the outskirts of Beijing.

When Feng's family threw themselves into my outstretched arms, with tears in their eyes, I also felt a lump in my throat, remembering the bygone days.

Feng's bereaved family visited our country on a number of occasions in later years, too. One year, during her stay in Pyongyang, Feng Yi-luo, Feng Zhong-yun's eldest daughter, was about to celebrate her 60th birthday there. Comrade Kim Jong Il sent her a table as a present on that occasion.

The militant friendship and intimacy established between Feng Zhong-yun and me are continued by our next generation.

Zhang Shou-jian, who was active as a political worker in the days of the IAF, was also a Chinese comrade-in-arms with whom I was on intimate terms. When he was in northern Manchuria, Zhang was commander of the 3rd Route Army. He was also called Li Zhao-lin. He was a close friend of Feng Zhong-yun, and he was also on familiar terms with Kim Chaek.

What was characteristic of his personality was modesty and devotion. Probably because of this we became friends at our very first meeting. I became very attached to him, for he gave prominence to his comrades when something good was achieved, and was the first to step forward whenever there was something difficult to be done.

The dossiers on the commanding officers of the guerrilla unit kept at the Comintern evaluated Zhang Shou-jian as an excellent organizer and as a brave, energetic and creative leader of the guerrilla army.

During the anti-Japanese war the soldiers of the north Manchuria guerrilla army frequently sang The Bivouacking Song, which he wrote.

After the victory in the anti-Japanese war, Zhang Shou-jian energetically shouldered heavy responsibilities as the secretary of the Songjiang district committee of the CPC and vice-chairman of Songjiang Province before he was assassinated by Kuomintang agents in Harbin. Zhou Bao-zhong, Zhang Shou-jian and Feng Zhong-yun have all passed away.

In April 1992 my old comrades-in-arms from the days of the IAF visited me and congratulated me on my 80th birthday. Among them were Chen Lei, his wife Lee Min, and Lee Jae Dok. I treated them as honored guests.

Chen Lei had worked as the chief of the propaganda section, and chief of the political department of the 3rd Regiment, of the 6th Corps of the NAJAA. In the days of the IAF he had been a platoon leader. After liberation he was secretary of the Heilongjiang provincial committee of the CPC and governor of Heilongjiang Province. It was when he was chief of the advisory committee of the Heilongjiang provincial Party committee that he visited our country leading a friendship delegation from Heilongjiang.

On my 80th birthday Chen Lei made me a present of a scroll bearing the words, Long Life and Good Health to Comrade Kim Il Sung on His 80th Birthday. On the scroll he wrote that I had led the arduous struggles against the Japanese and US imperialists to victory and built a country of bliss for the people on

our land of 3,000 ri and wished me a long life along with Koryo. Chen was an accomplished calligrapher.

Lee Min presented me with a collection of 100 revolutionary songs which had been sung during the anti-Japanese war. In the days of the JAF she had worked as a broadcaster.

The peoples and revolutionaries of Korea and China have lived as friendly neighbors on either side of the Tuman and Yalu Rivers, and have fought shoulder to shoulder, sharing weal and woe for over half a century since the days of the great war against the Japanese. This valuable tradition of struggle and fraternal friendship will continue in full blossom from generation to generation.

In July Juche 83 (1994) the report of the sudden demise of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung spread all over the world. The news, which came like a bolt from the blue, was a devastating shock and brought untold grief to people all over the world.

Chen Lei and Lee Min immediately left Harbin by car to pay their last respects to him. When Comrade Kim Jong Il heard, from the Korean consulate general in Shenyang, that Chen Lei and his wife were coming to Korea by land, he personally took measures to receive them on the Korean side of the Amnokgang Bridge and guide them to Pyongyang. When the car provided by the North Phyongan Provincial Party Committee reached Sinanju carrying the couple who had crossed the Yalu, another car, sent by the respected General Kim Jong Il was waiting for them there.

After leaving Harbin, the couple had covered 1,000 kilometers in two days, but they could not bring themselves to sleep, recollecting the benevolent image of Comrade Kim Il Sung which was deeply imprinted in their minds from the days of the anti-Japanese war. When they reached where the departed was lying, it was 12 pm. Without even taking the time to smooth the wrinkles from their travel-stained clothes, they turned to him and said, shedding hot tears, "Respected Comrade President, Chen Lei and Lee Min, your comrades-in arms, have come."

The respected General Kim Jong Il met Chen Lei and his wife on the platform of the meeting in memory of Comrade Kim Il Sung.

Zhou Wei, Zhou Bao-zhong's daughter, regarded her failure to see Comrade Kim Il Sung as her lifelong regret. In October Juche 84 (1995) she presented a letter and a picture album she herself had edited, to Comrade Kim Jong Il. That album included a large number of photographs relating to Zhou Bao-zhong's life as well as many photographs showing Comrade Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Suk, heroine of the anti-Japanese struggle.

Zhou Wei's wish to visit Korea was fulfilled in the summer of Juche 85 (1996). She came to Pyongyang in great haste with her mind filled with recollections of Comrade Kim Il Sung, who had been dear to her since her childhood days at the training base in the Far East region. The first thing she did after she arrived was to visit the Kumsusan Memorial Palace.

"President Kim Il Sung, Zhou Wei has come. Can't you open your eyes just once and look at me?" she muttered to herself and shed sorrowful tears. She pledged to promote the friendship between Korea and China succeeding to the work of her father and mother.

## 23.8. Fighters from Northern Manchuria

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One or two days after our arrival in Khabarovsk, An Kil told me that Choe Yong Gon was not far away. He added that Choe had been eager to meet me, and that when he learned of my arrival he would come at a run. I, too, was eager to see Choe Yong Gon. Like Kim Chaek, Kang Kon, Ho Hyong Sik and Park Kul Song, he was a comrade-in-arms whom I had wanted to meet for a long time.

The primary aim of the second expedition to northern Manchuria we organized when we were active in the Jiandao area was to meet Kim Chaek, Choe Yong Gon and other Korean comrades-in-arms there and help their struggle. To our regret, however, this aim was not fulfilled at that time owing to unavoidable circumstances.

I heard that Choe Yong Gon sent liaison men to us four times. One of them is said to have gone as far as Dunhua before turning back.

It was the common desire of all the Korean communists who were active in various areas of eastern, southern and northern Manchuria to collaborate, cooperate and achieve solidarity among themselves.

Choe Yong Gon was one of the outstanding people who had played a leading role in the building of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in northern Manchuria, especially the formation of the 4th and 7th Corps. Before he came to the Far East region, Choe Yong Gon had been active as chief of staff of a corps.

Park Hun, a graduate of the Huangpu Military Academy in southern China, was the first to tell me about Choe Yong Gon. This happened when we were stepping up training following the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army in Antu. Our greatest headache in those days was a shortage of military instructors. Although we had organized the guerrilla army, we had only one military expert capable of giving training to it.

Whenever Cha Kwang Su, Park Hun and I gathered, we discussed where we could get military experts from. So Choe Yong Gon naturally cropped up in our talks.

Park Hun said to me: "After the decease of Sun Yat-sen, the period of collaboration between the Kuomintang and the CPC came to an end. As a consequence, all the young Koreans who had been at the Huangpu Military Academy dispersed. Choe Chu Hae is one of them and is worth contacting. He had been a training instructor at the academy. If there were one or two people like him, they would be of great help to us. I wonder where he is and what he is doing now.

Later, I found that Choe Chu Hae was one of Choe Yong Gon's aliases; others were Kim Ji Gang and Choe Sok Chon. On hearing that Choe Yong Gon was in Khabarovsk, I suggested that we should go to see him first instead of waiting for him to come to us. When I arrived at his quarters following An Kil,



Choe Yong Gon jumped to his feet and gazed at me for a good while. He was a typical military officer, with square shoulders.

"I failed to meet you, Commander Kim, in Manchuria, but I see you here in Russia," said he by way of greeting, grasping my hand. His eyes were full of tears. He said he had heard that I would arrive in Khabarovsk soon, but he did not know I was already there. Then he repeatedly expressed his regret at receiving me at his quarters instead of himself coming to see me.

"It has been my lifelong desire to fight alongside you, Commander Kim. I am extremely glad to meet you like this. Let's not part again."

Choe Yong Gon had gone through many twists and turns since he embarked upon the revolutionary road. He said that, as we had, he had joined the revolution as a member of a student movement. When Choe was attending middle school, he led a strike of students against the American headmaster. The headmaster fled, but the Japanese authorities caused Choe and all the other students who had organized and led the struggle to be expelled from the school. Later, Choe took part in the March First Popular Uprising and was involved in the work of issuing anti-Japanese publications. He was imprisoned for some time because of this.

Following this, he went to Seoul and stayed there for some time. There, by chance, he formed a close friendship with a political operative of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai. This man induced him to go with him to Shanghai, but there Choe found himself disappointed by the state of affairs at the provisional government. Later he was involved in the communist movement and gained some military experience in the course of the struggle. Nevertheless, instead of helping to recover his nation's sovereignty, which he had intended to do when leaving the homeland, he got more and more involved in the Chinese revolution. In those days the young Koreans active in China proper pinned great hopes on the Chinese revolution.

Recollecting those days, he said: "Although I took pride in making revolution for another country, I somehow could not get rid of the sad feeling of being pushed to the sidelines. Sometimes I tried to rationalize my actions by convincing myself that the Chinese revolution meant the Korean revolution, and vice versa. Nevertheless, I could not help feeling misgivings that I was running away from the situation in the homeland."

When Sun Yat-sen tried to overthrow the Beijing warlord government and establish a people's revolutionary government through the Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation, advocating alliance with the Soviet Union and with the communists, and assistance to the workers and peasants, Choe Yong Gon took an active part in that struggle. He said that he thought that a favorable situation for winning Korea's independence would be created if the people's revolutionary forces succeeded in their expedition to the north and seized Northeast China. However, things did not turn out as he had expected.

After Sun Yatsen's death, Chiang Kaisek undermined the Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation, and

massacred communists. He did not take nationalities into consideration in suppressing communists, and during this massacre a large number of Koreans were killed in China proper.

At this time, Choe Yong Gon had many close shaves. He fled China proper to northern Manchuria to escape the whirlwind of the bloody massacre. Choe regretted having gone straight to northern Manchuria instead of going to Jiandao at that time and said it was because he had lost his bearings.

"If I had gone to Jiandao, I would have met you, Commander Kim, earlier and have been some help to the Korean revolution. I will always regret it."

I said to him: "I also regret very much my failure to join hands with military experts like you, Choe Yong Gon, earlier. If people like Kim Chaek and you had been in eastern Manchuria, we would have done more work for the Korean revolution. But let bygones be bygones. It is because the hard core like you kindled the flames of the anti-Japanese struggle in northern Manchuria that you were able to revolutionize the Koreans residing there and develop the movement to form the anti-Japanese allied army. The revolutionization of the masses is the fundamental preparation for the Korean revolution.

This will also be favorable for the Chinese revolution. Let us not consider the Korean revolution and the Chinese revolution in isolation. As long as we make revolution on Chinese territory, we cannot but attach importance to the joint struggle with the Chinese communists and to the common front with the Chinese anti-Japanese forces. What you have so far done in northern Manchuria is for the good of China's liberation as well as for the sake of Korea's liberation."

Choe Yong Gon said that what had troubled him most until then was loneliness. To my question as to why he had felt lonely, he replied that this was because the enemy was too strong and the future of the revolution seemed too dim. On top of that, as he had lived among Chinese, it was natural that he should have felt lonely. He said that, when he had felt extremely lonely, he had thought of the Korean communists fighting on Mt. Paektu. Hearing him, I could understand why he had sent his messengers to me four times.

Choe Yong Gon said he had felt great emotion when he was informed of the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF. He said that, having read the programme, he had thought he should go to Mt. Paektu and fight with us if he were to make a greater contribution to the Korean revolution. He added that, if this was impossible, he had made a resolve to strengthen ties with our unit at least.

I told him that I had organized the second expedition to northern Manchuria in 1935 in order to meet our Korean comrades-in-arms in northern Manchuria. That day Choe Yong Gon and I also talked about how we busied ourselves organizing armed ranks in eastern and northern Manchuria at the beginning of the 1930s.

Choe Yong Gon said that, though he had set up a training center and organized armed ranks among peasants in northern Manchuria, he had been anxious because the work of increasing the strength of the

force was not proceeding as he had intended. Saying that he had heard a long time before that I insisted upon all-people resistance, he asked me to tell him how I intended to mobilize all the people in resistance.

I said to him: "The actual situation of our country is that the majority of the Korean people eagerly desire a revival from their dire straits. If we arm them, we will have a large army amounting to hundreds of thousands. How do we intend to arm them? We intend to form, in various parts of the country, paramilitary organizations that will carry out armed activities while working. Workers' units will be organized in industrial districts, peasants' units in rural areas and students' units in towns and cities. Paramilitary corps and workers' shock brigades were already formed and had begun their activities in the northern areas of Korea in the latter half of the 1930s. We intend to form such organizations in all parts of the country in future. Who will form them? Hard cores that were trained in the anti-Japanese armed struggle will be dispatched to various regions."

I went on, "This is not something which will be realized in the distant future. The general trend of the world is now turning towards the ruin of Japanese imperialism. Although Japan is now carrying on a war against China alone, she may provoke a war on a larger scale sooner or later. Japan's present situation on this one front alone is hopeless. Therefore, if she sparks another war, it will bring about her ruin. The moment of our final showdown will assuredly come in a few years. When that moment comes, we should launch a fight to the death through all-people resistance by rousing all the resistance organizations across the country in cooperation with an all-out offensive of the KPRA, the main force of the Korean revolution. This is my plan for the operations for the liberation of the country and my line of winning independence by our own efforts."

Having listened to me, Choe Yong Gon said that he realized that his view on the people was wrong. He confessed, "Until now, I did not regard the people in the homeland as the people who would carry out the operations to liberate the country, considering them merely as people to be rescued. Only pioneers, not everybody, make revolution. It is true that the workers and peasants are the motive force of the revolution. However, how can all of them make revolution? The pioneers should present the people with a liberated country, shedding their blood. This was my view of the masses up until now. Hence, I attached more importance to military affairs than to political work for the revolutionization of the masses."

As our talk continued, Choe Yong Gon who had looked somber at first, cracked a smile from time to time. Coming to Khabarovsk, Choe Yong Gon said, he had been interested only in military cooperation with the Soviet Union, and had not given particular thought to arming the entire people of Korea or launching operations to liberate the country. He added that now that he had met me the way he should take was quite clear.

"Commander Kim, to be candid, I have been desirous of fighting on Mt. Paektu. I believe I can discharge my duty as a Korean only when I go there. I don't care what my rank will be there, that of a private or anything else. I only wish to fight under you on Mt. Paektu and be buried there," said Choe Yong Gon

tearfully.

"Now that we Korean revolutionaries, who were fighting scattered all over southern, eastern and northern Manchuria, have gathered in one place, let us not disperse any more, but fight for Korea with our hands joined more firmly." This is what I said on leaving Choe Yong Gon's quarters.

I got everlasting impressions from my meeting with Choe Yong Gon. What he said to me in tears expressed his long-cherished desire to make a direct contribution to the revolution in his own country even when he shared lodgings with the people of another country. What he said also expressed his keen desire to have one central figure and make the revolution by our own efforts, uniting around him. This wish and desire were not confined to Choe Yong Gon. They were common to all the Korean communists in southern, eastern and northern Manchuria.

The fact that Choe Yong Gon so earnestly desired to fight on Mt. Paektu was the expression of his trust in and expectation from me, as well as the manifestation of his patriotism to make the Korean revolution and die for Korea. The greater part of Choe Yong Gon's desire was met spontaneously by the organization of the JAF in later days. Since his first meeting with me in Khabarovsk, he had been with us. Finally, his wish to fight together with me on Mt. Paektu was met in this way.

Kang Kon was also among my comrades-in-arms from northern Manchuria whom I met in the Far East region.

Prior to the formation of the IAF, I met Kang Kon during my stay in Camp North. He was so delighted to see me that all the military and political cadres of the 2nd and 3rd Route Armies present there were surprised. Among the military and political cadres in northern Manchuria only Zhou Bao-zhong and some other commanding officers from the 5th Corps knew the relationship between Kang Kon and me.

Kang Kon and I were old acquaintances. When I was in Manchuria I met him once during our first expedition to northern Manchuria and another time during the second expedition to that place. He had been active as the political commissar of the 9th Regiment, 3rd Division, 5th Corps since 1938. Judging from the fact that he had become a regimental political worker soon after his enlistment, I could guess how great was the trust he enjoyed.

After we adopted our policy of small-unit activities at the Xiaohaerbaling conference, the 5th Corps also reorganized its structure. Kang Kon was then appointed political commissar of the Guard Company under the direct control of the General Headquarters of the 2nd Route Army. The head of the Guard Company was Park Rak Kwon. Whenever I met the messengers frequenting northern Manchuria, I inquired after Kang Kon, and each time I was told he was fighting well. He was well-known in the 5th Corps as a promising commander.

He made a name for himself in only two or three years after his enlistment. This was possible not only because he fought well, but also because he loved the people dearly. It is said that people were very

attached to him, regarding him as a straightforward and honest man. Whenever he entered a village in command of his unit, the villagers warmly welcomed him, saying that Political Commissar Kang had come. Moreover, they vied with each other in imploring him to admit their children to his unit. The popularity of his unit was so great because it was said that Kang Kon's men had a strong sense of organization and discipline.

Kang Kon displayed his talent and ability as a military commander to the full. His military talent was displayed more conspicuously when we employed small-unit activities. Kang Kon was particularly good at ambushing and derailing trains. Once he derailed a train carrying only Japanese officers. During the period of small-unit activities he dealt heavy blows to the enemy by derailing trains and demolishing railway bridges, roads and arsenals.

On the day of my reunion with Kang Kon we unburdened our hearts on the bank of the Amur for many hours. He lived with us from the time when the IAF were organized. The house in which Kang Kon, I and some others lived was called a tori house in those days. The leading commanders of the allied forces lived in this house. A tori house was a cylindrical building common in Siberia in those days. In this type of house, rooms were arranged around the corridor.

In later days I talked with Kang Kon on a number of occasions. Flawless in thinking and practice, he talked in an amusing way. Some people regarded him as a dry and strict commander, but they said that because they did not know him well. Kang Kon was cool-headed and lucid, as well as simple and honest. Yet he was sentimental and kindhearted, too. He did not gild his assertions or views, but frankly talked about what he ordinarily thought without embellishing anything.

Kang Kon talked a great deal about his native place, Sangju, in North Kyongsang Province. He said he had left Sangju when he was ten years old. Although he had left his native place at such a young age, he still described it vividly and pined for it. At that time Kang Kon said several times that Sangju was famous for liquor and silk. According to him, it was also a big producer of persimmons.

Whenever he talked about the liquor, persimmons and silk of Sangju as well as about the Raktong River and Mt. Sokri, his eyes became moist. Although outwardly dry and cool-headed, he could not control his emotion, like a poet, and became more talkative than usual once he started talking about his native place. He recollected with sorrow his elder sister, whom he had left with another family as the future wife for their son.

Those who love their native places as ardently as Kang Kon did his, will be enthusiastic in making revolution. One who loves his birthplace Warmly will love his country ardently, and such a man will be enthusiastic about making revolution. The acquaintance between Kang Kon and me developed into warm comradely love in the days of the LAF. What I admired in Kang Kon in particular was his extraordinary military eye and a high sense of responsibility. He possessed exhaustive military knowledge. Whenever we debated a military operation, he expressed his opinion enthusiastically. His assertions were unique and had profound meaning.

Kang Kon was good at Chinese and Russian. He started learning Russian after he came to Camp North. Before long, he was able to converse with Soviet officers and read the Military Regulations of the Soviet Union published in Russian. Both the Soviet and Chinese peoples admired his clear head. He invented and used his own abbreviations for Chinese characters. Kim Chaek rejoiced over Kang Kon's development more than anyone else. At one time they were teacher and student. When he was active in Ning'an, Kim Chaek taught at a private school for some time, and Kang Kon studied there.

"Sin Thae was considered a genius in his private school days. He could already recite The Three Warring Kingdoms in those days," said Kim Chaek. Sin Thae was Kang Kon's real name. Although Kim Chaek and Kang Kon were former teacher and student, they were like twins so far as their qualities were concerned. In his lifetime Kim Chaek was famous for being straightforward and honest. Kang Kon also possessed these qualities in equal measure. So far as the principles and abilities of the two men were concerned, they were similar.

When Kang Kon was Chief of General Staff after liberation, many of his subordinates were older than he was and quite a few of them had longer revolutionary careers than he had. However, all of them were reserved towards him because they knew well that he was a man of strong revolutionary principles. Kang Kon did not make the least concession to anyone as far as principles were concerned. He did not forgive those who abandoned their principles, even though they might be his close relatives.

Comrade Kim Jong Il stresses to officials the need to learn from Kang Kon's loyalty to the Party and the leader as well as from his revolutionary principles. He is right. Kang Kon was a talented official worthy of being followed by our successors, as well as an attractive military commander. He was killed in action at a too young age. If he had lived, he would have done a lot more work for the building of the armed forces.

Kang Kon was devoted to the revolution to the last moment of his life. He did not have any rest throughout his life. After Japan's defeat he could not return to Korea, his homeland, as he was helping the Chinese revolution. He took part in the operations to liberate Northeast China as commander of the Jidong military sub-district.

Kang Kon formed many units with Koreans during the operations to liberate Northeast China. It is said that the number of Koreans who took part in these operations amounted to 250,000. Kang developed stomach trouble owing to overwork. When he worked as chief of Camp No. 2 of the Security Officers Training Center back home, he had a lot of trouble because of a gastric ulcer. In those days he never ate regular meals, and I made sure that at banquets he was not plied with strong drinks.

Kang Kon accomplished great exploits in the building of the people's armed forces. The military achievements of our People's Army in the first stage of the war, such as the victories in the battles to liberate Seoul and Taejeon, are largely associated with Kang Kon. After the People's Army advanced into the area around the Raktong River, Kang Kon reported the situation on the frontline to me. In the middle of his report he said that in a few days he would be able to reach Sangju, his native place, and meet his

elder sister. However, to our regret, he was killed in action not far from his native place in September 1950.

Kang Kon was a talented official. He was at home both in political and military affairs. He was 32 years old when he fell in action. Even the Soviet people envied us for having a young Chief of General Staff. It was really a tragedy that Kang Kon died at such a young age.

We awarded the title of Hero of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Kang Kon. In order to preserve his achievements for posterity, we named the First Central Military Academy the Kang Kon Military Academy. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic, we had a bronze statue erected to Kang Kon's memory in the city of Sariwon. It is really regrettable that we have lost Kang Kon. I frequently think of him even now.

When they were going to the training base in the Far East region, all the anti-Japanese fighters from eastern Manchuria wanted to meet those Koreans who had fought in northern Manchuria. It is said that those from northern Manchuria also felt the same.

When I went to Camp North for the first time, all the Korean soldiers from northern Manchuria came out of their barracks and welcomed me. The overwhelming majority of them were strangers to me. When I was about to leave Camp North, they were reluctant to let me go. It seems like only yesterday.

Korean fighters from northern Manchuria treated those from eastern Manchuria as if they had come from their native country. There was no difference between northern and eastern Manchuria in that they both belonged to Manchurian territory. Nevertheless, eastern Manchuria is considerably nearer to Korea than northern Manchuria. Eastern Manchuria was developed by Koreans, and Koreans pioneered the revolution there. So it was not unreasonable that all of them regarded eastern Manchuria as part of their homeland.

Anti-Japanese fighters from eastern Manchuria had advanced into the homeland in company with me on several occasions. Therefore, it was natural for people from northern Manchuria to treat us as people from their homeland. When I went to Camp North for the first time, Kim Ryong Hwa was noticeable for his impressive moustache. Next to him was Choe Yong Jin, a big joker. He also grew his moustache. He stepped forward and introduced his fellows one after another. He did not stick to formality and was so light-hearted that I did not feel at all that he was a stranger to me.

When introducing people, he explained the characteristics of each of them briefly. For instance, he described Kang Sang Ho as having a marvelous memory, Kim Ryong Hwa and Kim Tae Hong as crack shots, Jang Sang Ryong, Kim Ji Myong and Jon Pong So as being nimble and diligent, Kim Jung Dong as having a quick eye and Ryu Ung Sam as an expert fanner. I found out later that his descriptions were accurate.

Kang Sang Ho had a clear head, Kim Ryong Hwa and Kim Tae Hong were crack shots, and Jang Sang

Ryong, Kim Ji Myong, Jon Pong So, Park U Sop and Kim Yang Chun were diligent and honest people who did any tasks assigned to them immediately, without putting them off. When he was at the training base in the Far East region, Jang Sang Ryong ran errands frequently between Kim Chaek and me.

Ryu Ung Sam was well-informed about farming. When he was in northern Manchuria, he was in charge of farming in the guerrilla zone. At Camp North, too, he took part in all the affairs of the sideline farm. At one time he worked as chief of the sideline farming department in the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces.

In those days I also met Choe Min Chol and Lee Jong San. The latter was the youngest of the men in northern Manchuria. When Choe Yong Jin reminded us of how Lee Jong San had fallen down from his bed at the sound of a shot announcing an emergency call, all of us held our sides, laughing.

Women soldiers who came from northern Manchuria had an openhearted character in general. There are many vast plains in northern Manchuria. It seems that if people live in a wide area, their character also becomes open-hearted. They were all adept at riding. Among the women soldiers from northern Manchuria, Park Kyong Suk and Park Kyong Ok were the best wireless operators and Wang Ok Hwan was the best horse rider. Lee Suk Jong was also said to be good at riding. Ho Chang Suk, Jon Sun Hui and Jang Hi Suk were outstanding members of the sewing unit. Lee Kye Hyang was a crack shot.

Whenever he introduced his colleagues, Choe Yong Jin put in a vainglorious phrase and in doing so, each time his face would bear a funny expression, provoking a smile. In my days in West Jiandao I had occasionally heard that Choe Yong Jin was a funny man. However, when I met him personally, I found him to be wittier than I had expected.

It was well-known even to the men of the main force that Choe Yong Jin was a famous fighter and a bold man. He became renowned as a valorous fighter since he displayed courage in the battle to annihilate high-ranking officers of the Japanese "punitive" force and their men who were on an inspection tour in a motorboat.

Choe Yong Jin was strong in his revolutionary principles. Once, when he was a regimental or a company commander in northern Manchuria, he visited his father who was serving as a Self-defense Corps member, in order to obtain provisions for his unit. His father had originally been an anti-Japanese independence fighter who fought in the Independence Army. When he came back home following the breakup of the Independence Army, the enemy drafted him into the Self-defense Corps to employ him in disrupting and alienating Koreans.

When Choe Yong Jin told his father that his unit was undergoing hardships because of a lack of provisions and asked him to give some food grain, the latter flatly refused, saying there was no grain to give him. To tell the truth, Choe Yong Jin's family had several acres of land and plenty of grain. Though his family was not very rich, it could get along without having to eat gruel for supper. I am not sure whether Choe Yong Jin's father refused to give grain to show to other members of the Self-defense Corps



that he was not in collusion with the guerrilla army.

Hot-tempered Choe Yong Jin was enraged to hear his father's answer. He said to him: "How can you, Father, who served in the Independence Army, behave like that? You, more than anyone else, should give us assistance, shouldn't you? The anti-Japanese guerrillas are suffering every hardship in order to oust the Japanese imperialist robbers and win back the lost country. Those who do not help the guerrillas shedding blood in the fight for the restoration of the country, are traitors who have no concern for the country and the nation."

Probably Choe Yong Jin's father was greatly shocked by what his son had said. Anyway, he gave his son 15 cartloads of grain. In later days, too, he procured a large amount of grain and weapons and sent them to the guerrillas. Although he was a member of the Self-defense Corps, he invariably assisted the guerrilla army without abandoning the patriotism and fidelity of his bygone days when he had followed the independence Army with a rifle in his hand. Later, the Japanese killed him.

In the days of the IAF, Choe Yong Jin was a company commander in our contingent. Even the Soviet soldiers admired his company, the 1st Company, because it led others in all respects. He was well-known as an exacting, competitive and hard-working commander. After liberation he fought well against spies and saboteurs to defend Pyongyang. He also worked conscientiously to train the hard cores of the regular armed forces at the Pyongyang Institute and the Central Security Officers School. When he was Minister of Fisheries, there were bumper harvests of fish. At one time he was a Vice-Premier.

At the training base I held a touching reunion with the fighters whom we had sent to northern Manchuria when we were active in eastern Manchuria. Among them were Choe Kwang, Kim Kyong Sok, Jon Chang Chol, Park Rak Kwon, Kim Ok Sun and An Jong Suk. On seeing me, Choe Kwang burst into tears, saying he had not seen me for such a long time. When he stopped crying, he said, "General, even in northern Manchuria, I always looked towards Mt. Paektu, where you were. Now I will never go to another unit even if you send me back forcibly." Following the formation of the IAF, he became a platoon leader.

I met Choe Kwang for the first time when he was head of the Children's Bureau. At that time he brought an art troupe of the Children's Corps to me, and they gave a performance. Around the time we left for our first expedition to northern Manchuria, he gave up his work as head of the Children's Bureau and joined the young volunteers' corps. He said that until that time he had thought that when a rifle was fired, a bullet flew out together with the cartridge. As soon as he joined the corps, he became a platoon leader.

I remember how, when a battle at Diaomiaotai began, he stationed his platoon on the hill west of Yaoyinggou to guard me. Later on, he took part in the Battle of Laoheishan. Before he came to the Far East region, he was a platoon leader of the guard unit at the headquarters of Zhou Bao-zhong's 5th Corps. I was told that Zhou Bao-zhong was very fond of Choe Kwang.

Because of this, Zhou Bao-zhong asked us to give him Kang Kon, Choe Kwang and Park Rak Kwon first

of all when he was selecting people needed for the operations against the Japanese in Northeast China. When they went to Northeast China, Kang Kon became commander of a military sub-district and Choe Kwang, Park Rak Kwon and Nam Chang Su, regimental commanders.

The area of activities for Choe Kwang's regiment was Wangqing County. In the days of Manchukuo they built their unit and waged battles eating the sorghum stored up by the Japanese. At that time some people complained that there were too many troops organized by Choe Kwang and others. They claimed that only 200 troops were allowed to be kept in the county. Therefore, Choe Kwang continued to recruit people into the army in the rural areas outside the county seat. The armed ranks organized by our comrades in those days made, in later days, a major contribution to the building of the army in our country, not to speak of the operations to liberate Northeast China. Choe Kwang's unit made great military achievements in Dunhua, too. Engaged in battles on one hand, on the other they formed Party and mass organizations.

We recalled Choe Kwang to the homeland in the early autumn of 1946, instructing him to choose his best men and bring them with him. He came home with some 200 others whom he had chosen. On the day of their arrival in Pyongyang, Kim Chaek and Mu Jong went to the railway station to meet them. At the news of Choe Kwang's arrival, Kim Jong Suk prepared a special meal for him.

After his return home, Choe Kwang worked as chief of staff of camp No.1 of the Security Officers Training Center. He took part in the Fatherland Liberation War as commander of the 1st Division of the Korean People's Army. He has performed great deeds for the building of our army.

He was faithful both as a man and a warrior. When the Pueblo incident occurred, he ate his meals and slept in his office for a year without returning home because of the tense situation. He faithfully assisted the Party and the leader with a pure heart all his life. He has experienced twists and turns and has suffered greatly in the course of the revolution. However, he has always been loyal. Choe Kwang is one of the military officers whom I treasure and love most.

Comrade Kim Jong Il also trusts him very much, loves him dearly and gives him prominence. His great trust in and love for Choe Kwang can be clearly seen from the fact that, after he was acclaimed as the Supreme Commander, he appointed the latter, now in his seventies, Chief of General Staff of the Korean People's Army.

When I was going to the training base in the Far East region, I thought I would also meet Park Kul Song and Ho Hyong Sik without fail. However, to my deep regret, my meeting with them was not realized because both of them had been killed in action in northern Manchuria. Ho Hyong Sik was one of the founders of the Zhuhe guerrilla army. Kim Chaek talked a lot about Ho, as indeed did all the fighters from northern Manchuria.

From Kim Chaek's stories about Ho Hyong Sik I still remember the episode in which, during a winter march to Jiangnan, Ho stood guard as a punishment on his own accord. That march was said to have

been unusually arduous. With a view to lessening the men's fatigue, Ho Hyong Sik had commanders stand sentinel and he himself kept guard. They had no watches in those days. Therefore, they measured the time by burning sticks of incense. When one stick was burnt out, it was considered to be time to relieve the sentry.

One night it was Ho Hyong Sik's turn to stand sentinel in front of the camp gate, but he failed to relieve the sentry by mistake. The following morning he criticized himself in front of his men and at night he stood guard as a punishment on his own accord. Seeing the chief of staff standing sentry as a punishment, one man felt extremely sorry for him and broke his incense stick in half.

When he came to know this, Ho Hyong Sik said to the man: "I am grateful to you for being considerate towards me, your commander. However, you have overlooked one important thing. There cannot be dual standards of discipline in the revolutionary ranks. Once a routine is established, everyone should observe it without exception. Only then will discipline prevail throughout the ranks. Let us both stand sentry tonight as a punishment and each reflect on our wrongs."

It is said that he stood sentry as a punishment that night again. Ho Hyong Sik received word from Kim Chaek to come to the training base as soon as possible. Even after that, Ho put off his departure for the base to finish the planned operations. He was killed in action before he managed to go to the base. No success of any military operations could make up for the loss of such a fine commander as Ho Hyong Sik. The death of Ho Hyong Sik was indeed a grievous loss to us who were planning the operations for the liberation of the country.

Park Kil Song had been active in Wangqing before he went to northern Manchuria and served as commander of a contingent. Under the influence of Oh Jung Hwa, he took part in the "harvest and spring struggle" of the early 1930s at a young age. Park Tok Sim, Park Kil Song's father, rented a farm and at the same time he worked as a boatman. I knew that old man well. On many occasions he carried on his boat the goods people sent to our unit.

When he was head of the Children's Bureau, Park Kil Song frequented my office. So we made friends with each other very quickly. He was very hard-working. He was not contented with the work as head of the Children's Bureau. He always sought a chance to join the army. And, when we were leaving for our second expedition to northern Manchuria, he badgered me to allow him to join us.

I denied his request and sent him to Luozigou as a political operative. The revolutionary masses who had lived in the guerrilla areas of Wangqing and Hunchun gathered there. Park Kil Song was a suitable man for protecting them. He was proficient at work with the masses. In later days, I heard about Park Ku Song several times through messengers.

Park Kil Song went to northern Manchuria because his identity had been disclosed in the area of Luozigou. After he had been flogged in prison, he was released on sick bail. He got away from Luozigou in search of our unit. Although he was young, he struggled well in prison. From the time he was crossing

the Laoyeling Pass, Park Ku Song underwent great hardships to find out our whereabouts. It is said that after some time he joined a unit which was active in the neighborhood of Xiaolaidipan, Ningan County.

Park Kil Song assumed the heavy responsibility of commander of a contingent when he was still in his twenties. He was a model in the activities of the Communist Youth League. In the days when he was commander of a contingent, Lee Jong San was his orderly. Park Kil Song's contingent was renowned as a unit which was good at fighting. His contingent had cavalry. I was told that the enemy dreaded the cavalry very much. Having wound up all the work that had been planned, Park Kil Song was on his way to the Far East region. However, he was arrested and killed by the enemy.

Lee Jong San received the news by wireless and ran to me. During the march Park Kil Song engaged in a fierce fight against the enemy and was badly wounded. He fell unconscious and the enemy dragged him away. If he had come to the Far East region soon after receiving our message, such a thing would not have happened. It is truly regrettable.

When we brought Park Kil Song's father, who had been living in Luozigou, to Pyongyang to live here, Choe Kwang and Kim Ok Sun wanted to take the old man to their home and support him there. So they began to follow the necessary procedure. However, Kim Il happened to learn about this, and asserted that he should support the old man in view of their relationship in the days of the small-unit operations.

The news of the two families maintaining that they should each support the old man reached my ears. Kim Il asked me to make a decision on the matter. I was satisfied with the noble humanity of the first generation of our revolution and said to Kim Il: "Park Kil Song's father is not only the father of Kim Il, Choe Kwang and Kim Ok Sun. The old man is the father of us all, and all of us are his sons and daughters. Therefore, let us all support the old man on behalf of Park Kil Song." We made arrangements for the old man to live in one of the good houses on the bank of the Pothong River in which ministers and vice-ministers lived in those days.

There would be no end to it if I were to talk about all my comrades-in-arms in our days in northern Manchuria. When I was at the training base in the Far East region, I also met the fighters from northern Manchuria who, as the special detachment of the IAF, took part in joint reconnaissance with the Soviet troops. Hong Chun Su was one of them.

Hong was in the Independence Army for some time, and visited such places as Pyongyang, Kangso, Anak and Sariwon to carry out a series of fund-raising activities. He was a crack shot and was good at reconnoitering. During the operations to liberate the country, he fought on the frontline.

The Korean communists who were part of the IAF had formerly fought in southern, eastern or northern Manchuria. Nevertheless, they were firmly united in ideology and will, and powerfully accelerated the final victory of the Korean revolution. The Laoyeling Pass is on the boundary between eastern, southern and northern Manchuria. However, that mountain pass could not draw a line of demarcation in the hearts of Korean communists. All of them wished to go to Mt. Paektu and fight with us even if they were to die

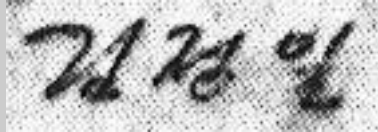
in the course of this.

Their unanimous wish to fight on Mt. Paektu became the factor that ensured the unity of ideology and will among our ranks. It was a great inspiration for us as we strengthened our own forces for the Korean revolution.

# Nurturing the Root of the Revolution

How Kim Jong Il became the heir

From [With the Century - Kim Il Sung's Memoirs](#)



**Lee Wha Rang note:** South Korean news organs have published interviews with a Russian midwife who claims that she had delivered Kim Jong Il at Vyatskoye near Khabarovsk (Kim Il Sung's 88th International Brigade - IAF - was based near this town). Another 73-year old Russian woman, Augusta Sergeyevna, a lifetime resident of this town, claims that Kim Jong Il and a twin brother were born there and that the twin brother fell into a well and drowned, whose grave is still there.

The fact of the matter is that it was Sura, Kim Jong Il's younger brother, who was born at the camp, most likely delivered by the Russian midwife. It is true that Shura drowned - but in July 1947 in Pyongyang. It may be that Sergeyevna's memory got fogged up with age and she has Yura (Kim Jong Il's Russian nickname) and Shura mixed up with some other kids. After all, there were several Korean and Chinese married partisans with kids at the camp.

Kim Il Sung went to Siberia in November 1940 to a Soviet training base near the town of Voroshilov. It was for retraining and reequipping the battered remnants of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army (KPRA) and the 1st Route Army of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army (NAJAA). Kim Il Sung married Kim Jung Suk at this camp in 1941. In the Spring of 1941, they moved into Manchuria and the homeland for guerrilla actions. Kim Jong Il was born in February 1942 at a camp near Mt. Baiktu. Kim Jong Suk and other women guerrillas used this base to transmit intelligence data to the 88th HQ.

In the summer of 1942, Kim Il Sung moved back to Siberia and joined the newly formed Soviet Army International Allied Forces - IAF and settled down at Camp North, located near Khabarovsk. It was also called Camp A by the anti-Japanese fighters. IAF was made of KPRA, NAJAA and Soviet Army volunteers. Some Western historians overlook the return of Kim Il Sung to Manchuria and Mt. Baiktu in 1941 after getting resupplied and retrained by the Soviet Army in 1940-41.

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Revolution does not only mean struggle; it means both struggle and life. Fusing struggle and life and

creating a beautiful life through struggle, thus achieving social progress and prosperity, is the revolution that communists aspire to.



*Lee Wha Rang Photo: Kim Il Sung and Kim Jung Suk - wedding day in 1941 in Siberia. Kim and a small entourage went to Siberia to attend a conference convened by Comintern. The secret conference lasted from December 1940 to March 1941. When the conference broke up over the issue of command structure, Kim Il Sung led his guerrillas -- rested, equipped with modern machines -- back to Manchuria and Mt. Baiktu area. In the Summer of 1942, Kim led his group back to Siberia and joined the Soviet Army International Allied Forces ( IAF) - commonly referred to as the 88th Brigade.*

Even amid hardships that are beyond human imagination, the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters created a noble and beautiful life that only communists can conceive of, and built a morally ideal community everywhere they went. While struggling, they loved and married. There were poems, songs, tears and laughter in their lives.

Entering the 1940s, our revolution flourished, acquiring new meaning and content. The birth of the second generation of our revolution gave us fresh hope and delight in the decade when we were advancing towards the final victory of the anti-Japanese revolution. Kim Jong Il was born at dawn on February 16, 1942, at a Paektu secret camp near Ganpaik-san. His birth was the most auspicious event in my life. From the bottom of our hearts, Kim Jong Suk and I blessed Kim Jong Il, who was born as a man of Korea, amidst the roar of gunfire on the battlefield.



*Lee Wha Rang Photo: Kim Jong Il at age 4 (April 1946 ).*

When he was born, I thought how glad my father and mother would have been if they had been alive! They would have loved him as dearly as my grandfather and grandmother had loved me. People say that one loves one's grandchildren more dearly than one's own children. But Kim Jong Il's grandparents died long ago. He had great-grandparents, but as they were in my hometown far away, I could not let them know about the birth of their great-grandson.

In my childhood, I basked in the love of all my family. Every member of the family of ten took

loving care of me as the centerpiece of the family. The villagers' love for me was also great. They must have taken care of me more kind-heartedly probably because I was an offspring of a family devoted to the independence movement.

But Kim Jong Il did not enjoy such love. There were no neighboring houses in the area of the Paektu secret camp and the training base in the Soviet Far East region where he spent most of his early childhood. We spent our youth in log-cabins or in tents with no address, and sometimes in the open covered with snow and ice. In his childhood Kim Jong Il lived among soldiers. He was loved by my comrades-in-arms, even though they were not his family. He grew up in the love of the guerrillas more than in my love.



*Lee Wha Rang Photo: Kim Jong Il at age 5 (1947). In July 1947, Kim's 3-year old younger brother - Shura - drowned in a water retainer pond near their house in Pyongyang.*

The guerrillas did not hide their delight at his birth, saying that he would make another General on Mt. Paektu. Kim Chaek always called him "Little General". Seeing a new generation of our revolution born in the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution and growing up as vigorously as the birch trees on Mt. Paektu, all the soldiers of the KPRA became convinced of the bright future of the Korean revolution and, with strength, courage and fighting will increased one thousand fold, fought even more staunchly to liberate their country.

Seeing my comrades-in-arms regarding his birth as an auspicious event for everyone, and their loving care for him, I warmly felt that their genuine love for my family was being handed down to the next generation. As I said before, I have lived all my life in the love of my comrades. I owe to these comrades and the people all my ability to lead the revolution and construction in good health until now.

Since taking leave of my mother at the age of 14, I have lived among the people and my comrades. In the days of the anti-Japanese revolution, in the days of building a new country, and in the days of the Fatherland Liberation War, my comrades faithfully helped and protected me without wavering. They became human shields, protecting me from bullets, from rain and snow, and from illness. Whenever my spirits sank, they inspired me with strength. Whenever I was exhausted or in pain, the first thing I did was call on my comrades and the people. They gave me fresh strength, opened blocked roads for me and inspired me with confidence that I could perform any task, however difficult.





*Lee Wha Rang Photo: Kim Jong Il, age 6, with mother (Kim Jong Suk) and father (Kim Il Sung) in 1948.*

Now I will tell you about an event in our life at the training base in the Soviet Far East region.

In the winter of the year in which the IAF were organized and we stayed at Camp North, it snowed heavily in the Soviet region and in Manchuria. The snowfall was so heavy that even wild animals would come to human habitations in search of food. Traffic was held up for days by the knee-deep snow.

At that time Kim Il, who had been on a small-unit mission, returned to the camp with a sack of rice and met Kim Jong Suk. Saying that he had obtained the rice because bread, not rice, was the staple food in the camp, he asked Kim Jong Suk to serve the Commander with cooked rice at each meal and not to use it for any other purpose. It was not the first time that Kim Il had obtained rice for me. Though he ate uncrushed maize everyday,

he always tried to have cooked rice for me without fail.

Each time the supply department rationed out rice in small amounts, Ryu Kyong Su would give his ration to Kim Jong Suk, saying she should cook rice for me without saying anything about it. The revolutionary camaraderie and communist morality between my comrades-in-arms and me was expressed after Kim Jong Il's birth as moral obligation for Kim Jong Suk and Kim Jong Il. Soon after Kim Jong Il's birth, Kim Jong Suk made clothes for him by shortening some of our uniforms.

The circumstances were no different when we were at the training base. In those days the Soviet people were not eating their fill, because of the war. Their slogan was to eat little, sleep little and wear humble clothes. So it was impossible to obtain clothes, quilts or bonnets for the baby. The women guerrillas gathered bits of cloth and patched them together into a quilt. Kim Jong Il used that quilt until the day of national liberation.



*Lee Wha Rang Photo: Kim Jong Il at age 6 - 1948.*

Whenever they saw my son under that quilt, my comrades-in-arms felt very sorry for him. That sight weighed on Lim Chun Chu so heavily that when he returned to the motherland for a holiday while working in Northeast China after Korea's liberation, he brought with him 500 blankets and gave them to Kim Jong Suk and me as a present. We donated all the blankets to the Mangyongdae Revolutionary School.

The circumstances were very difficult, but the soldiers of the KPRA looked after Kim Jong Suk and Kim Jong Il with the utmost devotion. The women guerrillas especially took much trouble. They lent willing hands to Kim Jong Suk. From his childhood, Kim Jong Il followed the army closely and liked the world of soldiers. So when they met him, my comrades would put their army caps on his head. Some carved pistols out of pieces of wood while working in the enemy area and gave them as presents to Kim Jong Il.

When we were staying in the Far East region, my house was situated near our barracks, unlike at the Paektu secret camp; so when they were at leisure after training and on holidays many soldiers called at my house and played with Kim Jong Il, teaching him to walk, giving him rides on their shoulders and teaching him songs. Sometimes they would take him to the Amur River and show him ships cruising up and down and the migratory birds flying away.

Kim Jong Il had an unusual start to his life, as born to guerrillas, he grew up in clothes impregnated with powder smoke, eating army rations and hearing shouts of military command. He was upright and full of guts from his boyhood, partly because he was endowed with these qualities, but more importantly because he grew up valiantly, free from constraint, learning the truth of life and struggle, among the fighters who had the strongest sense of justice and strongest faith in the world.

He was precocious, probably because he grew up under the influence of the guerrillas. Their noble feelings and emotions became rich nourishment for his mind and their mettle, as soaring as the peak of Mt. Paektu, added flesh and blood to his manly personality. Men soldiers were no less enthusiastic about helping Kim Jong Suk and Kim Jong Il. They would visit my house and try their best to do something for Kim Jong Suk. As was the case in the Paektu secret camp, at the training base in the Far East region nourishing food was not readily available. Everybody was leading a hard life, tightening their belts; even though one wanted to help others, it was often impossible to do so.



*Lee Wha Rang Photo: August 1948 - from left to right: Soviet Army Gen. Lebedev's son, Kim Jong Il; front row, Kim's younger sister, Kim Gyong Hee - at the Kwangwon-do Whajinpo Resort. Kim Gyong Hee is a member of the Supreme People's Council and her husband, Jang Sung Taek, has held key positions in North Korea.*

At this time, Lim Chun Chu and many others would save little by little the bread rationed out to them and gave it to Kim Jong Suk. Everybody went hungry to assist the front fighting against the German invaders, but they gave bread to her every day. Kim Jong Suk would eat part of the bread and keep the remainder before giving it back to them.

Once Lim Chun Chu went to Manchuria carrying a radio set on a mission. Keeping radio contact with Headquarters, he conducted political work for some months. He performed his mission with credit, and when he returned to the training base, he brought dozens of chicken eggs with him. It was very far from our training base to the place of his political work and, worse still, the path was not a paved avenue; it was a path through a forest of bayonets. How difficult it must have been for him to carry a bundle full of eggs while carrying a wireless set at the same time in the shadow of death! When he appeared in front of us with the eggs, I was truly moved by his devotion to Kim Jong Suk and Kim Jong Il.

As a matter of fact, Lim Chun Chu and Kim Jong Suk had been friends for a long time. When Kim Jong Suk attended a night school in Fuyandong, Lim Chun Chu and Kwak Ji San taught there. Lim gave much medical help to the local people. Kim Jong Suk's family, too, received medical treatments from him. When she fell ill once, Lim Chun Chu had treated her, I was told. Not only in his days in the JAF but all his life, Lim Chun Chu did his best for the good of my family - Kim Jong Suk, Kim Jong Il and me.

When the country was liberated, he made every effort to find out the whereabouts of Kim Jong Suk's relatives. Regarding it as his duty to introduce the lives and exploits of Kim Jong Suk, my younger brother Kim Chol Ju (*Lee Wha Rang note: he joined a Chiang Kai Sek's guerrilla unit in Manchuria and died in a gun battle*) and Kim Jong Suk's younger brother Kim Ki Song to the younger generation, he collected materials on them for several years and on this basis wrote many books about them.

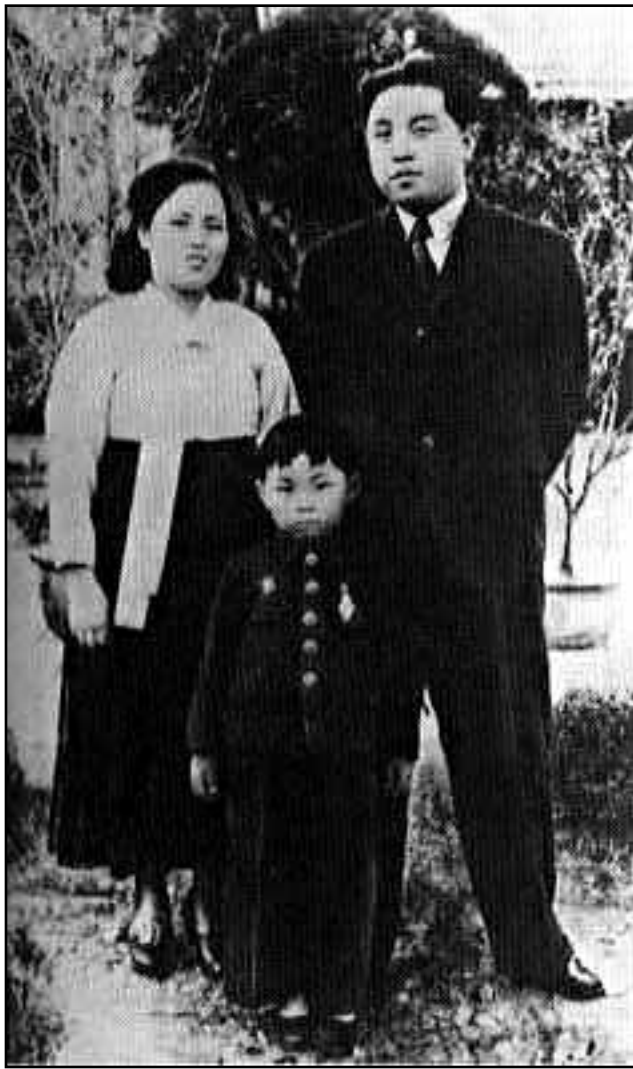


*Lee Wha Rang photo: Kim Jong Il with father and mother in April 1949, upon Kim Il Sung's return from a meeting with Stalin in Moscow. Kim's mother died of extopic pregnancy (extra uterine - the fetus growing outside her uterus) on September 22, 1949. In 1951, Kim Il Sung married his personal secretary, Kim Sung Ae. Kim Ok Sun, a woman guerrilla, married to Choe Kwang, cared for Kim Jung Il and his sister after their mother's death.*

He was a representative intellectual who helped me with knowledge while fighting with arms in hand. Endowed with profound knowledge, he made records right from the early days of the anti-

Japanese armed struggle. He started writing history when he took notes on my talk to the cadres of the Party and Young Communist League at Chaoyangchuan, Yanji County. From that time on, as a historian of the KPRA, he participated in important conferences such as those held at Nanhuton, Nanpaizi and Xiaohaerbaling, and made faithful records of them.

He contributed several articles to the publications connected with the Comintern. One year The Pacific carried an interview by its special correspondent with Lim Chun Chu. Reading the interview, I found out that he had boasted a lot about my unit to the correspondent of the magazine. Lim said the KPRA had succeeded in every battle because of wise planning, elusive tactics, promptness, accuracy and bravery. He also said that our soldiers were strong in the spirit of independence, cultured and optimistic. The correspondent wrote that Lim Chun Chu had contributed articles about the fighting achievements of the KPRA and the story of the heroic death of Kim Kum Sun.



*Lee Wha Rang photo: Summer of 1948 - Kim Jong Il with mother (Kim Jung Suk) and father (Kim Il Sung)*

Lim Chun Chu said to his comrades-in-arms now and then: "It is important to make use of our own publications. It is good to compile reports and documents for the Comintern; and it is also important to record the fighting achievements of the revolutionary army. But what is more important is to keep a systematic record of the history of Commander Kim in the communist movement and national liberation struggle of Korea. Poor as my writing skill is and shallow as my knowledge is, I will write Comrade Kim Il Sung's biography and hand it down to posterity." There were many in our guerrilla army who rendered services to the revolutionary cause with arms but few who, with a firm faith, made records of the history of the guerrilla army voluntarily and left them to posterity as Lim Chun Chu did.

Lim Chun Chu was an experienced political worker who had been engaged in Party work for a long time. This notwithstanding, we pay more tribute to him as a writer and historian than as a political worker because his achievement in formulating our revolutionary history is an incomparably great exploit. With rich materials he put our revolutionary

history in order and brought to it profound depth of thought. He could testify to the course of the anti-Japanese armed struggle because he kept a diary in those days. If Lim Chun Chu, a writer and historian, had not kept the materials on the anti-Japanese armed struggle, a great part of the history of our activities would never have seen the light of day.

He played a great role not only in systematizing our revolutionary history but in giving wide publicity to it. Doing Party work with the South Pyongan Provincial Party Committee after liberation he told Jo Ki Chon, Jong Kwan Chol and other intellectuals a lot about the Battle of Pochonbo and other activities of our anti-Japanese guerrillas. He rendered great service to enriching the archives of the history of our Party by writing books and many reminiscences on the revolutionary traditions. He swept away all obstacles to defend and brighten the revolutionary ideology and history of his leader and the revolutionary traditions of our Party.



*Lee Wha Rang photo: Kim Ok Sun, a woman guerrilla and wife of Marshal Choe Kwang, became Kim Jong Il's surrogate mother after his mother's sudden death in child birth in 1949.*

In our days in the IAF, he delivered political lectures on The Tasks of Korean Communists, a treatise I had written. Some of the foreign commanding personnel asked him to reconsider the matter of including the treatise in the curriculum. But he continued his lectures on the treatise, saying, "We have long acclaimed Commander Kim Il Sung as the leader of the Korean nation. What's all this fuss when I am giving lectures on my leader's work?" He showed great concern over my health.

When he was the secretary of the Party committee of a regiment, he once informed me about what had been discussed at a meeting. The decision was that I must not carry my knapsack with me. I admonished him, a man with many years of revolutionary service, for discussing such a thing at a meeting. He answered, "This is the will of the Party members. If they see you carrying a knapsack, other people will scorn us. You should accept the opinion of the masses."

He has been just as faithful to the leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Il as he was to mine. What, then, made him a revolutionary who respected his leader and the leader's successor so ardently and remained so faithful to their leadership? It was because he, like Kim Hyok, Cha Kwang Su and Kim Chaek, knew full well, from his life experience, the harmfulness of factions and felt to the marrow of his bones how precious the leader was.

Kim Jong Il regarded him highly as a member of the first generation of the revolution. He loved Lim Chun Chu and showed the utmost consideration for him. One year Lim, who had been ambassador to a foreign country, returned to the motherland after having a dispute with the authorities of that country over an issue of principle. The factionalists and worshippers of great powers who were entrenched in the Party raised a fuss that this matter should be called to account organizationally, saying it was an unprecedented diplomatic incident.



*Photo: Women guerrillas of Kim Il Sung. They cared for Kim Jong Il.*

But Kim Jong Il picked peaches in the garden of our house and sent them to him, saying that he had demonstrated the mettle of Korea to modern revisionists. He highly praised Lim Chun Chu for not only having authenticated, from the early days of his revolutionary activity, the struggle of many revolutionary fighters who had fought shoulder to shoulder with him, incorporating it in the historical treasure store of our Party, but also having finished the writing of *Reminiscences of the Days of the Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle*, a book worthy of

being considered a national treasure, while working as a diplomatic envoy in a foreign country, thus establishing and systematizing the anti-Japanese armed struggle as the history of our struggle, the history of the struggle of the KPRA.

While writing, Lim Chun Chu received much assistance and encouragement from Kim Jong Il. In the course of this, he was moved by Kim Jong Il's human appeal and followed and respected him as his mentor and leader. From that time on, he reported all problems arising in and out of his work to Kim Jong Il and acted according to his decisions. Wherever he went, he delivered public lectures and wrote books on Kim Jong Il's greatness.

In the late 1960s, when Lim Chun Chu was engaged in writing, the matter of succession to the revolutionary cause, especially the successor, became the focal point of argument and the demand of the times in the arena of the international communist movement. Choosing the right man as successor is a fundamental question that decides the future of the revolution and construction, the country and people. We can take many examples of revolutions and countries going to ruin because of having chosen wrong successors.

The basic factor that enabled the Soviet people to build their country into a world power in a short span of time after the October Revolution was that Lenin had chosen a good successor. Stalin, faithful comrade and disciple of Lenin, was loyal to the cause of his leader throughout his life. After Lenin's death, Stalin made a six-point pledge in front of his coffin. In the course of leading the revolution and construction subsequently he carried out all his pledges. When the German invaders were at the gates of Moscow, he had the other Politburo Members and cadres evacuated, but he himself remained in the Kremlin, commanding the fronts.



*Photo: Kim Il Sung women partisans at a Soviet camp. They made clothes for Kim Jung Il from their own wears and saved bread for him from their meager rations. Kim Jong Il's mother, Kim Jung Suk, is 2nd from right.*

When Stalin was alive, everything went well in the Soviet Union. But things began to go astray after Khrushchev came to power. Modern revisionism appeared in the Soviet Party, and the Soviet people began to suffer from ideological maladies. He forgot the

care with which his leader had brought him up: he vilified Stalin on the excuse of personality cult, expelled from the Political Bureau of the Party all the veteran revolutionaries loyal to Stalin and deprived them of their Party membership.

Once, while visiting the Lenin Mausoleum, Lim Chun Chu encountered Molotov on Red Square in Moscow, after he had been removed from office. Molotov advised him to carry forward the ideology and achievements of his leader faithfully without falling prey to revisionism, taking the precedent of the Soviet Party into consideration.



*Photo: Lim Chun Chu, trained in Oriental medicine, was the chief surgeon and unofficial historian of Kim Il Sung's partisans.*

At that time, Lim Chun Chu keenly realized that if the issue of successor was not settled properly, both the revolution and the Party would perish, he said later. As the bitter lessons of history teach us, the essential quality of the successor is his loyalty and moral duty to the leader and his cause. Loyalty to the leader cannot exist separated from moral obligation. Loyalty and moral duty to the leader are the first and foremost qualities his successor must possess.

Moreover, the successor needs high qualifications and ability to lead the revolutionary cause pioneered by the leader in accordance with his ideas and intentions. Our people marveled at the unusual ability and revolutionary principle Kim Jong Il displayed in establishing the leader's ideological and leadership system, and at his indomitable will and vigor, as well as the noble loyalty and filial devotion he showed in defending and putting into effect the leader's lines and plans. They have deeply realized that Kim Jong Il is the very successor capable of carrying forward the revolutionary cause of Juche and consummating it, true to their leader's ideas and intentions.

Our people have long respected and supported him. In supporting him, the veterans of the anti-Japanese revolution are in the van now as they were before. They have acclaimed him as the only successor to me because they are firmly convinced that only when he leads the Party, state and the armed forces can a



bright future be ensured for the nation, and the revolutionary cause of Juche pioneered on Mt. Paektu be carried forward and consummated without the slightest deviation. That they have acclaimed him as my successor means that the armed forces have held him up as the leader of the nation.

Lim Chun Chu, along with Kim Il, Choe Hyon and O Jin U, have taken the lead in acclaiming Kim Jong Il as the head of our Party and state. The anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans have unanimously acclaimed him as my successor because, before all else, they were attracted by his human appeal. Kim Il has always said there will be no one in the world who is as loyal and dutiful as Kim Jong Il is. Lim Chun Chu has said that there will be no one who respects the revolutionary forerunners as heartily and defends the revolutionary traditions as ardently as Kim Jong Il does and that no great man of ideology and leadership will be his equal. O Jin U has said that Kim Jong Il is the general of generals who displays unexcelled audacity and outstanding intelligence. Choe Hyon and Lee Jong San have often said that Kim Jong Il is a man of the richest human sympathy.

Lee Ul Sol also is a long-time assistant to Kim Jong Suk, Kim Jong Il and me. I still remember him clearly when he was my aide-de-camp after liberation. He would make a security check early in the morning and take breakfast with Kim Jong Il in the kitchen of my house. He was on quite intimate terms with Kim Jong Il in his boyhood. When I was going on a field-guidance trip, he would take Kim Jong Il with him. He always understood his needs and looked after him.

I still remember when I met Kim Jong Il in Sinuiju during the war. He came to see me after a long period of evacuation. At that time he asked Lee Ul Sol, my chief aide-de-camp, to take good care of me in place of his mother. His words are still ringing in my ears. Why does Kim Jong Il still trust him and why is he so grateful to him? It is because Lee Ul Sol took care of him after his mother died.

Kim Jong Il was bereft of his mother when he most needed parental care. To make matters worse, he and his sister had to take leave of me for some time because of the war. As I went here and there to reconstruct the economy after the war, I failed to take good care of them. It was Lee Ul Sol and other comrades-in-arms of mine who looked after them as their parents would do in the place of their kinsfolk when they were spending their childhood lonely, missing their mother, who had passed away.



*Lee Wha Rang photo: Kim Jong Il - 1956, age 14, a senior high student.*

In the summer of 1953, I visited the Soviet Union with a Party and government delegation. Before we left Moscow after completing our itinerary, the Soviet side gave a farewell banquet in our honor. The watermelons served at the banquet tasted especially good. After the party I went back to my lodgings. Lee Ul Sol, who was packing a carton, was very embarrassed to see me. I asked him what it was. He hesitantly replied that he had packed a watermelon for my children. The watermelon in the cardboard box was as large as a pot. Kim Jong Il was very delighted to get the watermelon. Saying how good it would be if our people who had suffered hardship in the war had taste of this watermelon, he suggested growing watermelons from its seeds. From the next year, together with Lee Ul Sol, he began to grow watermelons from the seeds of that watermelon in my garden. The watermelons thrived and spread far and wide.

Lee Ul Sol took leave of his parents at a young age, and lived all his life by my side. While

fighting the imperialists, big-power chauvinists, reactionaries and factionalists as my bodyguard for decades, he experienced difficulties of every description, tasting the sweets and bitters of life. In the course of this he became a man of great fortitude.

Soon after the conference at Khabarovsk I sent Park Yong Sun and Lee Ul Sol to Voroshilov for a short training course in wireless operation, ordering them to come back straight to the unit after the course. While I was operating in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu and in the homeland in command of a small unit, Lee Ul Sol, having finished the course, was making preparations to return to the unit.

On the day he received a commendation at the review of the short course, a high-ranking Soviet officer told him to make preparations to go to Korea, saying it was an order from the Comintern. Lee Ul Sol was quite puzzled at the order. The Soviet officer explained, "You are trustworthy. Songjin, to which we attach strategic importance, is your hometown. Settle down there and send us wireless reports of the enemy movements."



*Lee Wha Rang photo: Kim Jong Il (2nd from right) in 1960, age 18, a freshman at Kim Il Sung University. He labored at a lumber yard.*

He refused to obey the order, saying that, though he wanted to work in his native town, he had been ordered by his Commander to return to the unit after the short course to teach wireless operation. The officer tried to persuade him the next day again. He said they would get Comrade Kim Il Sung's permission later.

Apparently he attempted to influence the young man in the name of the Comintern. Lee Ul Sol retorted, "I can't go anywhere before executing the order my Commander gave me. We have spilt much blood because wireless communication was not available to us. You may not know it, but in order not to repeat that experience, I must return to the unit quickly, as my Commander ordered."

In those days we were in the Soviet Far East region temporarily, and the IAF had not yet been formed, so there was no unified system of command. The KPRA and the NAJAA were acting independently under their own command system. In this situation, it was unreasonable for a Soviet officer to attempt to divert Lee Ul Sol for another purpose in the name of the Comintern and without prior consultation with us. Lee Ul Sol's refusal to accept any other order before executing his Commander's was an expression of his unswerving loyalty to me.

Ever since his days in the Children's Company, he has been devoting his life to the work of protecting me, and he has never acted against my will or neglected his duty. Awake or asleep, he has thought only about me and has done everything for my health and personal safety. When I was fishing in the Wukou River in 1939, he protected my back with a machine-gun. He ensured my security also after liberation.

During the war there were several counterrevolutionary elements near the Supreme Headquarters. Strictly confidential information directly affecting the destiny of the country was transmitted to the Americans by Park Hon Yong and Lee Sung Yup. In the summer of 1952, Lee Sung Yup made his stooges call dozens of American planes by wireless to Konji-ri where the Supreme Headquarters was situated. The planes bombed the location of the Supreme Headquarters. They dropped a big time bomb near the building of the Supreme Headquarters, close by my quarters.

Lee Ul Sol called an emergency meeting of my aides-de-camp and bodyguards, and they decided to remove the bomb at the risk of their lives. After turning in their Party membership cards, they removed the time bomb to a valley.

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*Lee Wha Rang notes: Kim Jong Il's writings:*

- [Let Us Carry Out The Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's Instructions For National Reunification](#)
- [Kim Jong Il's Letter to Mun Myong-Ja, A Korean-American Journalist](#)
- [On the 50th Anniversary of Kim Il Sung University - Kim Jong Il](#)
- [Let us exalt the brilliance of Comrade Kim Il Sung's idea on the youth movement and the achievements made under his leadership](#)

## 24.1. In Anticipation of the Day of Liberation

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When writing their curricula vitae after the liberation of the country, quite a few anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans put down "Military Academy 88" or "Training School, Camp 88" in the column of academic attainments. The then personnel management officials were amazed at the fact that the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters who had gone through arduous guerrilla warfare were all graduates of a military academy. But what was really meant by "Military Academy 88"? Later, the officials found out the answer to this question while listening to the great leader's account of military and political training during the years of the IAF.

After the formation of the IAF, we underwent intensive military and political training while carrying out brisk small-unit actions and reconnaissance activities. Our educational program covered a wider range of subjects and a greater depth of content than those used in regular military educational institutions. Training was several times as intensive as that in regular military academies. Since the training program was aimed at producing officers, it would be no exaggeration for the trainees to say that they graduated from a military academy. I think, therefore, that the anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans had the years of the IAF in mind when they wrote that they had finished "Military Academy 88" or "Training School, Camp 88", on their curricula vitae.



*Photo: From left to right, Ahn Gil, Kim Il Sung and Choe Hyon in Siberia. Ahn Gil died of natural causes soon after Liberation.*

Needless to say, we neither put up such a sign nor issued such a diploma. After a few years of training, however, they thought that they had completed the course of a modern military and political university. Our comrades learned much in those days of military theory, and the strategy and tactics of modern regular warfare. The education in the period of the IAF was not confined to military affairs. It was comprehensive education and training in political and military subjects, as well as in the

preparations for the operations to liberate the country and for the building of the Party, state, and army in the liberated homeland.

So we attached equal importance to political and military education. We studied political economy, philosophy, the theory of party-building, and economic management. These educational activities, however, did not go smoothly at the outset.

Towards the end of 1942 and in early 1943, the tide of the Second World War began to turn in favor of

the anti-fascist forces. The sweeping victory of the Soviet army at Stalingrad broke the back of fascist Germany and marked the turning-point not only in the Soviet-German War but also in the whole of the Second World War.

With the long-awaited day of national liberation drawing close, mountains of work piled up, calling for my attention. The matter of the greatest concern for me then was how to build a new country in the liberated homeland. We would have to build the Party, the state and the army and develop the economy and cultural undertakings. But we were short of cadres, the leading and hard-core elements of the revolution. That was the most difficult problem.

At that time I thought of training the anti-Japanese fighters, who had been tempered and tested in the arduous armed struggle, into competent cadres with versatile capabilities, equal to any challenges not only in the military field but also in the fields of Party work, state administration, economic management, education and culture. I decided to resolve all these problems through military and political training within the framework of the IAF. The initial training program, however, had allotted a smaller proportion to political education than to military training.

I believed that politico-theoretical education should not make up a smaller proportion than military training. I brought this question up with General Apanasenko. He said that the first and foremost task of the IAF was to train the military cadres for national revolution in Korea and Northeast China, and that we should speed up training to ensure that everyone mastered the strategy and tactics of modern warfare, and acquired skills in the use of weapons and equipment so that they could fight in cooperation with the Red Army when a new situation was created in Korea and Manchuria.

I insisted, "We must not be biased towards the training of military cadres. In order to build a new country after the liberation of Korea, we must train all the cadres needed in various fields as pillars for the building of an independent and sovereign state. To this end, we must increase the proportion of political education in the training program. But I do not mean that we should take time off military training for political education. I mean to carry out the training as planned, while conducting just as much political education."

Apanasenko was convinced. As a result, the proportion of political education considerably increased in the military and political training program of the JAF. Setting about the military and political training, we took active measures to awaken the men to the need for this training. The Party members' groups and YCL organizations held meetings and made public their resolutions by means of newspapers and billboards, as well as over the radio in the camp.

Each contingent selected able cadres as political teachers. After the formation of the IAF, the Headquarters of the Soviet Far East Forces organized a short course for political trainers. But reaction to the lectures was not encouraging at first. The Russian lecturers spoke poor Chinese and could hardly make themselves understood. Therefore, a Chinese interpreter was appointed for each Russian lecturer. Even that method was not very helpful to our comrades, as translation took up half the time of the

lectures, so they were not effective. Given this situation, we got the Russian textbooks translated into Korean and then compiled lesson plans to suit our specific conditions, and distributed them to our political teachers.

The materials for political lectures in the initial period comprised philosophy, political economy and the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as well as the history and geography of both the Soviet Union and China. There were also lectures on The Communist Manifesto and Problems of Leninism. Needless to say, these were helpful to our men in widening their political horizons.

It was unreasonable, however, not to teach the men of the KPRA Korean history and the Ten-Point Program of the ARF, while giving them lessons about the history of the Soviet Union and China. So, I saw to it that the Ten-Point Program and the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF, The Tasks of the Korean Communists, and some other books we had previously regarded as essential reading were included in the teaching materials, and that Korean history and geography were taught.

The political teachers took much trouble to prepare their lectures. As they had to prepare and give lectures while participating in training, they were always under heavier pressure of work than the ordinary soldiers. The lectures were fairly good. They were convincing because they were supported by the teachers' rich fighting experience. More than once I listened to An Kil's lectures, and I found them very interesting. An Kil, a veteran political worker, had an original way of giving political lectures. As they were spiced with humor and lively figures of speech, the students learned about revolution in a light-hearted atmosphere.

During lectures, he would recite a poem or sing a song, when necessary. During one lecture he quoted a full page from Lenin by rote. When his men on the march were too exhausted to walk properly, he used to order a break, and play the harmonica and beat the drum, getting the men to dance and sing. That was his way of doing things. He did the same with his lectures.

Lim Chun Chu was good at giving lectures, and even better at tutoring. He would organize discussions or arguments among the trainees to get to know how well each of them was prepared and how well he understood the lectures. On this basis, he would give individual guidance after school. If any of them still did not understand the lecture, he would teach him by his bedside.

Kim Kyong Sok was also a good teacher. Not being an eloquent speaker, he always used to make careful preparations for his lectures, often sitting up late. He was very popular among his pupils. After completing his preparations, he always asked my opinion about them. He was a very serious and hard-working man. He would write down all that he was to say during his lecture. Getting into this habit in those days, even after liberation, he used to write down for himself whatever speech he had to make, before speaking to his audience. He did the same with his reports to meetings.

The teachers' enthusiasm resulted in the improvement of the trainees' qualifications. The lectures given by An Yong, Jon Chang Chol and Lee Pong Su were also popular among the trainees. Liu Ya-lou, a

graduate of the Frunze Military Academy, also gave good lectures. I can still remember him giving a lecture on the new type of rocket the Soviet Union had developed, Katyusha. I myself also often gave political lectures.

At the reviews of military and political training, the soldiers of the Korean Contingent always won the highest marks.

Even Feng Zhong-yun, who was working in the political department of the unit, admired the results of the training of the soldiers of the Korean Contingent. He even asked me what the secret of their good results was. I said, "No secret at all. They have just worked hard, with towels tied round their heads, and cooling their faces with cold water." Then he commented, waving his hands: "Well, no one can match the Koreans in diligence." Indeed, our comrades were very diligent in those days. It was exactly their sense of responsibility for the revolution that stimulated the soldiers of the Korean Contingent to be exemplary in military and political training.

However, there were some comrades like Park Chang Sun who considered studying a headache at Matanggou years before. Typical of them was Park Rak Kwon. Park Rak Kwon had been a member of the Young Volunteers' Corps in eastern Manchuria. Later, he had been picked, along with other exemplary men and officers, to be transferred to the 5th Corps at the request of the comrades in northern Manchuria. He had served as leader of the guard unit of the 5th Corps under the command of Zhou Baozhong. He was a brave fighter who was ready to go through fire and water. He was full of wit and swift in action as befitted a commanding officer.

In his days in the Wangqing guerrilla unit he once received a serious wound in the abdomen during an encounter with a Japanese "punitive" force. Holding back his entrails with his hand, he crawled back to the guerrilla zone. He acquitted himself well as the commander of the guards of the unit in northern Manchuria and became a favorite of Zhou Bao-zhong. Zhou himself said that he had escaped death on several occasions thanks to Park.

Park Rak Kwon had a special skill in handling weapons. Trying any weapon once or twice was enough for him to be able to dismantle and reassemble it easily and swiftly, even with his eyes shut. However, he loathed studying military theory. Whenever he was asked to study theoretical problems he would pull a long face immediately as if he had swallowed some bitter pill, and during theoretical study lessons he would sit in the farthest corner, trying to avoid eye contact with the lecturer.

I told him: "You are a platoon leader now. But in the future, when we fight large-scale modern warfare, you may have to command a regiment or a division. If you hate learning the knowledge of modern warfare as you do now, how can you command a regiment or a division? If you only rely on your own experience in commanding your unit, you may cause the deaths of many of your men. Do you want that to happen?"

After that, he applied himself to theoretical study with a firm determination. I once saw him out on the Amur all day long, engrossed in the study of the theory of infantry tactics, his whole body drenched with



sweat as if he had a fever. After liberation, he was dispatched to Northeast China. He participated in the battle to liberate Changchun in command of a regiment. He contributed to the victory in the battle to liberate the large city by his efficient command of his regiment because he had applied himself to the study of tactics while at the base in the Far East region, I think. He took the lead in the regimental charge at an enemy's position. He is said to have been wounded in several places by splinters from a mortar shell and died a heroic death worthy of his name. He is remembered as a hero by both the Koreans and the Chinese in their history.

"Study is also battle." - this is a truth we learned in actual life. A revolutionary must study to the last moment of his life, without a moment's interruption. Unless he studies, his mind will get rusty. Then, he will be devoid of foresight. It is precisely for this reason that Comrade Kim Jong Il always emphasizes the need to study hard, regarding it as the first part of the process of training people to be revolutionaries. We also educated the men and helped them widen their political horizons through the facilities for extracurricular activities and the means of information and agitation available at the base.

At the training base was a club equipped with a projection room, a library and a radio room, where the officers and men used to have meetings and film shows. During the broadcasting hour, the base radio gave wide publicity to the soldiers, platoons, companies and battalions worthy of being held up as models in their study, military and political training, and daily life. It also broadcast news about the international situation, especially the news of the war against Germany, every day.

The IAF also published a newspaper. Each contingent and company had its wall newspaper, and platoons had their field bulletins. These forms of media carried news items about the ideological and moral education of the soldiers, and about the preparations for and reviews of military and political training.

We also gave the soldiers revolutionary and class education through the anniversary activities for the Red Army and the October Revolution, May Day and other holidays. In those days the unit gave wide publicity to the Soviet heroes and heroines who had fought courageously in the Soviet-German War, which had a good influence upon the soldiers. Memorial services for the fallen revolutionary comrades-in-arms were organized in a significant way so that they served as occasions for giving revolutionary education to the soldiers.

When Ryu Yong Chan died, we held a memorial service for him at the training base. He had been enlisted with the help of Kim Jong Suk, who, during her underground work in Taoquanli, had won him over to the revolutionary organization and trained him. He was a good fighter. He was drowned in the Amur when a ship carrying sand for the construction of a barracks capsized. We also held memorial services at that time for Front Commanders Apanasenko, Vatutin, and Chernyakhovski. During the memorial services our own band played dirges. The allied forces occasionally organized lectures and meetings with the participants in the Soviet-German War.

We carried out both the study of military theory and military exercises in real earnest at the Far East base. We did tactical training, and all kinds of drills such as shooting, swimming, skiing, parachuting, and

radio communication, to get ourselves ready for modern warfare. We spent much time on offensive and defensive training, with emphasis on tactical problems. We also studied artillery, topography, sanitation, engineering, and anti-chemical warfare. The training for guerrilla warfare was concentrated upon raids and ambushes. Because of their rich experience in actual warfare of this kind, all the soldiers plunged into this training in real earnest.

During military training, we would pitch our tents over a vast plain, the scene of which is still fresh in my memory. When I directed the training, the company commanders and platoon leaders prepared their plans and carried them out. We made it a principle to undertake our style of training suited to the terrain of our country and the physical constitution of the Korean people, drawing on experiences in the anti-Japanese war and the Soviet-German War. We carried out tactical training in such a way as to follow up one subject of the curriculum with field exercises about it, through which we would judge the degree of the soldiers' understanding of the subject.

I myself conducted tactical training for the commanding officers. The objective of tactical training was to make each soldier equal to the job of a man a few ranks higher, that is, to make a company commander capable of commanding a battalion or a regiment, a platoon leader a company or a battalion, a soldier a platoon or a company, etc. Tactical training was conducted with a platoon or a company as a unit. When briefed about the situation and given the mission, the man appointed as the commander would estimate the situation, make his decision, organize the operation and then give orders. Let me tell you what happened at the beginning of tactical training. One day I went down to a company to inspect its tactical training. Son Jong Jun was acting as a platoon leader that day.

He was commanding his platoon with an air of confidence. I gave him a new situation in which various obstacles were laid in its way and a reinforced enemy company was on a height. He attempted a frontal attack, but I prompted him to employ the tactics of roundabout breakthrough, and made him restart the attack. It was not accidental that he attempted to employ a battle order that was not suited to the situation. It was an outcome of the training given by rote according to the then battle regulations whereby the troops were to attack in extended order behind a mechanized unit. Such an attack was unsuited to the specific conditions of our country, which has many mountains and valleys.

I made sure that all the lesson plans for tactical training were re-examined, revised and applied to meet the specific conditions of our on the principle of developing them by drawing on our experience of guerrilla warfare. I told O Jin U to draw up a model tactical training plan for an attacking platoon. A noncommissioned officer as he was then, he drew up a perfect model training plan with my assistance. In accordance with this plan, we organized a demonstration for the whole contingent. The reaction was very good. O Jin U also drew up a plan for maneuvers involving the whole contingent. Shooting drill consisted mainly of firing at fixed targets at different distances, moving targets, and suddenly appearing targets. The firing range was located eight to twelve kilometers away from our camp.

The Korean Contingent was also the best of all the allied forces in marksmanship. Lee Tu Ik in particular was a crack shot.

We selected the best shots for drills in sharp-shooting plus map-reading. They first drilled in firing

straight shots at fixed targets. They shot so much that they said they could still feel their ears ringing even after their return to their quarters. After the drill we handed out to each of them a compass and a map marked with the route of a march, giving them the mission of catching a certain number of birds at such and such places, and returning by such and such an exact time. It was not an easy task, for they would have to spend almost a whole day to move as dictated by the marks that required them to change their course at a certain point by what angle and return by going round a certain place, and moreover, they had to shoot birds. This was mainly aimed at helping them to master marksmanship and map-reading.

In our days at the training base in the Soviet region of the Far East, we also had a lot of skiing and swimming drills. Anticipating the great event of the country's liberation, we needed to learn such skills for the guerrilla actions we were to carry out by basing ourselves in the Rangnim or Hamgyong Mountains, and for our operations to liberate the homeland by crossing the Yalu or Tuman Rivers. Swimming drills took place in the Amur during summer. Considering the fact that ours is a maritime country, we attached special importance to swimming. Most of the soldiers of our contingent had grown up without seeing the sea, and those who could swim were few in number. So most of them were afraid of rivers.

In those days swimming was regarded as almost as difficult a drill as parachuting. We first made the trainees drill by moving their limbs while lying on the ground before taking them to the river and teaching them through demonstration by the few who knew how to swim. After their first experience in the water, we stretched a rope across the river and let them swim across with the help of the rope.

Feng Zhong-yun and a few others never learned how to swim; once in the water, they would sink like stones. Feng once lost his glasses in the water. Kim Kyong Sok was nearly drowned while practicing swimming alone. Jon Sun Hui was the best swimmer because she had lived by a river. When she was young she used to cling to the back of the grown-ups when crossing the river; ashamed of it as she reached the age of discretion, she had learned swimming. Having experience as a nurse with the 7th Corps, she served at the training base as a nurse in the dispensary. Many of her comrades learned swimming from her.

The swimming drill was followed by a river-crossing drill, making them an all-round drill, so to speak. After a forced march of about 25 kilometers in full gear, the soldiers made a raft for each platoon to cross the river. In this drill a straggler meant the loss of a mark. Choe Kwang's platoon was well-known for its proficiency in river-crossing, though it always had to surrender the first place to the others because of Kong Jong Su.

Kong Jong Su had worked as a farm hand before enlisting in the guerrilla army. Impeccable as his character was, he was born sluggish, most unlike a soldier. He burnt several caps one winter. He was slow to move, even when his trousers caught fire from a campfire. During his service in the 5th Corps he was in Choe Kwang's platoon. Once, exasperated by this man, Choe Kwang had tried to drive him out of his platoon, but Kong hobbled along in its wake, nevertheless.

Choe Kwang was moved by his doggedness. That man will never change, Choe Kwang thought to himself. I said to Choe Kwang: "Though told to go away, he still followed us to make revolution. That shows what a good person he is. Let's do our best to help him, though it costs us a great deal of effort to do so." Bearing my advice in mind, Choe Kwang gave him individual training, including diving into the water from a springboard seven meters high. I watched them from a distance.

Kong was nervous that he might do belly-flops in the water. Anyhow, he was a man of special character. After the liberation of the country he served as my aide-de-camp and as a bodyguard to Choe Yong Gon, and commanded a battalion.

We also had canoeing on the Amur, using a one-man canoe, called an *amurochika* in Russian, with one paddle. The local Nanayian people were good at paddling this canoe. My men would compete in paddling to and from Khabarovsk.

We also had landing exercises. Since our country is sea-bound on three sides and has many rivers, river-crossing and landing operations were essential for future campaigns against Japan. We once had a landing exercise aimed at Rajin Port.

Parachuting was more difficult than swimming. In this training course the women soldiers were more courageous than the men. There were some cowards among the men, but none among the women.

The first stage was a mock drill, in which the trainees would jump from a springboard into a pile of sawdust. The next stage was getting used to turning round on a revolving wheel. Women soldiers felt sick during this drill, but they never gave up.

Parachute practice took place on the vast plain around Voroshilov, where there was a landing-strip.

The trainees first had to learn how to fold their parachutes. Then they would ascend a tower about 50 meters high and descend by parachute. This trained them to turn their bodies once against the wind. Only then were they allowed to parachute from an aircraft. Ten to twenty soldiers would parachute first from an altitude of 1,000 meters, and later from 600 meters. The order to drop used to be given at the height of 800 meters. The landing-strip was surrounded by wide sugar-beet fields. When we landed, women working in the fields would run towards us, helping us draw up the chutes and peeling sugar beets for us.

They gave souvenir badges to those who recorded high scores in these drills. Choe Yong Jin from our contingent took the badge for the highest score. I also took part in parachuting on several occasions. The drill produced a variety of episodes. Some lost their caps, some their boots, some got sprains, some got caught in trees, and so on.

Soldiers who weighed more than 80 kilogram's or less than 40 kilogram's were not allowed to participate in parachuting for reason of safety. An overweight person might fall too rapidly and get injured, and an underweight person might be blown far off course. Jon Sun Hui was so light that she was once blown higher than the plane. Kim Jung Dong also used to fly astray. He was a very small man. I once saw him hung up in a tree. When I helped him down, I found that he was as light as a child.

During the Fatherland Liberation War, Kim Jung Dong performed great exploits in the battles to liberate Seoul and Taejon, and was awarded the title of Hero of the Republic. Parachuting was combined with air-borne operations, mostly from 1944.

The training in air-borne operations involved actions to destroy the resisting enemy while descending by parachute, rapid deployment after landing, the striking of the enemy from behind, and so on.

During parachute training, we lost some weight and we often felt hungry. Training was intensive, and on top of that, our food rations were reduced in order to support the front line after the outbreak of the Soviet-German War. Under these circumstances, we cultivated idle land to obtain additional food. We planted potatoes, soy beans and vegetables. We benefited a lot from the side-line farm. We also gathered edible herbs to supplement our diet. The area surrounding the training base was green with bracken, *Atractylodes japonica*, aralias shoots, and other edible herbs. When we boiled soup with edible herbs, the Soviet doctors in the dispensary warned us against eating them, as they might have been poisonous. However, after having a taste of the soup, they said it was delicious. When we told them that edible herbs were medicinal stuff, they began to ask for them.

Our comrades once quarreled with a Jewish Russian major in the Soviet army, the man in charge of the supply of the unit, in the fields while planting potatoes. The major was angry with our comrades who were planting cut-out eyes of potatoes, arguing that we would make a mess of potato farming. Our comrades retorted, saying that the yield in autumn would prove who was right. That year we had a rich harvest of the crop. The potatoes planted whole yielded something like pebbles, whereas the cut-out eyes planted by our comrades produced fist-size potatoes. Only then did the major recognize our expertise in farming. Although that spring our contingent had boiled and eaten all the potatoes from which eyes had been cut out, we harvested twice as many potatoes as the others did.

Our comrades organized a hunting team to catch wild animals, and on holidays went fishing in the Amur. The Amur teemed with fish, and we caught one which weighed scores of kilograms. In the spawning season, shoals of salmon came up the river. We caught them by casting nets and pickled them. We would take out their eggs and pickle them too. We once caught so many wild animals and fish that we sent some to the western front.

We also conducted wireless communication drill at the training base. There were some soldiers from northern Manchuria who had learned wireless communication in the second half of the 1930s, as they had frequented the Soviet Union. Park Yong Sun and Lee Ul Sol were the first in our contingent to learn it, at the temporary base. On their return from Voroshilov where they had attended a short course in wireless communication for three months, they imparted their skill to others. Wireless communication was taught to men soldiers, including Lee Jong San and Lee O Song, and almost all the women soldiers, including Kim Jong Suk, Park Kyong Suk, Park Kyong Ok, Kim Ok Sun, Lee Yong Suk, Wang Ok Hwan, Lee Jae Dok and Lee Mun.

Most of the units that had been active previously in eastern and southern Manchuria could not make use of wireless communication. The training of wireless operators needed assistance from either the Comintern or the Soviets, which was not easy to get. As they had no wireless operator, they had captured

wireless equipment on several occasions to no avail. We had appointed messengers to Headquarters and all the units to ensure communication on foot. Our messengers had had to walk really long distances that had to be covered at the risk of their lives. No small number of them had been killed on their missions. After his enlistment, Lee Chi Ho served as a Headquarters messenger for several years. While carrying out his mission to ensure communications for Headquarters, he had endured many hardships, suffering hunger and being subject to flogging when arrested. Braving these hardships, he had rendered distinguished services.

For all these sufferings, however, prompt communication was impossible. That was why we attached special importance to training in wireless communication. Training the backbone of the signal corps was imperative not only for the building of the regular armed forces but also for the establishment of the communication system, the nerve system of the country, and for cultural and information services, in the liberated homeland.

In those days Kim Jong Suk, while participating in a variety of drills such as those for wireless communication and parachuting, went to various parts of the homeland to carry out small-unit actions there. The women soldiers were exemplary in the wireless communication drill. They also participated equally with the men in the other drills such as for skiing, swimming, parachuting and river-crossing. Their training was very intensive. Even the Soviet officers said that the drills were several times more difficult than those they had gone through during their days at military academies. However, all the women soldiers attended the drills without any complaint.

When starting parachute training, we had decided to exclude the women with children and those with weak constitutions. The women soldiers were all disappointed at this. An Jong Suk even came to me to protest in tears: "Some of us even left our children behind to come here and take part in training!"

When coming to the Far East region, she had left her little child at the wattle gate of a stranger's house. Lee Jong In, too, was said to have left her daughter in the shed of someone else's vegetable field, before coming to Russia. They insisted that they should be allowed to participate in the parachute drill, saying that to hasten the day of national liberation was the only way for them to meet their dear children again.

Unable as she was to take a bit of the food served at the mess hall, Park Kyong Suk was never absent from training in wireless communication. Soon after her baby was born, she participated in the training course with great enthusiasm. She was so active in both her studies and exercises that the instructor of the wireless platoon spoke highly of Korean women, noting that they were indeed hard-working and persistent.

Park Kyong Suk once accompanied Kim Chaek to the enemy-held area, carrying wireless equipment on her back, and engaging in small-unit activities for several months. She was very dexterous in operating the wireless. Kim Jong Suk was also enthusiastic about her training. Once she sprained her ankle, but continued to take part in skiing training, although her leg was badly swollen. When I expressed my worry about her, she showed her concern about me, taking out a sugar cube wrapped in paper and saying: "If

you do the drill with this in your mouth, you will feel better."

What worried me most during the parachute drill was whether or not the underweight women would be able to land properly. However, they would open the chute in time and land right at the fixed spot. Some of them would put bricks into their knapsacks to add to their weight when parachuting.

This was the mettle of our fighters in their youth. Overcoming all hardships with a smile for the future of the liberated homeland was our joy and pleasure, and made our lives worthwhile. Although the training was intense, and we could not get enough sleep and were not strong enough, we endured all the hardships and trials with a smile for the future of the liberated country.

Our veterans still hold those days dear. Everyone has a time of youth. It is by no means easy, however, to spend one's youth so as to recollect it with a high sense of honor and pride even in the distant future. How valuable and noble it is to devote one's life to the cause of the country and the nation, overcoming all manner of hardships, full of ardor and fighting spirit!

I firmly believe that our young people, too, will make a staunch struggle for the motherland and revolution, braving difficulties and hardships, by inheriting the spirit of the martyrs who laid down their lives in the anti-Japanese revolution.

Anticipating the great event of national liberation when Japan and Germany were in decline, we channeled great efforts into the study of the homeland to build up the motive force of the Korean revolution. Without the correct theory and strategy and tactics of the Korean revolution, and without knowledge of the history and geography, the economy and culture, and the ethics and customs of the homeland, it would have been impossible to achieve independence by our own efforts, to build a new country, and to take an independent stand and attitude towards the revolution.

Most of our comrades, however, were not well-informed about their motherland, for they had been born in Manchuria. Born as he was in North Kyongsang Province, Park Song Chol had left his hometown at the age of about ten and lived in Manchuria afterwards. Lee Ul Sol, too, though hailing from Songjin, had lived in Changbai from the time he crossed the Tuman as a child until he joined the guerrilla army. Therefore, I decided to teach the soldiers the Juche-oriented line of the Korean revolution and about their motherland.

The problem, however, was a lack of books on Korea at the training base. I obtained books published in Korea by giving assignments to those going into the homeland for small-unit activities, or with the help of Soviet people. Once I obtained a book entitled The Outline of Korean Geography, and read it, which helped me a lot in my study of the geography of our country. One day I gave Lim Chun Chu an assignment to draw a large map of Korea, adding that he should include in it all the famous mountains, rivers, plains, lakes, mineral deposits, and the specialties of all regions, as well as the scenic spots and places with cultural relics.

Lim drew the map with great efforts, by patching several pieces of white paper together. During a

political lecture, I put up this map and made a speech titled, *The Korean Revolutionaries Must Know Korea Well* to the political cadres and political instructors of the KPRA. In my speech I emphasized that the Korean revolutionaries must have a good knowledge of Korean history and geography, pointing out a few tasks for greeting the great event of the national liberation on our own initiative. After that, all the Korean soldiers of the IAF made a careful study of their motherland under the motto "The Korean Revolutionaries Must Know Korea Well."

I think it was around the Harvest Moon Day that we sat up late into the night, talking about the homeland and our native places, looking up at the bright moon hanging over the forest. The yearning and love for the motherland were the source of our inexhaustible strength and courage. We braced up and stepped up our study and training efforts. In those days the anti-Japanese fighters fully assimilated the whole course of the curriculum one would normally learn at a regular university, while undergoing intense training that was almost beyond their physical strength. It was by no means easy to do so, but the sweat they shed and the efforts they made bore fruit in the liberated homeland. Among those who worked with us after liberation were quite a few people who had graduated from noted universities. When I met some of the graduates of the Oriental Working People's Communist College, I found them not particularly informed of either Party-building or nation-building.

The anti-Japanese veterans were conversant with any duty. When I entrusted Kim Chaek with the responsibility for the industrial sector, he ensured the reconstruction of the devastated national industries in a short span of time. An Kil, who was given the task of establishing and running an institute for training the military cadres necessary for the building of regular armed forces, fulfilled his task without much difficulty.

No one could match the former guerrillas in work among the masses or political work. Throughout the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, we worked hard to make preparations for shouldering the future of the liberated motherland, looking into the bright tomorrow, always confident about the victory of the revolution.

When I proposed drawing up the blueprint for the reconstruction of Pyongyang City when the Fatherland Liberation War was still raging, some people were taken aback, saying that it was preposterous to talk of a blueprint for reconstruction when one could hardly know when the war would end. However, no sooner was the war over two years later than we could start reconstructing Pyongyang City without any delay, on the basis of the blueprint.

Revolutionaries must plan their work and push ahead with it in anticipation of events that will take place in the distant future, while dealing with the tasks in hand. How good it is to rise above hardships, plan for the future and create life by anticipating approaching events, rather than to complain about difficulties! Compressing time and speeding up the coming of the future is characteristic of the positive spirit. When we were looking forward to the final victory of the anti-Japanese revolution, we constantly speeded up military and political training, to hasten the day of national liberation, full of revolutionary optimism and confidence.



Only those who work day and night for their motherland's future, overcoming today's difficulties with a smile, only those who plan the future for their posterity, thinking and studying ceaselessly, can become genuine communists and ardent revolutionaries.

## 24.2 The Flames of National Resistance Flare throughout the Country

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It was impossible to win national independence relying only on the efforts of a few people with advanced ideas or of a small force of fighters. This was a historical lesson of the world revolutionary movement as well as of the national liberation movement in Korea. From the day we started the anti-Japanese revolution we consistently asserted the importance of resistance by the whole people. By this resistance we meant the general mobilization of the entire nation for the anti-Japanese revolution by training them along revolutionary lines.

In other words, we meant to liberate the country by means of the organized and active resistance all the people throughout the country against the Japanese. With regard to national resistance, we held that, in order to train all We got down to preparations for national resistance when we established our base on Mt. Paektu and extended our armed struggle to the areas on the Yalu and in the homeland, while working hard to build the Party, the united-front movement and mass organizations under the banner of the ARE. The Ten-Point Program of the ARE calling for the accomplishment of national liberation through the general mobilization of the entire nation was, in effect, a declaration of national resistance.

I think it was after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War that we advanced the policy of national resistance as an independent line, and began to take practical measures to that end. We held meetings in the Paektusan secret camp and also in Caoshuitan and Sinhung to discuss the matter of national resistance against the Japanese. The September Appeal can be considered an appeal for national resistance.

When we moved to Mt. Paektu I also put forward the idea of organizing the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army of Northern Korea (AJPGANK). We selected a number of people who had been tempered in the local organizations, and trained them at the training school on Mt. Kanbaek as the leadership personnel for national resistance, while at the same time putting great efforts into building more paramilitary organizations in the northern area and various other parts of the homeland, and expanding them.

Our political operatives in the homeland also organized workers' shock brigades and paramilitary corps in many parts of the country. As the day of decisive battle approached, we speeded up the operational preparations for an all-people resistance.

At this moment, the commanding officers of the Korean Contingent held a meeting, at which the discussion was focused on the preparations for the showdown. All the commanding officers expressed full support for my proposal that we should make every preparation to organize national resistance against the Japanese and achieve national liberation by our own efforts.

Later I set out the three-point line for national liberation on the basis of the review of the work of building the Party and mass organizations and the activities by the secret armed organizations in the homeland. This line was aimed at accomplishing the historic cause of national liberation by means of a general offensive of the KPRA combined with a popular uprising and joint operations behind enemy lines.

This plan was completely feasible. What made me believe it feasible? My judgment was based upon the feelings of the Korean people, which were all turned to us. Many people were looking up to Mt. Paektu, and many others were flocking there. There was no shortage of people wanting to join the guerrilla army to become Kim Il Sung's soldiers. Those, who evaded conscription and the labor draft took refuge in the mountains, built smithies and made weapons, saying that they would fight to the end against the Japanese.

The public sentiment at that time found expression as follows: "We cannot live under the tyrannical rule of the Japanese any longer. We will rise in revolt and destroy the Japanese when Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army pushes into Korea. We must fight a decisive battle with the Japanese at the risk of our lives."

It was around this time that the Japanese police made a great commotion, alarmed by the appearance of the words, "Kim Il Sung, Commander of Korea's Independence", on the ceiling of the steerage of the Koanmaru, a ferry plying between Pusan and Shimonoseki, and "seditious scribbling" on the South Gate in Seoul: "Commander Kim Il Sung Will Soon Return to the Motherland in Triumph."

In the first half of the 1940s, the broad masses of people from all walks of life entrusted the destiny of the nation to us more than ever, eagerly waiting for us to liberate the country.

It is said that the people's will is God's will. The people's will represents their aspirations and wishes. If the people's will is in our favor, we can accomplish anything, no matter how arduous the task. This was the reality we were counting on. The three-point line of national liberation was based on this reality.

The gist of the operational plan for the final battle was that our main force would make a rapid advance into the homeland and occupy all the provinces, fighting there on the one hand, and on the other issuing an appeal to the whole nation in order to rouse the workers, peasants, and youth and students who were hiding in the mountains to rally around armed organizations and join the armed popular uprising to destroy the enemy and liberate the country.

This plan was certain to succeed. If we reinforced the revolutionary army trained in the anti-Japanese armed struggle, the backbone of our armed forces, with the patriotic youths and people in the homeland and then launched a determined campaign in all parts of the country, we would be fully able to liberate the country by our own efforts.

The point in question was how to mobilize the people for resistance at the decisive moment. That was not

difficult, either. At the time of the March First Popular Uprising, two million people had turned out to cheer for independence. Just imagine how many people would turn out for resistance in case of a decisive battle!

Needless to say, this policy was not readily accepted by all. When we first proposed the line for national resistance, some people shook their heads dubiously, but most of us supported it, confident that the policy was certain to succeed. Our policy for arming the entire nation astonished the commanding officers of the NAJAA. They asked us how we could propose such a venture when our country was a complete colony and we were waging the armed struggle mainly outside it.

I told them: "To arm the entire nation for national resistance is not our subjective idea, but the desire of the people themselves. We have simply adopted our people's desire and demand as our task."

In the first half of the 1940s, the Japanese imperialist ruling system was gradually becoming paralyzed. With the defeat of Japan in the Pacific War becoming certain, there appeared various forms of delinquency even among government officials. Jo Myong Son, who had been to the homeland for small-unit actions gave me the following account: Once he had captured a policeman in a mountainous area. He asked the policeman why he had been wandering around in a forest like an idler in such a period of emergency. The captive replied that he had gone hunting because he was in despair, as he had a foreboding that Japan would collapse before long.

That was the general mental state of the Japanese officials in those days, a sure sign that their ruling system was tottering.

This weakness in the enemy's ruling system presented an opportunity for our resistance organizations in the homeland to prepare resistance on a national scale. Taking advantage of the enemy's weakness, our political operatives and the members of the resistance organizations sent either declarations or warning notes to the enemy officials irrespective of their positions, ranging from sub-county officials and lower-echelon policemen to provincial governors and the Governor-General in the top strata of the colonial government of Korea, and even to the Prime Minister and Emperor of Japan, striking terror into them.

In February Juche 32 (1943), the resistance organizations in the homeland sent warning notes to Japanese Prime Minister Tojo in relation to the introduction of the conscription system in Korea.

The warning note, sent in the name of all the young people of Pyoksong County, reads: "To your Excellency Prime Minister Tojo, the Prime Minister's Official Residence, Tokyo City... "Korea will become independent.

"Come to your senses, Japan, our enemy. However hard you try to train soldiers through the introduction of the conscription system on the peninsula, the day we are waiting for will come soon. Give me arms. The Japanese are our enemy....

"Dedicated to our motherland Korea, we will resist our enemy, Japan, to the last, to the last moment of our lives, and even in our graves. We will join the army before anyone else to work off our deep-seated enmity, to resist the enemy, Japan, nay, to destroy her." (Monthly Report by the Special Political Police, p. 72, Public Security Section, Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, February Showa 18 (1943).)

Stepping up the preparations for national resistance, we paid special attention to the following points: One was to establish new temporary secret bases while building up the secret bases existing in the homeland into military and political bases for national resistance; the second was to send more small units and teams as well as political operatives into the homeland to prepare the forces of national resistance thoroughly for the operations to liberate the country, in keeping with the requirements of the new situation; and the third was to establish unified leadership over the national resistance forces in the homeland.

National resistance was inconceivable apart from an armed revolt, nor would it be successful without bases for activities. When formulating the line of national resistance, therefore, I paid primary attention to the work of building in the Rangnim and other major mountains secret bases that would be used for the operations and support of the KPRA as well as the strong points of the armed struggle by the national resistance forces. As a result, many secret bases were established in the northeast region centering on Mt. Paektu, in the northern inland region centering on the area along the Yalu, and the Rangnim and Pujomyong Mountains, in the western and central regions, and in all other parts of the homeland.

In the early 1940s, in addition to these secret bases, we set up temporary secret bases of various forms and sizes at vantage points across the country that would be of strategic and tactical importance in carrying out the operations for national liberation, to meet the requirements of the new situation.

Giving priority to the establishment of the bases, we dispatched many small units, teams, and political operatives to the homeland. I also advanced deep into the homeland on more than one occasion, leading a small unit. The small units, teams and political operatives we had sent into the border areas on the Tuman and the Yalu, into the central regions of Korea, including Seoul, into the southern regions of Korea, including Pusan and Jinhae, and to Japan, carried out brisk political and military activities, preparing the broad masses of people for national resistance against Japan.

An official document issued by the Japanese, dealing with the activities of the political operatives, reads:

"Arrest of an Agitation Group Leader, Kim Il Sung's Subordinate

"An agitation group leader surnamed Kim, a faithful subordinate of Kim Il Sung, the leader of the insurgent Koreans in Manchuria who has long since been engaged in anti-Japanese activities, sneaked into Tumen, Jiandao Province, for the purpose of inciting rebellion, and carried out underground activities until he was arrested and put under strict investigation by the police authorities there. The objective of his infiltration and his activities that have been confirmed so far through the investigation are

as follows:

"1) Objective of infiltration: To disturb the home front in Manchuria and Korea in the event of the outbreak of a Soviet-Japan War, organize a fifth column with Koreans, and obtain Japanese bank notes.

"2) Activities: Having entered Manchuria from Khabarovsk on the aforementioned mission as an agitation group leader under Kim Il Sung, he allured about 20 insurgent Koreans in Tumen.

"3) Background: As the fact that the headquarters of the fifth column is in Kyongsong (Seoul) has become clear, a close examination is now under way for detailed information."

(Monthly Report by the Special Political Police, p. 82, Public Security Section, Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, February Showa 18 (1943).)

Another important task in speeding up the preparations for national resistance was to build a leadership capable of unified control of the resistance movement in the homeland. After the formation of the Homeland Party Working Committee, groups of Party members were organized in many parts of the country. They gave guidance to the mass organizations. From the late 1930s, area Party committees were organized for unified control of the groups of Party members and anti-Japanese mass organizations spontaneously formed in many areas and started to function as regional leadership bodies.

For example, the Yonsa Area Party Committee was organized by Kim Jong Suk.

In the first half of the 1940s, an area Party committee composed of pioneer communists was organized and active in South Pyongan Province. This committee had subordinate groups of Party members in Pyongyang, Kaechon, Nampho and elsewhere, through which it guided the ARF and the national resistance organizations within the province.

The Chongjin Area Party Committee organized in North Hamgyong Province had many Party cells in the Nihon Iron Works and other factories in Chongjin.

As a result of our active military and political activities to defeat the Japanese imperialists by means of nationwide anti-Japanese resistance, the forces of national resistance grew quickly in the homeland in the first half of the 1940s. The Japanese imperialists claimed that they had discovered more than 180 anti-Japanese underground organizations within Korea in 1942, and that the total membership of these organizations amounted to 500,000. I think if the organizations which escaped the enemy's surveillance were added to this, the number would be much greater.

The common feature notable in the activities of the anti-Japanese organizations at home and abroad in those days was that most of them were developing into political and military organizations, and that their major objective was a popular uprising and armed resistance. In those days many fighting organizations overtly proclaimed their objectives of national resistance, popular uprising, armed revolt, and

participation in the final offensive operations of the KPRA. They even named themselves either "Kim Il Sung Corps" or "Paektusan Association", stressing their direct connection with us.

The "Kim Il Sung Corps" which was organized in Seoul and extended its influence over the area around Mosulpho in Cheju Island and other parts of the homeland and Japan was remarkable in its objective and the mode of its activities as a national resistance organization in the closing period of the anti-Japanese revolution.

I think it was in about June 1945 that this organization became known to the public. At that time, the police department of Niigata Prefecture got a clue about its activities among the Koreans who had been drafted to work as laborers in Japan, and made frantic efforts to ferret it out.

The "Kim Il Sung Corps" struggled with the objective of rallying the broad anti-Japanese masses and preparing them for resistance against the Japanese to participate in the final battle for national liberation, when our revolutionary army would advance to the homeland. This organization struck roots in the major munitions factories, harbors, military construction sites, and other production sites.

According to a secret Japanese document, the corps publicized that the Pacific War would soon end in Japan's defeat, that Korea would become independent, that Korea would adopt a political system under which all the people would live in equality and happiness without any discrimination between the rich and the poor, and that "Kim Il Sung would be the supreme leader of liberated Korea."

Quite a few researchers are of the opinion that the large-scale revolt by the Korean workers at an airfield on Cheju Island in 1942 was masterminded by the "Kim Il Sung Corps". I think there is some truth in that.

Here is an article carried in the American newspaper New York Times, dated July 18, Juche 31(1942).

"KOREANS DAMAGE BIG JAPANESE BASE

"Workers Kill 142 of Air Force in Attack on Quelpart (Cheju Island), at Entrance to Yellow Sea (West Sea of Korea)

"Patriot Uprisings Go On

"WASHINGTON, July 17?Continuing active revolt in Korea against the Japanese resulted in heavy destruction to a Japanese air base on the Island of Quelpart, or Saishu, late in March....

"Quelpart Island is off the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula and commands the Strait of Korea and the entrance to the Yellow Sea (West Sea of Korea).

"On March 29, according to the reports, a force of Korean workers on the island attacked the air base.

They destroyed the wireless station and set fire to four underground hangars. In the attack 142 Japanese pilots and mechanics were killed and another 200 burned or wounded.

"Two gasoline storage tanks and sixty-nine planes were also destroyed. The Japanese later killed all of the 400 Koreans who survived the fighting. "On March 1, the reports said, Koreans dynamited three power plants in Northern Korea."

The Paektusan Association was organized in Songjin (the present Kimchaek City), North Hamgyong Province, in the summer of 1942. According to a Japanese police report, the association was organized under the guidance of a man from Waseda University. The organization was said to have named itself after Mt. Paektu which was our base of operations. The document also said that this association had attempted to join the People's Revolutionary Army and worked to develop national consciousness, for the purpose of achieving Korea's independence.

In the Pyongyang area there was a resistance organization named the Fatherland Liberation Corps, of which my cousin Kim Won Ju was a member. It was an active resistance organization with the main objective of rising in armed revolt in response to the operations of the KPRA to liberate the country. It expanded its ranks among the workers, peasants, youths and students, and other people in Pyongyang, as well as in industrial areas and the countryside in the central and western parts of our country. The organization struck roots even in police establishments and the enemy's government and public offices.

Its policy of action was daring and enterprising. For example, it planned to destroy the organs that were pressing young Koreans into military and labor services; it also planned to get in touch with our unit to obtain weapons and send its elite members to participate in the armed struggle.

It planned to attack police stations and sub-county offices, take back grain which had been delivered, seize documents on military and labor draft work, destroy transport facilities and build a forge on Mt. Kuwol to make swords, spears, and other weapons. All this shows how ambitious its plan of operations was. The leadership of this corps even elaborated an idea of planting its agents in the Japanese army and munitions factories.

According to Won Ju, the Fatherland Liberation Corps was organized at Tudan-ri. Won Ju was arrested for having snatched a pistol from the enemy in the closing days of Japanese rule. After his arrest, policemen pounced upon his house almost every day in search of the pistol he had hidden. When they arrested him, the policemen were said to have clamored that they had captured Kim Il Sung's cousin.

Among the resistance organizations in the homeland, the relatively large ones were the secret society formed in the Nihon Iron Works and the armed-revolt society made up of graduates of Kyongsong Imperial University. The secret society formed in the Nihon Iron Works was an organization made up mainly of workers of this factory under the guidance of a political operative dispatched by one of our small units.



It is not accidental that in the early 1940s an organization for the reconstruction of the Communist Party came into being in the Nihon Iron Works. Quite a few of the leading figures of this organization belonged to the old generation in view of their backgrounds in the communist movement, and had been behind bars more than once owing to their involvement in labor or peasant unions.

The secret society in the Nihon Iron Works made preparations for realizing its main objective, which was to rise in armed revolt in cooperation with the advance of the KPRA into the homeland. It built a secret base in the Puyun area, where it stored weapons, food supplies and medicines, and printed leaflets and pamphlets. It organized action teams in the major industries and even formulated a concrete action plan that specified the date of and the signal for the beginning of the armed revolt, and the places from which to wrest weapons, as well as the procedure for this purpose.

This society also did a useful job of sabotage to slow down the wartime production of the Japanese imperialists, until it was finally uncovered.

This resistance organization had a bold plan to capture an anti-aircraft gun of the Japanese army stationed in the vicinity of the factory. The Anti-Japanese Association in this plant, too, launched a struggle to frustrate iron production at the same time as efforts to stop pig iron from being shipped to Japan. Thanks to its efforts, ships waiting to be loaded with pig iron were often delayed at Chongjin Port for several days.

The armed-revolt society formed in Kyongsong (Seoul) was a large and formidable organization. It included many communists of the older generation as well as a large number of intellectuals. I think it had more intellectual members than any other secret society in the homeland. This organization was also called the Songdae (abbreviation for Kyongsong Imperial University) Secret Society. The incident that was widely talked about as the "Songdae incident" among the people before liberation was the work of this organization. The man who masterminded this organization was one of our operatives.

Both Kim Il Su and So Jung Sok, who formed the armed-revolt society in the Kyongsong area, were veteran communists who had been well-known to me since my days in Jirin.

Kim Il Su had once served as a company commander, along with Lee Yong, the son of Lee Jun, in the Korean Battalion of the Red Guards in the Far East region. I was told he had taken part in several battles to destroy the White army, and rendered distinguished services. In the early 1920s he had also been a member of the Koryo Communist Party headed by Lee Tong Hui. He had also engaged in the activities to reconstruct the Korean Communist Party, and later said that he would never call at the Comintern again with a potato seal, though he still wanted to reconstruct the party, I was told.

He agreed with an open mind to our contention that the party should be built by the method of forming grassroots organizations first, through work among the masses and then organizing the higher echelons, instead of the old method of forming the central body and declaring its inauguration first, and then organizing subordinate organizations. Later he had taken refuge in Manchuria and worked with the East

Manchuria Special District Committee, before getting arrested by the Japanese police and imprisoned for several years. ed many places in search of our unit, I was told. Failing to meet us, he returned to Korea and immersed himself in the working class.

Obviously he expunged the mistakes of his past, in view of the fact that he attached importance to the working class. Both So Jung Sok and his brother So Wan Sok are old acquaintances of mine. Originally, So Jung Sok had belonged to the Seoul group and then transferred to the M-L group. When he was in M-L, he was on intimate terms with Hwang Paek Ha, Hwang Kwi Hon's father. It was when he was engaged in youth work in M-L that I got to know him. Since he was living in the neighborhood of Jang Chol Ho's house, where I was boarding, I became acquainted with him. At that time we had a lot of arguments.

Later, he was said to have given up factional strife. When all others transferred themselves to the CPC, in accordance with the principle of one party for one country, he still stuck to his position to the last, carrying on activities for the reconstruction of the party. Then he was arrested in action and kept behind bars for several years. He was strong in his convictions and principles.

Even after liberation the two brothers worked hard for national reunification and the revolution in south Korea. The resistance fighters in the homeland who had formed the armed-revolt society in Seoul, expanded the organization to the Hungnam Nitrogenous Fertilizer Factory and other factories, mines and schools in many parts of the country. The armed-revolt society in Seoul established a secret base for its activities and carried out a wide scope of activities ranging from the acquisition of weapons and the issuing of publications to the collection of military information. It even taught its members how to handle weapons and gave them military drills.

The students of Kyongsong Imperial University, the only university in Korea during Japanese rule, were considered geniuses, and most of them were sons and daughters of the rich. But the Japanese did not establish the university to enlighten the Koreans. When Koreans launched a campaign to set up their own private university, the Japanese prohibited it, but instead set up a university to produce underlings for their colonial rule, calling it an "imperial university".

It was amazing that an armed-revolt society sprang from such a university. An Hyong Jun also formed national resistance organizations in Seoul, and fought courageously. From his early days he had engaged in the anti-Japanese youth movement in the northern border area under the guidance of my uncle Hyong Gwon.

Under the cover of operating a sort of stock company on Jongno Street in Seoul, with subordinate enterprises, he promoted the work of forming organizations, while working in a big way to raise funds for the revolution. He formed national resistance organizations among the lumberjacks and raftsmen of his subordinate enterprises.

In cooperation with several comrades, he bought an insolvent Japanese tannery dirt cheap, and turned it

into a supply base and rendezvous for the armed-revolt society. The tannery made a profit under his management, and he used this money to purchase weapons and the like, I was told.

After liberation, he served as the first chief of the information department of the People's Committee of Seoul City. Together with Kim Chaek, I met him at the office of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea in the spring of 1946. Lee Kuk Ro and other scholars, who had been associated with the Korean Language Association, formed their own organization and waged a sturdy struggle.

The comrades hailing from North Hamgyong Province often talk proudly of the armed corps of the province, such as the Kkachibong People's Armed Corps in Hoeryong, the Worker-Peasant Armed Corps on Mt. Kom, and the People's Armed Corps in Rajin. It is natural that they take pride in them, for those armed corps played a considerable role.

The Paekui Society, made up of young workers at the Musan Mine. performed information services and conducted struggle, systematically listening to radio broadcasts from the Soviet Union in Korean. There was the Patriotic Corps in Cholsan, the Anti-Japanese Armed Corps of the Sunan Iron Works, and other armed corps with various names all across the country. Many of them were organized by people who had once worked with us or who had been dispatched by us.

The resistance organizations active in the Hungnam area under our influence worked at the risk of their lives to frustrate the Japanese imperialists' top-secret scheme to develop a weapon of mass destruction, with the result that the project never materialized before Japan's defeat. In the Hochon area, South Hamgyong Province, where Lee Kwi Hyon, who in his early days had once taken part in the building of anti-Japanese mass organizations in the Phungsan area along with Park In Jin and Lee Chang Son, was active on a mission, the workers on a power station construction site and many other patriots formed an organization and waged a daring struggle.

A national resistance organization was even formed within the Japanese aggressor army. You are probably well aware of the famous incident of mass desertion in 1944 by young Koreans who had been drafted into the navy at Jinhae. Convinced that the war would end in the defeat of the Japanese imperialists, they said they would rather join Kim Il Sung's army and fight under him to make a contribution to Korea's independence than die in vain as draftees of the doomed armed forces.

When I was on a visit to China one year, Zhou En-lai and Peng DeJuzai told me that during the anti-Japanese war a good many young Koreans in the Japanese army had come over to their side with their arms and requested that they be sent to Kim Il Sung's army, but that owing to unavoidable circumstances they had not complied with their request, and instead transferred them to the Volunteers Corps in North China.

In the 30th division of the Japanese army stationed in Pyongyang, young Koreans were said to have formed an anti-Japanese armed student-soldier corps and planned to join the KPRA en masse. This armed corps was a well-formed organization. It had two detachments under it; and each detachment had

four or five subordinate units under it. It is said that at first the corps was uncertain about its course of action, but at last it got in touch with us and began to act in the right direction. This corps had a very ambitious action plan. They planned to desert their barracks on the Harvest Moon Day and assemble at the foot of Pukdae Hill in Yangdok County, and then move over mountain ranges to the deep forests around Pochonbo, capturing weapons, ammunition and food by attacking police stations and gendarmes.

Then, they intended to reinforce themselves with conscription and labor draft evaders who were hiding in the mountains, build a base for their activities, and launch guerrilla actions until they could link up with the main force of the KPRA to take part in the operations to liberate the country. At the final operations meeting they made preparations down to every detail to join the KPRA under the motto "To Mt. Paektu". But the plan came to naught due to the carelessness of one of them. In those days the Japanese military clamored that that was the most mutinous plot since the foundation of their army.

A considerable number of communists who had been associated with various organizations in the homeland also joined us in the decisive battle to destroy the Japanese imperialists, in support of the line of national resistance. Lee Hyon Sang got to know about our policy of national resistance when he was serving a term in Sodaemun Prison in connection with a communist group incident. He heard about it from Park Tal, Kwon Yong Byok, and Rile Sun, who were in the same prison. He immediately went on hunger-strike, aiming to get out of the prison by all means and form a resistance corps for the looming showdown with the Japanese.

Released on parole because of illness caused by his 20-odd-day hunger-strike, he recuperated for some time and then went to Mt. Jiri, where he formed a small armed unit with the young people and students who were in hiding there to evade conscription and labor draft.

There Lee Hyon Sang built his base in the form of a liberated zone. It is said that he dispatched a messenger to Mt. Paektu to get in touch with us for joint operations. Jo Tong Uk, whom we had sent to Seoul, also made good preparations for national resistance. The June 6 Union he formed had several subordinate legal organizations like a mountaineering club and a football club. It established close ties with other anti-Japanese organizations in Seoul, I was told. Even after liberation, he remained in Seoul, doing his best to steer the youth movement in south Korea in the way we intended. As soon as he came to Pyongyang, he called on me to report the results of his activities over the previous ten years.

Kim Sam Ryong was one of those who formed secret organizations in prison and fought to implement our policy of national resistance. During his time in Sodaemun Prison in Seoul he organized a communist circle and launched a campaign against the Japanese imperialists' coercive conversion attempts. He had been put behind bars due to his involvement in the same communist group incident as Lee Hyon Sang had. After the formation of the communist group, he had worked as the chief of the organizational department of the group. The communist group in Seoul was an organization set up to reconstruct the Korean Communist Party.

Many of those who had been involved in this group supported our leadership of the communist

movement in the homeland, and later joined the national resistance movement. As I said previously, our operatives infiltrated the very heart of Seoul, distributed the ten-point program among the members of the communist group and informed them of the battle achievements of the KPRA.

The communist group in Seoul had different trade unions in factories and enterprises in the Seoul area under its control, and conducted various forms of anti-Japanese struggle. Kim Sam Ryong, who had organized and guided the struggle, did not yield to the enemy even behind bars. After coming over to the north from Seoul, Park Tal often told me that Kim Sam Ryong was a revolutionary with a strong sense of duty and principle. According to Park Tal, Kim was one of the few comrades who resisted the Japanese to the last.

Like Lee Hyon Sang, Kim Sam Ryong also met Park Tal in Sodaemun Prison. The two men seemed to have become close friends in the prison. It was Kim Sam Ryong who took Park Tal to Seoul Hospital after the latter's release from prison, and took care of him devotedly. When Park Tal was coming to Pyongyang at our invitation, Kim arranged everything for Park's trip. Through Park Tal, he sent me a letter of greetings.

Kim Sam Ryong was a Party worker with strong convictions and skilful organizational ability, a patriot who devoted all his life to the country, the nation and the communist cause. When the South Korean Workers' Party was outlawed, we worried about his safety, and advised him to come to the north without hesitation if the situation became critical. However, he did not quit his post, but continued to carry on Party work in south Korea responsibly underground. Betrayed by turncoats, he was arrested by the south Korean police and executed.

In the first half of the 1940s, our revolution prepared all the people to the full in anticipation of the great event of national liberation. What made the enemy's ruling system crumble so quickly in our country in August 1945? It was because our national resistance organizations rose up in all parts of the country and destroyed the Japanese ruling machinery.

Soviet publications write about the anti-Japanese struggle activated in the first half of the 1940s by the national resistance forces organized in all parts of the Korean peninsula. One of them reads in part:

"During the Pacific War the anti-Japanese movement in Korea gained a higher momentum, putting Japan off-balance.

"Cases of sabotage in Japanese military establishments were recorded in large numbers. For instance, seven waggons loaded with military supplies were blown up and a paper mill burnt down in Sinuiju in February 1942. In Unggi (present-day Sonbong) six oil tanks were blown up and oil depots were burnt down. On Cheju Island Korean workers employed at a Japanese air base destroyed 69 Japanese planes" (Korea, pp. 43-44, V. Yarovoy, the Soviet Naval Forces Press, September 1945.)

During the preparations for the final offensive to liberate the country, our nation exerted all its efforts.

The patriotic forces of our nation were united and mobilized to the fullest for national resistance against the Japanese. This was a new development of our revolution in the first half of the 1940s as well as a prominent success. It can be said that the two forces, communism and nationalism opposed to each other, came into collaboration in this period, transcending differences of ideology.

Was Lee Yong a communist? No. He was originally a nationalist, and, what is more, belonged to the old generation like my father. However, he worked with us. A true patriot does not take issue with anybody about communism or nationalism.

Was Kim Gu a communist? No. He was a nationalist as well as a die-hard anti-communist. But he even appealed to the Korean compatriots in the United States to send us the war supplies. Later, he even dispatched a messenger to establish a military link-up with us. It was not because they espoused communism that the Korean students studying in Japan vowed that they would become Kim Il Sung's soldiers. It was because they knew that the way to Mt. Paektu was the way to patriotism and to national independence.

Arguing about ideologies and doctrines is no way to national unity. We must find a common denominator and make it absolute, burying our doctrinal differences, as we did when heralding the great event of national liberation in the first half of the 1940s. Hence the importance of the experiences and lessons of the anti-Japanese revolution.

## 24.3. The Breakthrough in the Operations against Japan

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When preparing for the final operations against Japan to liberate the country, the KPRA (Korean People's Revolutionary Army) took the lead in making a breakthrough.

The activities of the KPRA for the preparation and execution of the operations against Japan were carried out directly through the chain of command of its main force as a component of the IAF (International Allied Forces), as well as through its detachments under the control of the IAF. To step up reconnaissance work, especially joint reconnaissance by the IAF, in preparation for operations was a pressing need in view of the prevailing situation at the time. In order to obtain information about the strategy of the Japanese imperialists, it was necessary to conduct intensive reconnaissance in Manchuria and Korea, especially in the areas bordering on the Soviet Union, as well as widespread intelligence activities in Japan proper.

In the first half of the 1940s, when we were anticipating the great event of national liberation, we were faced with an immensely heavy task of reconnaissance, incomparably greater than in the previous period.

At that time we were preparing for a final showdown with the Japanese imperialists. That required reconnaissance of a large number of targets. Previously we used to select a single or a few prize targets at a time, mainly for raiding, demolition or ambush, so reconnaissance had been limited to these targets. But now the enemy's military posts, fortified areas, airfields, gun positions and all the other hostile elements had to be reconnoitered. Even the seats of reactionary organizations their structural characteristics and the sentiments of the Public came within the range of our reconnaissance. Another reason why we attached importance to reconnaissance in this period was that the Japanese army had stepped up its movements, and there were frequent changes in its chain of command.

When Germany started to invade the Soviet Union, the Japanese military dispatched hundreds of thousands of troops to Manchuria as reinforcements for the Kwangtung Army, in an attempt to push north if the Nazi army occupied Moscow and threw the Soviet Union into confusion. Seeing the Nazi army bogged down, unable to occupy Moscow, the cunning Japanese military judged that a push north was premature, and shifted most of their forces massed in Manchuria to the south, attacking Pearl Harbor and occupying Singapore, in pursuance of their policy of "defending the north and attacking the south". This entailed the movement of troops, weapons and equipment.

The soldiers of the KPRA trekked about the vast expanse of Manchuria and the homeland, collecting a lot of information necessary for the operations to liberate the country. I considered most important information about the fortresses and fortified areas on the borders between Korea and the Soviet Union, between Korea and Manchuria, and between the Soviet Union and Manchuria. But for this information, it

would have been impossible for us to carry out the operations against Japan as successfully as we did. It was because we had scouted the enemy so thoroughly that the Kwangtung Army, the elite of the enemy forces, that had bragged of being the “son of tiger”, surrendered without offering any resistance worth mentioning.

It was natural that the Japanese boasted of these fortified areas as impregnable. The world knew well that the French Maginot Line and the German Siegfried Line were imposing fortifications, but not much was known about the Japanese fortresses.

The Japanese fortifications covered a distance of 1,000 kilometers in all. Over a long period of time, the Japanese had constructed them with the use of huge amounts of materials. Each fortified stretch consisted of 500 concrete and earthen pillboxes on the average, in addition to command posts, observation posts, artillery positions, all sorts of troop shelters and combat trenches, communication trenches, and anti-tank and anti-personnel barriers - a network of fortifications tight enough to prevent the infiltration of an ant. The fact that the main force of the Kwangtung Army was positioned in these fortifications shows how much strategic importance the Japanese military attached to them. That was why we put priority efforts into the reconnaissance of these fortifications.

When I was moving in command of a small unit to and from Manchuria and the homeland, our team once passed through the northern flank of the fortifications at Dongxingzhen, where we often encountered the enemy's pillboxes and well-covered troop shelters. When we woke up early in the morning from our bivouac overnight, we often found ourselves either on the roof of an underground structure or near a concrete pillbox built by the enemy.

Once we bivouacked at the foot of a mountain where an enemy's gentry post was situated. I woke my men up quietly and took them out of range of the enemy's observation. When I asked them during breakfast if they knew that they had slept right under an enemy sentry post, they were wild with surprise.

For the reconnaissance of a fortified area I used to dispatch several parties of scouts. For instance, responsibility for observing the fortifications at Kyonghung (present-day Undok) was given to a dozen scouting parties. Similarly in Hunchun, Dongxingzhen and Dongning. Our scouts in those days would penetrate the enemy's fortifications and return with even the scraps of concrete they had chipped from a pillbox.

A piece of string or a ruler could be used to measure the size of a concrete pillbox or the caliber of a gun, but it was indeed difficult beyond imagination to take away concrete scraps, unnoticed by the enemy's sentry. Our comrades, however, made a fine job of it. Our comrades reconnoitered not only the fortifications in the border area but also those in Rajin, Chongjin, Wonsan and those in Jinhae and Ryosu, as far as the southern tip of the homeland.

The scouts discovered everything that needed to be detected the layout of the fortifications, number of guns, landing-strips, planes and troops, harbor facilities, tonnage of enemy warships, the procedures of



entry into harbors, the location of communication centers, depots of military supplies, and so on.

In scouting the fortifications and fortified areas, O Paek Ryong and his party, including Kim Chol Man, Han Chon Chu, and Kim Hyok Chol, performed outstanding exploits. This party carried out dozens of reconnaissance missions in the homeland.

Initially they made use of pigeons for communication, for want of wireless equipment. Reaching their destinations, they would write a report on a slip of paper, put it into a tiny aluminum cylinder attached to a pigeon's leg, and let the bird loose, so reporting their arrival. But from 1942 onward, most of the small units and scouting parties that infiltrated into the homeland and Manchuria made use of wireless equipment.

Entering the homeland, they would wear ordinary civilian clothes. They would subsist on rations they carried with them and would travel on foot, avoiding trains, buses or even horses. We familiarized the scouts with the geography, customs and dialects of their destinations. The enemy guards were always vigilant against the infiltration of the small units and parties of the KPRA across the Tuman and the northern border. They would stretch something like thread over the hillocks through which the small units or panics might possibly infiltrate, and keep constant watch. When they found the thread broken, they used to order out the soldiers and policemen stationed there as well as the local inhabitants for searches. Occasionally they would discover the footprints of our scouts.

O Paek Ryong's scouting party had many hair-raising experiences. His party once encountered a rabid element of the Home Guard on the Josul Pass on their way from Unggi (present-day Sonbong) to Kyonghung (present-day Undok). Finding his dead body the following morning, the enemy made a thorough search of the pass even by ordering out hundreds of the local inhabitants. Even when they saw our comrades hiding in the thicket of oaks, the local people feigned ignorance.

That day Kim Chol Man hung on a branch of an oak tree a slip of paper with an inscription reading, "We are the revolutionary army fighting for Korea's independence." Reading the notice, the inhabitants whispered among themselves before shouting that there was nobody there, and proceeding to another valley.

O Paek Ryong's party set up many temporary secret bases during their work in the homeland. The secret bases on Mt. Poroji, at Jagunkamacwon and on Mt. Chonghak were established by them. From these bases, our scouts carried out work among the masses on their own initiative, during which they got to know many good people. Our comrades persuaded an old charcoal burner to obtain information and buy newspapers and magazines for them. When the old man became familiar with information collection, they gave him an assignment to scout the ports at Chongjin and Wonsan. Staying at a relative's house in Wonsan, the old man scouted the fortress there for a long time, obtaining important information for O Paek Ryong's reconnaissance party.

O Paek Ryong had enlisted in his scouting activities a man who had been fanning and burning charcoal

deep in the forest of Mt. Poroji. This man spoke Japanese quite well, so O Paek Ryong trained him for some time and then dispatched him to Japan. In those days the Japanese army used to ship horses from that region to Japan every autumn. When they did so they would select Koreans to escort the horses. O Paek Ryong got this man to slip into the ranks of the horse escorts. This man also tried hard to gain information about the sea routes between Rajin and Niigata, and between Chongjin and Tsuruga.

What was characteristic of the activities of O Paek Ryong's party was that the range of their activities was wide and the information they obtained was very accurate. Even information on the fortifications in Jinhac, Masan, Pusan, and other areas on the southern tip of Korea was obtained by agents dispatched by O's party. One agent sent to Pusan was said to have carried out his mission while working as a dealer in miscellaneous goods. One of our operatives also was active in the fortress in Ryosu.

O's party conducted their reconnaissance activities on a large scale, yet in a skilful and accurate way. The landing operations at the major ports of Rajin, Unggi, and Chongjin on the east coast for the war against Japan were planned by the Soviet army, based entirely on the information obtained by O's party, which made reconnaissance of the ports in a daring and unique way.

Kim Hyok Chol was a hero of the KPRA produced by this reconnaissance party. He died on his tenth mission to the homeland. One of his group of three men on that mission was suffering from arthritis. The group carried out their mission successfully, but got into trouble because the sick man could hardly walk. Kim Hyok Chol carried this man on his back. As it was snowing heavily they plodded along with great difficulty, and because they were late reaching the rendezvous across the river, their guide there had withdrawn. The leader of the group went down to a village to obtain food for his comrades, who had been starving for days. Meanwhile, Kim Hyok Chol did his best for the sick comrade, but the latter died.

Kim Hyok Chol himself was so exhausted that he was reduced to crawling through the snow. Before long, he too died. Many soldiers died of hunger like him during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The following spring local villagers found his body, and buried it by the Tuman River. Beside him they buried the sick man he had tried to save. It is said that Kim Hyok Chol was still grasping his pistol when he died, so the local people must have known that he and his comrade were guerrillas.

Kim Hyok Chol had been recruited by Kim Jong Suk during her underground activities in Taoquanli. He was very courageous and loyal. The volunteers from Taoquanli all fought courageously.

The fortifications in Kyonghung were scouted by Son Thae Chun's party. They also worked efficiently. They collected a lot of information from a temporary secret base they had set up on the mountain at the back of Unggi. When surrounded by the enemy in the summer of 1942, Son Thae Chun fought them barehanded, before dying a heroic death. He had been transferred to our main force from the Helong guerrilla unit. In our unit, he had served as a squad leader and then a platoon leader. Park Yong Sun and Kim Ju Hyon, who hailed from Helong, used to praise him a lot, saying that he was intelligent and upright, had strong convictions and principles, and was full of ardor.

Their praise was no exaggeration. Son was greatly loved by his comrades. In terms of his service record in the guerrilla army, he was a veteran like Kim Ju Hyon. He was a handsome man with wavy hair. The following episode shows what sort of man he was. When he was living in Helong he was engaged to marry a girl. But misfortune befell them when the girl's brother, a revolutionary, was arrested and imprisoned and, to make matters worse, the girl's family got their house foreclosed by the landlord and had to live in a hut where the bier and other funeral equipment were kept by the village. In those days Son Thae Chun was doing YCL (Young Communists League) work at Changrenjiang. The plight of his fiancée's family grieved him sorely.

However, he had no means to help her out. He racked his brains and called at the house of a man called Kim, a YCL member, in a nearby village. He met Kim's father and asked him if he would give him an ox in exchange for his introduction of a girl who could be a good daughter-in-law. Interested in the good "daughter-in-law", Kim's father replied that he would not object to the idea if Son would pay for the ox in a few years' time. By a "good daughter-in-law" Son meant his fiancée's family to help them get back their house. Thus he saved her family from the crisis. Only then did he meet his fiancée and tell her everything.

At first the girl protested in tears that she would never marry a stranger. Son persuaded her, saying, "Why should I be willing to let you marry a stranger? But can we not sacrifice our love for the sake of your father, mother, elder brother, elder sister, and younger brothers and sisters who are crying over their ill-treatment by the landlord? Please don't object to my idea any more." The girl just sobbed and cried sadly, making no further remark.

As bad luck would have it, however, the enemy's "punitive" force pounced upon the village on the day of her marriage, causing pandemonium in the village and driving both the bridegroom and bride to flee from the house. With all the family scattered, the bridegroom joined the guerrilla army and the bride remained in the enemy-held area, continuing her work in the YCL.

Son Thae Chun, too, joined the guerrilla army. The bridegroom Kim fell in battle while serving with the Wangqing guerrillas. The girl, who had suffered one misfortune after another, lived alone for the rest of her life, unable to forget Son, I was told. I always used to send Son Thae Chun on difficult missions. He took part in every major battle I organized and commanded, among them the battles at Jiansanfeng, Musan and Hongqihe, each time displaying unrivalled courage and heroism. During the battle at Hongqihe he carried out his duty responsibly as a frontline scout.

Like O Thae Hui's in Wangqing, Son Thae Chun's family was a revolutionary family who laid down their lives in the war against the Japanese. Son Thae I, Son Thue Un, Son Thae Ryong and many other brothers of his fell in action while fighting in the guerrilla army and revolutionary organizations. Kim Hak Song died while reconnoitering the fortifications at Kyonghung. He was also surrounded by the enemy as Son Thae Chun had been. He handed over the information he had gathered to Kim Pong Sok and lured the enemy towards himself to his last moment. Han Thae Ryong's reconnaissance party participated in scouting the fortresses at Chongjin and Ranam. They carried out their mission by

disguising themselves sometimes as Japanese gendarmes, sometimes as shoemakers and sometimes as rickshaw pullers.

However well they disguised themselves and however skillfully they acted according to the circumstances, they were unable to gain information on an anti-aircraft artillery position on a mountain because of strict surveillance by the enemy. Their object was to ascertain the calibers of the guns and their number, but it was difficult to approach the area. One day they saw an old man pulling a handcart up the hill towards the position of the guns.

In sympathy for the old man, they pushed the cart from behind. He thanked them and, hearing Han Thae Ryong lamenting their lot of "wandering and begging", he sympathized with him, saying that the Koreans could live only when the Japanese perished. Not missing this chance, Han said, pointing at the gun position; "When they have so many guns, why should they perish?"

With a wry smile on his face, the old man replied, "Most of those guns on that mountain are fake, you know. Only a few of them are real; the rest are all made of wood. They used to cut the trees here, strip them of branches and paint them, and carry them to the position." The old man knew the disposition of all the enemy forces in the Chongjin area, the times of arrival and departure of the ships at the Chongjin Port and the details of the cargo they transported. What the old man said agreed exactly with information obtained through other channels, I was told. Scouting of the fortified areas and fortresses in Onsong, Kyongwon, Kyongliung and other parts of the northern border region.

Park Kwang Son's scouting party combined reconnaissance skillfully with work among the masses. While concentrating on reconnaissance, they never neglected political work aimed at educating the masses along revolutionary lines. Their efficient work among the masses encouraged the people to help them in carrying out their reconnaissance. In Onsong, Unggi, Kyongwon, Kyonghung, and Rajin there were many organizations we had formed from the early 1930s. Park's party were able to obtain much information because they set these organizations in motion again.

After liberation, recalling his days of small-unit actions, Park Kwang Son said that his scouting party owed a great deal of their success to the inhabitants of Onsong during their activities in the northern area of North Hamgyong Province. They found that the inhabitants were either organization members who had been ceaselessly assisting the guerrilla army, living under the great influence of the "Jirin Wind" and "Jiandao Wind" from the early 1930s or their descendants.

He also said that the village headman with whom they had joined hands unexpectedly in Onsong was a member of an underground organization. The village headman would warn them not to cross the Tuman on such and such a night, because an instruction had been issued to guard the ferry strictly. He also told them that they would find such and such a place safe to tap a telephone giving them necessary information.

Among those who helped Park's party, there was a man serving as a corporal in the gendarme squad

stationed in Namyang, I was told. It was rare for a Korean to become a corporal in the Japanese gendarmerie. There were some Koreans like Hong Jong U working as assistant gendarmes, but the rank of corporal was exceptional for Koreans.

Park Kwang Son's party decided to win over the corporal. They found that he was a special member of the ARF who had been in touch with Son Jang Chun since the early 1940s. After the death of Son Jang Qiu while carrying out small-unit activities in Kyongwon County, the corporal had been lying low, waiting for the re-establishment of connection with the People's Revolutionary Army. The corporal handed over to the scouting party every piece of information he had obtained from the gendarmerie. He also provided security for the members of the small units of the KPRA and of revolutionary organizations.

When one small unit was arrested, the corporal got them set free by claiming that they were undercover agents of his gendarme unit. Namyang was a relay point between the fortifications in the border area and Japan proper. The important road and railway as well as the communications network linking the northern border area of our country with Northeast China ran mainly through Namyang, and even the material supplies for aggression on the continent had to pass through Namyang to get to Northeast China.

In the light of this, it was a great success in the activities in the enemy area that this scouting party drew the corporal in Namyang into intelligence service for us. The small units and groups of the KPRA boldly enlisted even the servants of the enemy organs in reconnaissance. An office boy of the police station in Sosura rendered great help to our men who were scouting the fortifications in Kyonghung and the fortresses in Rajin.

After gaining the confidence of the chief of the police station through his devoted service, he collected various bits of information, and even got access to a top-secret military document in the end. Even among the Japanese policemen in Chonghak, which Han Chang Bong and Jo Myong Son frequented during their activities in the northern border area, there was a man who, under their influence, gave active assistance to our intelligence activities.

Through their reconnaissance activities, our small units and groups kept a constant watch over the Japanese imperialists' operations and troop movements, while gathering a lot of valuable information useful for reference in the planning of our final offensive. As the Japanese often made feints, our comrades had to repeat their reconnaissance frequently. In spite of every conceivable kind of trickery, the enemy could not deceive our scouts.

Yun Thae Hong, too, gathered accurate information about the makeup of the first directional army of the Kwangtung Army, thus making a great contribution to the planning of operations against Japan by the Headquarters of the IAF.

We also paid great attention to infiltrating a great number of operatives into the enemy-held areas on a long-term basis. In those days many of our operatives worked in various important positions in enemy

establishments, even in the Japanese army units, not to speak of the puppet Manchukuo army and police.

Underground workers were guided by an important principle that required them not to leave their work place at their own discretion unless recalled by those who had sent them. They were pledged not to divulge their secret work, at the cost of their lives. Our comrades indeed lived up to this principle with their lives.

Let me take the case of Ji Kyong Su for example. Our Headquarters assigned him to the task of keeping himself entrenched in the enemy area for a long time, carrying out underground activities in the Soviet Manchurian border area.

With his operational funds, Ji Kyong Su purchased land and a house, and also married. Pretending to be a landowner, he shrewdly got on intimate terms with Japanese soldiers and policemen, gleaning top-secret information from them and reporting it regularly to Headquarters. His information proved its worth in the operations for the final offensive for the liberation of the country.

Even after liberation, we did not recall him, because we judged that his work post would be the venue of the decisive battle with Chiang Jieshi's army before long. When his area was liberated, he gave up his land and house, and so escaped being attacked by the newly liberated peasants.

Some time later, however, the area fell under the rule of the Kuomintang army. He took back his land from his tenants, and behaved as a landowner again, making friends with senior officers of the Kuomintang army and drawing valuable information from them. However, when Northeast China was liberated from the rule of the Kuomintang army, Ji Kyong Su, who had performed distinguished services in silence, was branded as a reactionary and brought to trial. He was nearly beaten to death by the peasants. Even while being flogged, he did not reveal his real identity.

He would have suffered greater mishaps if our comrades who were at his trial had not vouched for him as a soldier of the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army. Hearing the news, I immediately recalled him to the homeland.

In Mijiang, Hunchun County, there is a place called Ssoksaegol, where an old man called Ryom was eking out a living by hunting. In those days the Japanese imperialists did not give permission to ordinary people to hunt unless they promised to help them with their intelligence work. Old man Ryom obtained a hunting license only after promising to do so. Im Chol's scouting party, which had been operating in the Tumen area, got this old man to play a double game by giving false information to the enemy, while giving authentic information to the guerrillas.

Im Chol's party succeeded in their reconnaissance of the Tumen area because they made effective use of this old man. Previously other parties dispatched to the Tumen area had all failed in their mission due to the counterintelligence of the enemy. Tumen was the base of the Japanese imperialist secret intelligence services, as well as of their army and police.

After liberation, the inhabitants of the area, regarding Ryom as a reactionary who had worked as an agent of the Japanese, confiscated all of his property. Like Ji Kyong Su, the old man seemed to have had a hard time of it at his trial. In early 1946, Im Chol vouched for his real identity. Afterwards, old man Ryom was held in respect as a patriot. With the war against Japan impending, the military and political activities to make a breakthrough in the operations were stepped up.

With their defeat in the offing, the Japanese political and military circles came up with an assertion that they should "defend Korea to the last". They insisted that in the system of their self-support and self-protection Korea would be not only the supply base for their continental war, the last war base, but also a lifeline for keeping Japan alive to the last. Their "doctrine of the defense of Korea to the last" meant that they were prepared to fall back on Korea to make a last-ditch effort to survive. To translate this doctrine into practice signified that Korea would be the ground of the final battle to annihilate the Japanese imperialists.

With this understanding, we channeled great efforts into ferreting out the enemy's important military secrets, by reinforcing the reconnaissance of the homeland. Of these efforts, the scouting of the enemy's airfields was specially important. Escalating their war, the Japanese imperialists had built or expanded many airfields in Korea and Manchuria. In our country they had built them in the east coast area; those in Chongjin and Kilju had been built in the course of their expansion of the war.

Surprisingly enough, at the new airfield in Kilju the planes had all nose-dived each time they had taken off. Only after several test flights did the Japanese realize that there was an air pocket over the Kilju area. They soon closed it down. Owing to the construction of this airfield, many peasants had been driven from their land. Even this information was collected by our comrades who had been dispatched to the east coast area. Those who had reconnoitered the Hoeryong airfield confirmed that only a few of the planes there were real, and the rest were all fake.

Kim Ja Rin's reconnaissance party, that had gone as far as Pyongyang by way of the east coast, climbed Moran Hill, from where they photographed the airfield. The airfield had a repair shop for planes and lorries, and a number of attached buildings such as spare parts depot, transportation workshop, dispensary and canteen. The reconnaissance party photographed all of them, after entering the airfield disguised as Japanese gendarmes.

Kim Tae Hong who had been dispatched to northern Manchuria, also reconnoitered an airfield adroitly. Under the guise of a day laborer, he scouted an airfield on the Soviet-Manchurian border area for four months. The airfield had no more than 20 real planes; the rest were sham ones, I was told.

Our scouts went through many hardships. Some of them had to hide in a ditch near a railway line for several days to reconnoiter the movements of military trains. Others had to ensconce themselves in holes in the ground all day long, sweating heavily on sweltering summer days, just to find out the state of the enemy's tactical training. I still remember the activities of a scouting party the members of which all died heroically in the course of working several hundred kilo-meters away from the training base.

On the appointed days they used to report the results of reconnaissance to Headquarters by wireless. Their information was rich and accurate, and reported in time so that it greatly satisfied not only us but also the Soviet comrades. One day, however, the party gave us an emergency call by radio, reporting that they had been surrounded by the enemy, their wireless equipment had been set up on a mountain top, and that they were sending their last message.

The message reported that the enemy had surrounded the mountain where the wireless equipment was and was closing in on them; a young soldier had gone out first to fight a do-or-die battle and fell; he had been followed by a veteran soldier, who also died. The operator herself, after sending the message, would explode a handful of grenades to kill at least one more enemy before dying. After transmitting this message, the wireless operator, who hailed from southern Manchuria, died a heroic death.

Kim Hong Su also died a heroic death. He went out towards Hunchun in 1943 on a reconnaissance mission but was arrested. The enemy put him to all kinds of severe torture to squeeze his secrets out of him, but to no avail. Finally the enemy pushed him into a potato grinder, and ground him to death. An article about his death was highlighted in the newspaper of the IAF. I had loved this soldier dearly because he had always taken quiet care of any difficult job.

Ji Pong Son also fell in Hunchun in the spring of the same year while on a reconnaissance mission there.

There would be no end to it if I were to talk about all the reconnaissance activities of the small units and groups of the KPRA and their heroic struggles. The successes we achieved in the period of reconnaissance activities in the enemy rear, making a breakthrough in the operations against Japan, would have been inconceivable apart from support from the people. We received great help from the people in those days.

From the outset of our preparations for the difficult scouting activities in the enemy area I had expected much help from the people, and emphatically told the members of the small units and groups over and over again that they should rely on the people and get their help without fail. In the meantime, I was somewhat worried that the new way of struggle in the form of reconnaissance in the enemy areas might not bring us into intimate and blood ties with the people and enable us to enjoy their understanding, sympathy and support as had been the case when we had been waging guerrilla warfare in large units, making us known widely in both Northeast China and the homeland.

But this arduous struggle of blazing a bloody trail in the operations against Japan gained us support and encouragement from the people at every step of the way, and vindicated our constant belief in and reliance on the people.

In this period we realized even more keenly that the people were fighting, believing in our KPRA and looking up to Mt. Paektu just as we believed in the people and relied on them. As long as we believe in the people, and the people believe in us, and the entire nation supports us, we will surely emerge



victorious? this truth, this conviction, inspired us with the greatest strength and courage, and gave us great strength for the decisive battle to annihilate the Japanese imperialists.

The hundreds and thousands of pieces of information we obtained through our reconnaissance work rendered us great help in the preparation for the operations against Japan and for the final victory. But for such daring and wide-ranging reconnaissance activities of the KPRA, the operations against Japan to destroy the one-million-strong Kwangtung Army would not have resulted in such a quick victory.

Precisely for this reason we take great pride and confidence in the fact that the KPRA made a breakthrough in the war against Japan at the cost of blood through the positive activities of its small units and groups and through their persistent and daring reconnaissance activities in the first half of the 1940s, thus playing the leading and decisive role in annihilating the Japanese imperialists.

## 24.4. The Spirit of the Nation

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In the first half of the 1940s the Korean people were challenged to decide whether they could exist as a nation or not, and whether their downtrodden national character could revive or not. The Korean people faced oblivion unless they accepted Japanese surnames, bowed at Shinto shrines and abandoned their own language and spoke Japanese. That was the fate forced upon them by the Japanese.

In these tragic circumstances Korean patriots and progressive intellectuals fought stoutly to preserve the spirit of the nation, turning to Mt. Paektu, where the brilliant commander General Kim Il Sung was fighting against the Japanese. Following is the great leader's recollection of their struggle.

With the start of the 1940s, the Japanese imperialists made frantic efforts to make Koreans their "imperial subjects". Their attempt to Japanize in a few decades the Korean nation with a history of 5,000 years clearly shows how villainous their colonial policy was. The first song they taught primary schoolchildren was the song of the rising-sun flag. In this way, the Japanese imperialists forced "loyalty and patriotism" upon children from their primary school days.

It was not without reason that a textbook for children contained a story about Nogi, a fanatic emperor-worshiper who demonstrated his "loyalty" by committing a suicide. To instill "loyalty and patriotism" in children they had to hold up such a ringleader of militarism as Nogi as an example of loyalty and filial piety. The "oath of imperial subjects" and the "exercise of imperial subjects", too, were imposed upon the Koreans to assimilate them as Japanese.

Being robbed of natural resources was, of course, as painful as losing a piece of flesh. Not satisfied with the plunder of our resources, the Japanese went so far as to take away brass bowls, spoons, chopsticks, candlesticks and wine cups used for ancestral rites. In the end they even pulled out hairpins from women's hair.

There used to be a lot of big trees on Mt. Kumgang. But, after provoking the war against China, they cut down all the giant trees around the temples on Mt. Kumgang and took them away. They plundered an enormous amount of other wealth, too much for us to calculate. So the Korean people were indignant.

What we resented more bitterly, however, was that the Japanese went through the catalogue of vices to obliterate the national character of Koreans. They forced Koreans to wear colored clothes instead of their traditional white garments, change their family names, use the Japanese language, worship at Shinto shrines, pay silent tribute at noon and what not, just as they did.

What I detested most about the Japanese doings at that time was that they banned the Korean language and forced my compatriots to speak Japanese. A nation is characterized primarily by the community of blood and language. Without its language, the Korean nation could not exist.

Compelling Koreans to speak Japanese was nothing but an attempt to exterminate the Korean nation. A nation that has lost its language ceases to exist. The Japanese imperialists touted the slogan, "The oneness of Japan and Korea must begin with everyday use of the Japanese language" and forced Koreans to speak Japanese at home, in church and even in bath houses, to say nothing of government offices, companies, schools and factories. The newspaper Komin Nippo was devoted exclusively to the dissemination of the Japanese language.

They were so frenzied about spreading the Japanese language that they coerced Korean writers to write in Japanese and published the magazine National Literature in Japanese. In the closing days of Japanese rule, at least one act of a play had to be performed in Japanese. In my chat with Hwang Chol, Mun Ye Bong and Jo Ryong Chul after liberation, they said that Korean film stars had been forced to practice Japanese pronunciation and that Korean singers had been compelled to sing at least one stanza of a Korean song in Japanese when recording their songs. In the end they launched a "people's singing campaign" and forced people to sing even fascist war songs in Japanese.

Students who did not speak Japanese were regarded as seditious. Government offices refused to deal with those who spoke Korean and crossed their names from the rationing list. Korean-speaking people were even denied train tickets.

"Kamidana" was a box in Japanese style which contained a tablet with the name *ama-tera-su oh-mi-kami*, the purported founder of Japan, written on it. The Japanese imperialists forced every family to hang up such a box and trumpeted that "Japanese and Koreans are of the same descent." After liberation I learned that a person had served a prison term because he had defecated near a Shinto shrine.

When I was at the training base in the Far East of the Soviet Union, I was told that a farmer had changed his family name because the Japanese threatened him to expel his child from school if he refused to adopt a Japanese family name. He was so remorseful at having disgraced his ancestors that he drowned himself.

In such an oppressive world, even the alive are as good as dead. It is not surprising that the aggressors who occupy other countries pursue a policy of assimilation in their colonies. Each assimilated its colonies in its own style, Turkey in Bulgaria, the United Kingdom in Ireland, Imperial Russia in Poland and France in Vietnam. But the Japanese imperialists were the only ones that deprived the people under their occupation of their language, spoken and written, and forced them to change their names. What evil would they refrain from doing, these barbarians who did not hesitate to break into the royal palace in Seoul and murder Queen Min at the end of the last century? Koreans were in fact poised between life and death.

Korean intellectuals had no other choice but to resist the Japanese imperialist policy of national obliteration or obey their policy. Most intellectuals, of course, chose resistance. But some of them shut their eyes to the nation by escaping from reality, and others surrendered to the Japanese, hankering after honor and wealth. A few of them were even active in supporting and helping the Japanese imperialist

policy of national assimilation.

When I was at the Far East training base, I frequently read publications from the homeland. So I knew well who were patriotic, who were selling out the nation, who entered officialdom and who went to prison, who were converted and who mounted the gallows.

Have any of you read Lee Kwang Su's article about the change of family names? I read this article in the newspaper Maeil Sinbo: "I am a subject of the Japanese Emperor. My children, too, will live as his subjects. I changed my name because I considered it more worthy of an Emperor's subject to have the Japanese name Kayama." This was the gist of his article. He named himself Kayama after the name of the place where Japanese Emperor Jinmu acceded to the throne.

Not a trace of the pride or honor of a Korean could be found in this article. This man was rotten to the core. When writing the Theory of National Transformation he took off his topcoat and jacket, but in this article he took off his trousers and underwear as well, and openly declared his pro-Japanese attitude.

He contributed to a magazine an article which praised the "volunteer" system. After liberation Lee Kwang Su described his pro-Japanese activities as patriotic deeds for the "preservation of the nation". He said he had to have friendly relations with the Japanese to preserve the nation. But why did he praise the "volunteer" system if he had really wished the nation to survive? How many of the "volunteers" returned home alive from the battlefield?

Poet Han Ryong Un was a Buddhist. At the time of the March First Uprising, he was one of the 33 representatives of the nation. He was a Buddhist monk who insisted on action. He asserted that the independence of Korea would be possible only by the death-defying actions of the nation, not by a petition. When he was arrested by the enemy, he refused a lawyer, private food and bail. When most of the representatives showed signs of vacillation, scared by the enemy's threats, he shouted throwing a bedpan: "Are you fighters for the country and the nation or not?"

The Japanese tried to bribe him with the offer of a piece of state land. But Han refused this, too. When his colleagues collected money to build him a house in Songbuk-dong, Seoul, he wanted to have it built with its back to the Governor-General's office, saying that he hated to see that building.

One day Han met Lee Kwang Su at the Jongno intersection. It was when Lee was going round to persuade Korean students to join the Japanese army. The two men had been on intimate terms before.

That day, however, Han passed Lee without even deigning to look at him. In embarrassment Lee turned and stopped him. He asked, "Don't you know me? I am Lee Kwang Su." Han replied, shaking his head, that the Lee Kwang Su he had known was dead. That was a death sentence the Buddhist monk pronounced upon Lee Kwang Su, who had lost the national spirit.

Choe Nam Son, too, changed from being a patriot to being pro-Japanese. He went so far as to say openly

that Korea was destined to remodel herself on Japanese culture. Lee Kwang Su and Choe Nam Son regarded themselves as first-rate intellectuals, but their knowledge and literary talent, devoid of faith, were useless.

Choe Rin, too, yielded to the Japanese policy of assimilation. Some literary men received prizes from the Government-General for writing pro-Japanese poems. When these intellectuals were turning traitor, lamenting their misfortune of being Koreans, abandoning their ancestral names, wearing Japanese dress, bowing in the direction of the Japanese imperial palace and making a foolish pledge that they would die an honorable death for the emperor, patriotic scholars, educators, literary men, artists, journalists and other conscientious intellectuals fought stubbornly to uphold the honor of the Korean people, spitting at the traitors.

Lee Ki Yong was one of them. He served prison terms twice, accused of involvement in the KAPF (Korea Artista Proleta Federacio) incident. A man like Lim Hwa turned traitor after being imprisoned, but Lee Ki Yong kept his principles as a patriotic writer after being released from jail. Out of jail, he was jobless and was wandering about Seoul. At that time the Japanese imperialists promulgated the ordinance of probation for political offenders and arrested at random patriots and other progressive people on charges of harboring dangerous ideas. The Japanese forced them to "serve the country". "Service to the country" meant conversion. Lee Ki Yong was summoned by the police every three days. The enemy demanded that he should write works in Japanese and give pro-Japanese lectures in Japanese.

No coercion, however, could bring this man of unbreakable will to his knees. When the enemy tried to force their version of "national literature" upon him, he wrote stories in Korean in answer to their policy of making Koreans "imperial subjects". After he was blacklisted, he was reduced to dire poverty. He was so pressed for money that when his second son died, he wrote the short story Money by the corpse because he could not obtain funeral expenses. Pestered by the police, Lee Ki Yong and his family took refuge on Mt. Kumgang. However, the enemy's spies shadowed him even there. Pro-Japanese elements threw stones at the door of his house and broke it several times.

However, he remained true to his principles as a patriotic intellectual. The people who were hiding in the mountains after evading military service or the labor draft came down to the village by night to ask his advice. Each time Lee encouraged them to stay in the mountains and resist the Japanese, even if it meant living on grass like cows or horses. The young people who were influenced by him in those days became cadres in that place after liberation, I was told.

Lee Kwang Su adopted a Japanese name, but Lee Ki Yong never changed his name. He did not allow even his relatives to have Japanese names, saying that if they changed their names they would become less than human.

When I first met him after liberation, I admired him, asking how such a weak person could overcome such severe trials in prison and continue to refuse to change his name. "How can I, a literary man, abandon my principles when Ryn Kwan Sun, a girl of only 17, kept her integrity, sacrificing her life in

her prime?" he replied. "When the great Kanto earthquake happened, I saw the Japanese in Tokyo slaughtering Koreans mercilessly with bamboo spears, swords and hooks. I thought at that time that I had to have a showdown with the enemy even at the cost of my life."

Sin Chae Ho was one of the patriots who fought resolutely against the Japanese policy of assimilation. He was a distinguished historian as well as a famous writer and political essayist. He had great literary talent. When I was in Jirin, I read his letter of protest which the Rev. Son Jung Doh had kept. His letter criticized Syngman Rhee, who wanted to put Korea under the mandate of the United States. It was so powerful and incisive that I read it over and over again. The Rev. Son said that he had kept it because he was impressed by it.

While publishing different newspapers and magazines in Shanghai and Beijing, Sin Chae Ho wrote many articles which criticized compromisers. When an article of his was carried in a newspaper, people would rush to buy it. Reading his articles one feels as if one is seeing a throbbing organism. Every sentence of his articles vibrated with the spirit of Koreans. Towards the end of the 1920s Sin was arrested by the Japanese imperialists and put behind bars in Lushun. While in prison for about ten years, he never yielded to the Japanese. Even in prison he continued to write articles imbued with the spirit of our nation.

The fact that in Lushun Prison he continued to write *The Ancient History of Korea* and *The History of Ancient Korean Culture* shows how great were the efforts he made to preserve the orthodox quality and soul of our nation. Sin Chae Ho died in a lonely cell in an alien land after continuing his writing by mustering up the last drop of his blood.

Feeling the indomitable spirit of resistance of the patriots and intellectuals who, even on the brink of death in prison, were trying to preserve the soul of our nation and awaken the national spirit of the people, I made a firm determination to defend their spirit and unite the soul of each of them into a major wing of the force of national resistance.

Preserving the spirit of our nation and preparing national resistance were inseparably related to each other. Preserving the spirit of the nation was the spiritual base and a major link in the preparation for national resistance. Without the struggle to preserve the national spirit, it would have been impossible to enlist the broad patriotic forces in the ranks of national resistance. Attaching importance to the mission of the intellectuals to preserve the history, culture and traditions of the nation, we continued to dispatch political operatives among intellectuals both at home and abroad.

I would emphasize to the political operatives who were leaving for the homeland: As a mother gives birth to a child, so everybody is born and dies in the embrace of the nation, and even after death cannot be separated from the nation. We are linked with one another by the same blood ties in the community of our nation. So everyone must take part in the struggle to defend it. Both the revolution and the armed struggle are carried out for the nation. What we are determined to take back is not only our territory, but also our history, culture and the nation itself. Therefore, you must make full preparations for national resistance by combining the arming of all the people closely with the struggle to defend the national

spirit, and expand the ARF organizations among the broad masses of intellectuals such as scholars, educators, journalists, literary men and artists, to make each of them a spark and bullet in the struggle to defend the spirit of the nation.

At the end of 1938 the Tong-A Ilbo reported the arrest of the members of a secret society called the Red Research Society in the Yonhui College in Seoul. Paek Nam Un, who was the first Minister of Education of our Republic had belonged to this society. In the awful years when those yielding to the enemy were treated as "human beings" and those resisting the enemy were persecuted as "beasts", he chose the road of resistance to defend and preserve the national spirit. Paek Nam Un worked his way through a commercial college in Japan and became a teacher at Yonhui College.

The Socic-Economic History of Korea was a typical masterpiece written by him. While teaching at the college he applied himself to writing. It was an admirable patriotic deed that he wrote this work when the Japanese imperialists were making frantic attempts to destroy our national economy and erase even the name of the Korean nation.

There was an economic research society, a legal organization, in Yonhui College. Paek Nam Un played a leading role in developing this society into a fiercely revolutionary organization. With some fellow professors he converted the economic research society, a simple scientific research body, into the Red Research Society that aspired to communism. Since the society got in touch with the political operatives dispatched by us, all its activities were geared to realizing the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF. During vacations all the members of this society went out among the people to launch enlightenment campaigns.

According to an official paper, Recent Public Security in Korea published by the police bureau of the Government-General, the Red Research Society was engaged in organizing seminars, short-courses and reading circles to instill communism in the members. I was told that Paek Nam Un translated The True Record of the Lee Dynasty, living in retirement and jobless until the defeat of Japan. The fact that he wrote The Socic-Economic History of Korea, developed the economic research society into the Red Research Society, and resolved to translate The True Record of the Lee Dynasty was a challenge to the Japanese imperialist policy of making Koreans "imperial subjects".

Since the year when he heard the news of the Battle of Pochonbo, he lived in a cold room without heating even in winter, I was told. Why? Hearing that Kim Il Sung and all the guerrillas under him were eating and sleeping in the open, covering themselves with fallen leaves in all seasons, he felt deeply ashamed of living in a heated room. When we were organizing the Cabinet, he was the first to be appointed Minister of Education. He also served at various times as President of the Academy of Sciences and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly. He worked very conscientiously.

Kye Ung Sang, a world-famous geneticist whom our people produced, was a man with an exceptionally strong sense of national pride and firm scientific convictions. He studied very hard from childhood. He was too poor to buy paper, so he wrote on dried leaves. If he obtained a pair of socks once in a while, he

kept them in his pocket as much as possible, putting them on only when he was visiting neighbors. He often walked barefoot, so as not to wear out his shoes.

Because he studied very hard, saving every single penny, he graduated from a university in Japan and went through a post-graduate course. When he finished his post-graduate course, many institutes in Japan invited him to work there. His tutor at the university, too, wanted him to work with him in an agricultural experimental station to be established in Manchuria.

However, Kye Ung Sang declined all their offers. His wish was to continue his research into silkworms in a place where there were no Japanese army. He had a strong desire to return home for scientific study, but gave up the idea. He thought over his future and at last made up his mind to go to China. At that time there were no Japanese in South China. The Japanese began to invade China proper following the July 7 incident.

Only when the Japanese occupied Guangdong did he think of returning to his motherland. He resolved to go back to the land of his forefathers now that the Japanese had appeared everywhere. When he was coming back from South China he brought with him a new variety of silkworms he had invented, going through great hardships.

After liberation he was disgusted at the activities of the American military government and came to Pyongyang with silkworm eggs in his trunk. When I met him first, he said that a man with the soul of a Korean could never live under the US military government. His words convinced me further that he was a scholar with a strong sense of national pride. In the northern half of Korea he invented many new varieties of silkworm eggs, which were highly productive and capable of resisting diseases.

Only men of firm faith can preserve their national spirit. If they are to make real contributions to their country and fellow people, intellectuals must have ardent patriotism and unshakable scientific convictions. The Korean Language Association was one of the organizations which launched a relentless struggle to preserve the national spirit in the homeland in the closing years of Japanese rule.

According to Lee Kuk Ro, this association was established in the early 1930s. The Korean Language Study Association was its predecessor. The Korean Language Association quietly did a lot of useful work. It was not until this association was organized that the compilation of a proper Korean dictionary got under way. Previously there was no Korean dictionary worth mentioning in our country. Of course, many scholars tried to compile one, but doing so in a ruined country was no easy job.

However, the Korean Language Association undertook this heavy task of its own accord. Without language there can be no development of culture. The development of culture is impossible without the reasonable arrangement and standardization of language and letters, the basis of its development. The most powerful means of arranging and standardizing language and letters in a rational manner is a dictionary that integrates and systematizes the resources of the national language.



Compilation of the national language dictionary was an enormous task, which required boundless efforts. Particularly difficult for the association was a lack of money. Because they worked in secret, avoiding the eyes of the Japanese, they could not obtain support from the people. What an arduous undertaking it must have been to edit a large dictionary when there was not even a standard of correct spelling!

They made two copies of the manuscript of the dictionary and hid them in different places. What heroic patriots they were, these scholars who compiled the dictionary by picking up one by one the downtrodden, yet precious Korean words many decades after the ruin of the country, at a time when people who did not speak Japanese were scorned like the dumb! The Korean Language Association also engaged in external activities in secret. Its representatives took part in the International Phonetics Conference held in the United Kingdom in 1935 and in the World Linguistics Conference held in Denmark the following year and denounced the Japanese imperialists, exposing how they were trying to obliterate the Korean language.

King Sejong organized a body of scholars to devise an alphabet with which to write the Korean language, brushing aside the desperate objections of sycophants like Choe Man Lee, who wanted the people to remain ignorant. He supervised the composition of the epic poem Songs of the Dragons in the new alphabet, and ordered that all official documents as well as Confucian and Buddhist scriptures be written in it too. Previously all writing had been in Chinese.

Under the reign of King Yonsan (1494-1506) the Korean Script Institute was abolished, and the Korean alphabet began to be forsaken. But it was revived by the Political Reform of 1894.

The Korean alphabet, which began to see the light again at the end of the last century, was soon trampled upon again, this time by the Japanese, who pursued the policy of "daily use of the Japanese language". The organization which rose against this policy was the Korean Language Association.

But this association, which had fought for the independence of the country and the arrangement and dissemination of the Korean language, was suppressed by the enemy in the autumn of 1942.

Dozens of scholars of this association and other people involved in its activities were arrested by the Japanese police. When I heard this news from the comrades of a small unit who had been to the homeland, I could not repress my indignation.

At that time the whole camp was excited at the news that the Soviet army had annihilated hundreds of thousands of German troops at Stalingrad. but I lost my appetite at the news that many of our scholars had been arrested and tortured. The scholars underwent a terrible time in Hamhung Prison. The enemy's torture was so cruel that some of them died even before they were brought to trial. The Japanese police regarded the Korean Language Association as an anti-Japanese independence body, but they failed to discover that this association was under our influence, because the imprisoned scholars kept the secret, shedding their blood and sacrificing their lives.

In the association there was an underground organization which included Lee Kuk Ro and other advanced people who were linked directly to our organization. I was told that Choe Il Chon called on Lee Kuk Ro in Seoul in the autumn of 1936 and in the summer of 1937. He had been dispatched to the homeland on a mission to build an ARF organization among intellectuals there.

Choe Il Chon carried out his mission with credit, frequenting Seoul as the head of the Changchun (Manchukuo) bureau of the Tong-A Ilbo. Lee Kuk Ro was terribly tortured in the prison, because he took the "guilt" upon himself by stating that he had done everything his comrades were accused of. After returning to Seoul, instead of taking care of his terribly wounded body, he did a lot of work for the unity of democratic forces and the building of an independent sovereign state using the Korean Language Association as a base.

When Lee Kuk Ro came to Pyongyang to take part in the April North-South Joint Conference, I told him: "We paid deep attention to the incident involving your association. When we heard that the Japanese police tortured its members every day and some people died on the rack, we were very worried. But the association members never yielded even in prison. We admired your steadfast anti-Japanese spirit and collective patriotism."

Lee Kuk Ro replied, "Don't mention it. We could hold on so stubbornly because we had something to believe in. What gave us the courage? It was none other than Mt. Paektu." He went on to say that after the Battle of Pochonbo he and the other members of the society bought a bottle of liquor and drank together in tears.

Because Lee was a man to be held up as an example in the struggle to preserve the national spirit, a patriot who enjoyed respect from both communists and nationalists, we invited him to the platform of the April North-South Joint Conference and let him read the document, "Appeal to the Entire Korean People" on behalf of the conference.

After the conference he said that he would stay in Pyongyang to work with me. So I had all his family brought to Pyongyang from Seoul. For several years he worked as a Minister in the Cabinet. He was so modest and well-mannered that he never used the low forms of speech even to his juniors. Once I read his personal history, and it surprised me. He had been to many places and met many people. He had been to China, Japan, the Soviet Union, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. He had even met Lenin. He met Lenin when the Conference of Peoples of the Far East was being held in Moscow. Lee Kuk Ro went to Moscow from Shanghai and stayed together with Lee Tong Hui and Park Jin Sun. He met Lenin twice in the Kremlin.

He had also met most of renowned Korean nationalist champions. He knew Choe Il Chon, Pyon Tae U, Hwang Paek Ha and many others who were active in Northeast China. Wilhelm Pieck invited Lee to study in Germany when he was staying in Moscow. Lee entered Berlin University at his recommendation, and obtained a PhD.

One day I asked him why a doctor of philosophy had specialized in the Korean language and how he became a linguist, when some people advised him to enter the business world after he returned home and others urged him to choose a political career and distinguish himself. Lee Kuk Ro replied: "On a visit to Ireland I heard the people using English as the official language instead of their mother tongue; the signboards, milestones and all other writing was in English. Seeing these things I was afraid that the Korean language, too, might suffer such a fate. So I decided to devote my whole life to the movement to defend our mother tongue when I returned home."

The incident of the association shocked us. We saw our living, fighting motherland in the intellectuals who were defending the national spirit at the cost of their blood in defiance of the enemy's weapons and gallows.

The students of Kyongsong Imperial University also formed an organization and launched an active struggle to preserve the spirit of the nation. The patriotic intellectuals of this organization rose against the Japanese policy of obliterating the Korean nation and fought resolutely to defend the national character. They attacked the absurd assertion of the pro-Japanese literary men and government-patronized scholars while disseminating the excellent traits of the Korean nation by lawful means.

They said, "The Korean nation is neither indolent nor fond of factional strife; Korean people are not well-off because of the Japanese, not because they are idle. The Japanese deprived our nation of all its wealth. Who dares say our nation is a backward nation? The Korean nation is an excellent nation that can take pride in its resourcefulness and civilization in the eyes of the world. No matter how harshly the Japanese may suppress us, the Korean nation will preserve its spirit at any cost."

But the intellectuals learned the lesson that speech alone could not counter the enemy's violence. So they built bases on mountains and made preparations to organize armed ranks with the workers of coal and other mines, and evaders of military service and the labor draft hiding in the mountains.

A large number of young people, students, scholars, religious men, educators, literary men, artists and journalists joined organizations for national resistance and fought resolutely against the Japanese imperialist policy of obliterating the nation. Intellectuals who were not involved in such organizations, too, confidently rose against the enemy's policy of assimilating the nation. The tyrannical repression and iron chains could not break the struggle of awakened intellectuals to defend the national spirit.

Successful intellectuals who are remembered in history were all loyal to their countries and nations, and strong in their faith and will. That is why I always emphasize that intellectuals must love their country and nation ardently, and cherish an indomitable will and revolutionary faith in any adversity.

## 24.5. For Unity with the Anti-Japanese Patriotic Forces

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I have maintained all my life the important principle of uniting with the patriotic progressive nationalists, and exerted great efforts to put it into practice. At one time the nationalist movement, together with the communist movement, was one of the two components of the national liberation struggle in our country. The national liberation struggle of Korea started with the nationalist movement. In the first half of the 1940s, nationalism still existed as an ideological trend and as an anti-Japanese patriotic force, though it was weak. Under the banner of anti-Japanese struggle, the majority of nationalists, except for the reformist wing, continued resistance against the Japanese imperialists at home and abroad. The nationalist movement did have some influence on our compatriots in the homeland and overseas.

In spite of our failure to cooperate with Yang Se Bong, we did not hesitate to make tireless efforts to build a united front with the anti-Japanese nationalist campaigners. The anti-Japanese nationalists, too, tried in every possible way to cooperate with us. Those who had utterly rejected or shunned communists in former days began to turn to us. The moves of the anti-Japanese independence fighters to ally with us became a general trend in the latter half of the 1930s. After the formation of the ARF in May 1936, we developed the united front movement, passionately appealing to the entire nation to fight for national liberation. The nationalists made a positive response to this appeal.

This was illustrated by the facts that Yun Il Pha, chief of staff of an Independence Army unit in southern Manchuria, sent us a letter of support, that a Mr. Park, an independence fighter among the Korean residents in Shanghai, came to southern Manchuria to visit Lee Tong Gwang, the ARF representative in that area, and that the remnants of the Independence Army, which had been under the command of Kim Hwal Sok, came over, led by Choe Yun Gu, to the KPRA.

What made the nationalist camp abandon their chauvinistic attitude and attach great importance to cooperation with us?

It was because the KPRA had built up a high reputation and increased its influence. The anti-Japanese armed struggle became the principal factor in the Korean national liberation movement, and the KPRA was the main force in that front. It represented the nation's aspiration for independence and its faith in the cause and it was organizing and leading the revolution against the Japanese.

Various forces were fighting to liberate the country from Japanese occupation, but it was the KPRA that was dealing the heaviest blows to the enemy. It was the KPRA that struck the greatest terror into the Japanese imperialists; it was also the KPRA that inspired the Korean people with the greatest hope.

The Korean people believed that the KPRA was the only real armed force capable of driving the

Japanese imperialists from their country.

According to his assistants, Kim Gu shouted for joy at the news that Japanese imperialists had been destroyed at the Battle of Pochonbo.

The organ of the Korean National Revolutionary Party published in Nanjing also gave a detailed account of this battle under the title Happy News about the Korean Revolutionary Armed Movement. Its editorial staff sent that article to the Hamhung branch of the Joson Ilbo, I was told. This was an expression of pan-national support, encouragement and solidarity that transcended political ideas and doctrines. The Korean independence campaigners in China proper, too, were apparently excited at the news of the battle. Kim Gu tried to find a way for armed resistance from his early days. The Worker-Soldier Society organized by him in the early 1920s, in fact, aimed at armed resistance. He hated those people who were trying to gain the independence of Korea by cultivating personal ability without resistance or in a diplomatic way.

He regretted his failure to raise a big army and launch a powerful armed struggle. So he took great interest in our armed struggle and expected a great deal from it. Immediately after liberation, The independence of Korea, a newspaper for overseas Koreans published in Los Angeles, carried an article which criticized Kim Gu. The gist was that Koreans in the United States had raised a large sum of money for Kim Il Sung's army and the Korean Volunteers in response to an appeal by Kim Gu, but Kim Gu himself had frittered it all away.

His failure to send war funds was understandable, however. To deliver the money he would have had to contact our organization, but that must have been difficult to do. By the fact that Kim Gu appealed for donations of money for us, I knew that he tried in every possible way to support our armed struggle.

The Battle of Jiansanfeng, too, had a great impact on those in China proper who were fighting for independence.

Rapidly growing interest among the nationalist organizations abroad in our struggle and their rapid turn towards alliance with communism also resulted from the fact that we had founded the ARF and published its ten-point program, the common fighting program of the nation which was acceptable to all the people.

In those days the anti-Japanese patriotic forces in China proper were divided because of differences in their political ideas and doctrines, and in their fighting methods. They were divided mainly into two groups; one was Kim Gu's nationalist faction and the other Kim Won Bong's leftist faction called the people's front which was close to communism. The two factions were independently connected with Chiang Kaisek's Kuomintang, the military commission of China's Nationalist Government and the CPC.

Two problems had to be settled to realize a united front with the independence fighters in China proper. To begin with, the anti-Japanese nationalist organizations had to be rallied into one. In other words, organizations with different ideas, doctrines and fighting methods had to be amalgamated into a single

front under the banner of anti-Japanese patriotism, regardless of their differences. The next step was to effect cooperation on a new basis between us and all these patriotic forces.

From the time of the founding of the ARF, we made consistent and sincere efforts to find a solution to the problem. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, we worked even harder to effect cooperation with the movement in China proper.

With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the second Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation was realized in the Chinese revolution, attracting great attention worldwide. This ushered in a new phase in the national-salvation resistance of the Chinese people and gave a strong impetus to the development of the Chinese revolution.

In this political context, Kim Gu's faction and Kim Won Bong's faction succeeded in forming a single front, and published a joint declaration in September 1940, putting an end to their past confrontation. Their joint declaration contained many items similar to those of the Inaugural Declaration and Ten-Point Program of the ARF. Afterwards, the provisional government drew Kim Won Bong's faction into left-right collaboration.

This change in the strategy of the nationalist movement attracted our attention. Also in the first half of the 1940s, we tried hard through different channels to win over the anti-Japanese patriotic forces in Manchuria and China proper, as well as those in the homeland and Japan.

As the Pacific War and the Sino-Japanese War raged, Japan sank deeper into a morass. One event after another heralded its defeat.

The rapidly changing situation demanded that all the anti-Japanese forces at home and abroad should unite and prepare for the last decisive battle against the Japanese imperialists. Decades of anti-Japanese struggle had made the people understand that the most effective way to liberate the country was to form a strong union of national forces irrespective of their ideas and party affiliation.

Uniting the broad sections of the patriotic forces at home and abroad and building up the impetus of national resistance was our historic task as well as the common desire of patriots of different classes and the masses of the people.

The following is taken from Japanese police records about the fighting methods of the Koreans battling for independence and the change in the popular sentiment in the 1940s: "The scheming of the Koreans, both nationalist and communist, at home and abroad, is aimed at the independence of Korea. They declare that their objective is the independence of Korea. Those under the wing of the Chongqing provisional government, those under the influence of the United States ... and those connected with the Soviet Union and the CPC, all pursue the independence of Korea as their final objective." (Report by the head of the police bureau of the Korean Government-General to the heads of police departments of all provinces, May Showa 19(1944).)

"Special aspects of ideological offences:

"They are focusing on the independence of Korea, their central objective, not constrained by particular ideas or doctrines, and establishing a closer relationship with the communist movement, towards which they were formerly antagonistic. The incidents of joint scheming by nationalist elements and leftist elements are not rare at present." (Monthly Bulletin of External Affairs of the Political Police, No. 51, p. 5, Public Security Section, Police Bureau, the Korean Government-General, March and April Showa 19 (1944).)

The Provisional Government in Shanghai was one of the organizations to which we paid attention to establish relations with the anti-Japanese patriotic forces in China proper. After the Japanese invaded China proper, the provisional government frequently moved from place to place. Because it moved here and there, following the Kuomintang government, it was barely able to maintain its name. The people connected with the provisional government recollected that they drifted from place to place with no time to unpack. Sometimes they just sat in hotel rooms without having even time to unpack their luggage before moving elsewhere to escape the ravages of war.

In the turmoil of ceaseless factional strife, amendments to its constitution and reorganization of its Cabinet, the provisional government was constantly haunted by the danger of insolvency and assassination.

They were in such dire straits at that time that Kim Gu said in recollection: "Because of economic difficulties we could hardly maintain the name of the government. The rent of the office building was only 30 yuan and the salary for an office boy was less than 20 yuan, but we had no means to pay our way. The owner of the building dunned us for payment many times. I slept on the wooden floor of the government building and survived only on handouts from compatriots who had jobs. I was the most wretched of beggars."

In 1940 the provisional government settled in Chongqing, where Chiang Kaisek had set up the headquarters of the Chinese government. From that time on, they were able to lead a comparatively settled life, and organized the Liberation Army. This meant a step forward in their activities.

In those days some people who worked for the Liberation Army carried in their publication accounts of the struggle of the KPRA and the activities of the NAJAA mentioning the names of Kim Il Sung, Yang Jing-yu and Zhao Shang-zhi.

Their army, however, had little experience and was weak in terms of equipment. The members of the provisional government themselves considered that the development of their armed force was limited. Analyzing the circumstances of the overseas anti-Japanese forces among the Koreans, Lee Chong Chon frankly admitted that it was difficult for the provisional government to assume leadership, and that it was not prepared to greet liberation on August 15, 1945.

Following is a report by the Japanese police about the Liberation Army.

"The battle array of the Liberation Army is very poor, contrary to the exaggerated propaganda of the provisional government. No detachment has more than ten soldiers, except for the fifth detachment, which has 50 men. But 20 of them are anarchists under the direct command of Ra Wol Han, and the rest are Koreans taken prisoner from the Japanese army. Most of them are nearly illiterate and former drug smugglers. The army is so weak that it does nothing notable." (Political police section, police department of Hwanghae Province, February Showa 18 (1943).)

However, we tried to join hands with them. We considered that if we achieved cooperation with Kim Gu's faction, their force too would be mobilized for the final push to liberate the country.

At first Kim Chaek was not very keen on my proposal to cooperate with Kim Gu, an anti-communist element, and did not expect much from the venture even if it was realized. Hearing my explanation, however, he supported me, saying that he saw only Kim Gu's anti-communist tendency and not his patriotism. He also proposed to get in touch with the anti-Japanese forces in China proper through Ho Jong Suk.

Choe Yong Gon was also reticent about cooperation with Kim Gu. He was more skeptical than Kim Chaek in his attitude towards the provisional government. "We should not join hands with those who are enmeshed in factional strife," he said. "It will do us no good. We should rather cooperate with Kim Won Bong's faction." Of course, Choe Yong Gon, too, finally came round to my way of thinking.



*Lee Wha Rang notes: Photo; Kim Won Bong - On November 9, 1919, in Kirin, Manchuria, Kim Wong Bom, alias Kim Ik San, formed Uiyoldan, Practice Justice Bravery Society, a secret terrorist group with members in Korea, Japan and China, and a number of foreigners including a German named Martin, a specialist on making bombs.*

*Among the Uiyoldan's notable accomplishments were the bombing of Japanese Gov. Gen. Saito's office in Seoul, September 12, 1921, and the shooting of Gen. Tanaka on March 28, 1922. They also attempted the assassination of the Japanese Emperor on January 4, 1924 and the bombing of the Tokyo Takushoku on December 28, 1926.*

*In October 1938, Kim Won Bong established the Korean Volunteers Army with Chiang Kai Sek's help. In 1944, his wife, Park Cha Jung, was killed while leading a Korean women's detachment in a fight with the Japanese troops in China. In 1945, Kim Wong Bom returned to his hometown Milyang (South Korea)*



*after 27 years of exile. He opposed Rhee Syngman and the US Military Government of Korea and joined up with Kim Il Sung. He was active in politics in North Korea and received numerous awards from Kim Il Sung. Kim Won Bong was purged for factionalism.*

Kim Won Bong formed the Justice Group (*yioldang*), and engaged in assassinations, raids and sabotage in China proper, Northeast China and in the homeland. Afterwards he organized the Korean Volunteers Corps. The commander of its first company, of about 40 men, was Park Hyo Sam, who acted as the commandant of the Central Security Officers School for a short period after liberation.

Later Kim Won Bong told me that the Korean Volunteers Corps was so weak in strength and equipment that it could not take independent actions, but went round among Chinese units launching anti-war propaganda and operations to demoralize the enemy forces using loudspeakers. However, we attached importance to their resolve to defeat the Japanese imperialists by force of arms, in spite of the fact that they were a puny force. We directed considerable attention to the continued existence of the Korean Independence Union and the Korean Volunteers in North China.

In those days Mu Jong played a great role in North China. He was renowned for his contribution to the building of the Chinese Red Army and the liberation struggle of the Chinese people as well. After returning home he worked as Vice-Minister of National Defense and as an artillery commander. At that time I offered him a house near mine. He rendered distinguished service in army building in the liberated homeland, but he was criticized for severe bureaucratic actions during the Fatherland Liberation War and was dismissed from military service.

Though he had been relieved of his post, we did our best to cure him when he fell seriously ill. In Changchun, China, there was a hospital run by a Romanian medical team. Mu Jong received treatment in that hospital. He wanted to breathe his last breath by our side, so we brought him home. When he died I had a decent funeral held for him, highly appreciating his distinguished services.

When I met Mu Jong for the first time, he said, "I have heard a lot about you, General Kim, and the news has encouraged me. Whenever I thought that in Korea there was a general who was striking terror into the Japanese I was delighted. I was in the 8th Route Army in body, but my mind was always on Mt. Paektu. I tried in every possible way to join hands with you, General Kim, seeking a way for the Korean Volunteers to join forces with your army, the KPRA, hoping to destroy the Japanese imperialists through joint operations by these two forces."

A Japanese government document concerning the activities of the North China detachment of the Korean Volunteers to establish relations with General Kim Il Sung reads as follows: "The movements of the North China detachment of the Korean Volunteers:

"In about May or June 1941 a new detachment of the Korean Volunteers was formed in North China.

"While recruiting men and making fallacious propaganda in the Beijing-Hankou line area, where we are

in occupation, it is trying to cooperate with Kim Il Sung, a Korean rebel in Manchuria, and to have relations with comrades in Korea.... It has made a declaration as follows: 'We will continue the anti-Japanese struggle to liberate Korea by consolidating the unity of our unit, rallying the 200,000 compatriots in North China and cooperating with revolutionaries and revolutionary organizations and armed ranks in Northeast China and Korea.'" (Political police section, police department of Hwanghae Province, February Showa 18 (1943).)

Ho Jong Suk, who served as the first Minister of Culture and Information after liberation, was in Yanan in the 1940s. She said that there were many renowned champions among the Korean fighters in Yanan, and they all yearned to join our army. She, too, was so attracted by our army that she asked Zhou En-lai and Zhu De to allow her to go to Manchuria, but was criticized by her Chinese comrades for harboring nationalism.

From what she said I knew that when we were trying to get in touch with the Korean fighters and patriotic figures in China proper, they also earnestly wished to cooperate with us. At that time they participated in many of the operations of the 8th Route Army to demoralize the enemy, and their main target was the young Koreans serving in the Japanese army.

They called to those young men through loudspeakers, saying that they should not serve as cannon-fodder for the Japanese, but come over to the Korean Volunteers or the 8th Route Army, those in central and southern China to the Korean Volunteers Corps or the New 4th Army and those in Manchuria to Kim Il Sung's army.

They also issued rules about the treatment to be given to the Korean soldiers who came over to their side. They stimulated desertion by promising that those coming over with heavy machine-guns would receive a certain sum of money and special supplies of daily necessities for three years, those with light machine-guns, grenade-launchers or rifles would get a certain sum of money each and those who surrendered unarmed would receive education or medical treatment in accordance with their needs. The demoralization operations produced great results.

There were communists and nationalists among the Korean patriots who were active in the mainland of China. All of them aspired after solidarity and cooperation with us, irrespective of their ideas and doctrines. It was a laudable thing in many ways. We never discriminated against people with different ideas and doctrines. We did not care whether they were under the influence of the CPC or under the wing of Chiang Kaisek, and considered everyone who loved the country as the object of our cooperation.

We were able to use different channels to establish relations with the people in China's mainland, the channels of the Soviet military authorities or the Comintern, as well as messengers from the NAJAA to China proper. Sometimes we directly sent our messengers to the necessary targets.

Among the channels we used to get in touch with people in China proper when we were waging the armed struggle in Northeast China there was a liaison channel of the 7th Corps of the NAJAA in the

Raohe and Tongjiang areas. In addition, the international channels to Yili in Xinjiang Province, Lanzhou in Gansu Province and Yanan in Shaanxi Province were available to us. Another was the guerrilla channel from Dongbiandao, Manchuria, to the Manchurian-Chinese border.

At the training base in the Far East region were staying Liu Ya-lou and Lu Dong-sheng, who had served in the Chinese Red Army as division commanders and were giving lectures to the IAF before receiving military training in the Soviet Union, as well as Wang Peng, the CPC liaison officer. I intended to send letters with them to the Koreans in Yanan and Chongqing when they returned to China proper, but they did not return to Yanan until the day the Japanese imperialists were defeated.

Lu Ya-lou was the chief of staff of the Northeast Field Army during the operations to liberate Northeast China. Later, he became the Commander of the Air Force of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Lu Dong-sheng, too, remained in Northeast China as the commander of the Songjiang Military District. Apparently he had another name, Song Ming. He fell in action at the end of 1945. We tried to contact the people in China proper through the small units sent to Northeast China, as well as through the underground organization channels in the homeland.

As advised by Kim Chaek, I expected much from Ho Jong Suk. If our contacts reached Ho Jong Suk, we could open a way through her to join hands easily with the anti-Japanese forces around Yanan and Chongqing. We paid special attention to her, partly because the record of her patriotic struggle was admirable and partly because she was the daughter of Ho Hon, who was closely connected with Kim Chaek.

We sent an instruction to an underground organization in Sinuiju which had once been under the leadership of Kang Pyong Son, a DIU member, to establish relations with the patriots in China proper. In accordance with this instruction, the underground organization in Sinuiju gave its agent in Tianjin an assignment to open a KPRA liaison channel to Yanan and Chongqing. That agent tried hard to build a liaison office for our cooperation with Yanan and Chongqing, I was told.

The Japanese police collected various items of information concerning the fact that when he was fighting in the IAF the great leader tried in every possible way to achieve a national united front with the anti-Japanese patriotic forces in China proper and an anti-imperialist joint front with the Chinese anti-Japanese forces, including the CPC: "Activities of Kim Il Sung:

"Working in the Okeyanskaya training camp near Vladivostok in the Soviet Far East region, he is bent on recruiting and leading Korean rebels in Manchuria. According to recently acquired information, he is now making preparations to dispatch agents to Manchuria in secret to disrupt military transportation by destroying railways in Manchuria and Korea, and to instigate popular unrest, in concert with air raids on Manchuria and Korea to be made by the American air force in China, in accordance with a secret agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union.

"After visiting Moscow twice in mid-June he went to Chongqing and Yanan to discuss many matters with the Soviet and American embassies in China and the CPC organs, and to plan his future activities. He reorganized railway destruction teams and ideological operation teams with the Korean and Manchurian rebels who had been active along the Yalu River. These secret agents are now undergoing training around Khabarovsk in the Soviet Union." (Monthly Report by the Special Political Police, p. 76, Public Security Section, Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, November Showa 19 (1944).)

When we were seeking to establish relations with the patriotic anti-Japanese forces in China proper, these forces in Chongqing, too, were trying in every way to collaborate with us. According to An U Saeng, secretary to Kim Gu and nephew of An Jung Gun, Kim Gu also dispatched a messenger to us. However, the country was liberated when he was still on his way to Manchuria. I was told that a Mr. Kim had come as far as Mudanjiang in the capacity of the representative of the provisional government, but had returned to Chongqing, unable to meet us.

A Japanese source acknowledged that we were in touch with the group of Koreans in China proper who belonged to the CPC, centered on Junggangjin, Linjiang, Hyesanjin and Tonghua. In the days of the JAF we were also interested in contacting religious circles, while carrying out small-unit actions. Towards the end of 1942, Yun Se Bok, the third-generation leader of the headquarters of the Taejong sect, and many other religious people were arrested by the police.

These religious people launched anti-Japanese activities, declaring that the mission of Taejong sect was to pray for the freedom of the Korean nation from the fetters of Japan and Manchukuo, and reconstruct their country. One of its leaders openly declared that the defeat of Japan in the great East Asian war was inevitable, so the followers of the sect should take the opportunity to hasten the day of national liberation. He also said that, whereas there was Ba Maw in Burma there was Kim Il Sung in Korea, and that the happiness of the Korean nation would be achieved by its independence.

Having heard from a small unit that had returned from a mission that the Mudanjiang police were rounding up Taejong activists, I gave instructions to the Anti-Japanese Association under the influence of the 2nd Directional Army whose headquarters was situated in Ningnan County, instructions to frustrate the enemy suppression, take measures to defend patriotic religious people and step up the work of uniting the patriotic forces in Huadian, Dunhua and Antu behind the organization.

The anti-Japanese nationalist organization in the homeland to which we paid attention when we were preparing the final battle against the Japanese was the Korean Nation-Building Union, organized by Yo Wun Hyung. This union was an underground organization formed in 1944. It had an affiliated organization, the Peasants Union, which had been formed mainly with the farmers around Yangphyong, Kyonggi Province, Yo's native place.

In that year the Japanese repression of nationalist organizations was at its most severe. With their defeat in the offing, the Japanese imperialists arrested, questioned and punished anyone they suspected of being against them, wielding the national mobilization law and other fascist instruments at random.

Organizing such an anti-Japanese body as the Korean Nation-Building Union in such a situation showed how audacious Yo Wun Hyung was.

They kept their activities so thoroughly secret that our political operatives in Seoul did not know for some time that such an organization was active under their very noses. It was not until 1945, in fact, that we learned of the existence of the Nation-Building Union. After the founding of this body, Yo Wun Hyung sent a man to me and a liaison officer to the Korean Independence Union. Unfortunately, the first had to return without finding our whereabouts. But his envoy met the members of the Korean Independence Union in Yanan, I was told. The messenger failed to meet me because we were at the training base in the Soviet Union at that time.

As Yo tried in every possible way to meet us after the Battle of Pochonbo, so we made efforts to cooperate with him. We entrusted one of our political operatives in Seoul with a mission to work with him. I gave him instructions to get in touch with him even if it required great efforts, but I was told later that he could not share secrets with Yo because the latter never allowed the operative to approach him.

Yo Wun Hyung set up a military commission in the Nation-Building Union and planned actions in the rear of the Japanese imperialists. This accorded with the line of national resistance we advocated.

Our activities for cooperation with the anti-Japanese patriotic forces in China proper did not produce the desired results, because Japan collapsed so quickly. When the main force of the KPRA and the resistance organizations in the homeland were together launching the final operations for national liberation, the armed forces in China proper could not take part in these operations.

Kim Gu regretted this failure. He said that the surrender of the Japanese was rather a shock to him than good news, because their preparations for war, which had been made amid indescribable hardships for several years had come to naught. He worried that he would have no say in the future of Korea because he had done nothing in this war.

However, the efforts of both sides for cooperation were not totally futile, despite what he said. The efforts for national liberation were to be rewarded by history.

Our efforts for unity with the anti-Japanese patriotic forces promoted historical progress, and at last bore fruit in the founding of the united front after liberation, which embraced all sections of the population.

I think it was absolutely correct that ever since the beginning of the anti-Japanese revolution we considered united front work as a major objective and policy, and made every effort to realize it.

Frankly speaking, friction and conflict did exist between young communists and nationalists at one time. After the Wangqingmen incident, in which leaders of the Kukmin-bu such as Ko I Ho and Hyon Muk Kwan killed many of our comrades, we broke with the nationalists and condemned them sharply. At that

time some of our comrades insisted that we should sever relations with the nationalists for ever.

However, no matter how tragic and heart-breaking the sacrifice at Wangqingmen, we could not afford to blame the whole nationalist camp for the crime committed by the reactionary leaders of the Kukmin-bu. We had to continue to uphold the united front policy for the sake of the great cause, swallowing our grief and indignation at the murder of our comrades. With a determination to start again with a clean slate, we contacted Yang Se Bong's unit, which was fighting in southern Manchuria as the remnant force of the Kukmin-bu and even tried to cooperate with Kim Gu, who was a synonym for anti-communism.

If we had gone to extremes under the impulse of the moment and remained hostile to the nationalists without overcoming our mental sufferings, the united front would have remained an empty slogan.

Our painstaking and sincere efforts to build a united front moved even such an obstinate anti-communist figure as Kim Gu. But this was not accomplished overnight. Kim Gu did not choose alliance with communism, jettisoning anti-communism, because he had a grudge against the US military government which had not recognized the provisional government or because he was on bad terms with Syngman Rhee. It was our ardent patriotism, which we had cherished from the days of the anti-Japanese struggle, that welded Kim Gu and us into unity.

As historical facts show, the people we chose in those days gathered under the banner of the united front after liberation. Look at the politicians who took part in the North-South Joint Conference in April 1948. All the renowned nationalists, particularly Kim Gu, Kim Kyu Sik, Jo So Ang, Choe Tong O, Om Hang Sop, Jo Wan Gu and Kim Wol Song, participated in the conference. To be exact, all the politicians of Kim Gu's provisional government came over to our side.

Yo Wun Hyung, the hero of the Korean Nation-Building Union, visited me in Pyongyang, the leaders of the Korean Independence Union visited Pyongyang with their colleagues, and Kim Won Bong came to Pyongyang and worked as the first Minister of State Control. Already in 1946, the Democratic National United Front was formed in the northern half of Korea, embracing the patriotic forces of different parties, factions and classes.

Our will to achieve great national unity was hardened and consolidated in the days when we were preparing the final operations against Japan. Without such a process, we could not have made such persevering efforts to draw into the united front the patriotic forces from all walks of life at home and abroad who had different ideas and doctrines and history of struggle, in the complicated situation after liberation, in which sharp confrontation existed between patriotism and treachery to the nation, progress and conservatism, democracy and reaction.

The motto of our nation under the constant threat of foreign aggression must be great national unity.

I believe that the prosperity of the nation depends on to what extent the entire people are faithful to this motto.

Because we have a deep-rooted historical tradition of a consistent and fair policy on giving priority to the interests of the nation, transcending ideology, ideas, political views and systems as well as great achievements and valuable experience in implementing this policy, we have been able to set forth the Ten-Point Program of the Great Unity of the Whole Nation and summon all the people to join the struggle for national reunification.

## 24.6. Across the Korea Strait

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In the first half of the 1940s, when we were speeding up preparations to meet the great event of national liberation on our own initiative, we worked hard to build up a powerful force for national resistance in the homeland on the one hand, and on the other paid special attention to ensuring that our revolutionary organizations in Japan proper could play an important role in the resistance movement.

It can be said that we took two courses in our activities in Japan. One was to reinforce the existing ARF organizations and various other anti-Japanese organizations there so that they could join in the final offensive operations of the KPRA and form new organizations. The other was to infiltrate special operatives of the KPRA deep into the citadel of Japanese imperialism to collect military information to ensure victory in the military operations against Japan.

We sent political operatives to Japan in real earnest from the latter half of the 1930s, when the main force of the KPRA had advanced to Mt. Paektu and West Jiandao, and built up the subordinate organizations of the ARF. At the outset of the armed struggle, we Korean communists raised the motto, "Let us build a fortress of revolution in the heart of the enemy."

Needless to say, the political operatives had to be ready to risk their lives in order to infiltrate Japan. They knew that prisons and even the gallows were in store for them. Worse still, sea routes were the only way to enter Japan in those days. These routes were crawling with policemen - both uniformed and in plain clothes detectives - and secret agents. It was no easy job for the operatives to penetrate Japan this way. Nevertheless, we had to persist in our thrust into Japan.

The following document issued by the security police bureau of the Ministry of the Interior of Japan clearly shows how active the KPRA's military intelligence activities were in Japan proper:

"On Kim Il Sung's dispatching a special agent to Korea and Japan: "The group of Kim Il Sung, an insurgent Korean in Manchuria ... is active in Japan. The latest information from the special mission in Korea of the ministry calls for stringent measures to deal with the situation. "Prefecture and municipal authorities should pay special attention to security in seaports and place mobile police on trains.

1. The purpose of the dispatch: "The communist bandits, especially from the Soviet Union, send spies for intelligence service in Korea and Japan.

2. Destinations: "All the key military points along the Tumen-Jiamusi and Fengtian-Jirin railway lines, major ports in Korea (Chongjin, Rajin, Pusan, Mokpho, Wonsan, Kunsan and Sinuiju), and Shimonoseki and Tsuruga in Japan.



3. Age, clothing and kit of the man dispatched: "Age: 20- to 25-year old man of Manchurian-Korean origin. "Clothing: single-breasted khaki suit and laced boots. "Kit: various kinds of magazines on politics, the economy, and art and literature, and toilet articles in a suitcase. "Other things are not clear, but the typical secret agent speaks Japanese fluently. He may have been a teacher or a policeman previously and can pass for a Japanese in his speech and manners." (Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, November 8, Showa 16 (1941).)

We considered Japan important because it was the citadel and the operations center of Japanese colonial rule. A thrust into the center would deal a telling blow to the heart of the enemy and be very effective in destroying their colonial rule. Awakening to political awareness the Koreans in Japan, particularly the large number of young Koreans who had been drafted for labor there, and organizing them were necessary for collecting military and political information for the impending operations against Japan. It was also necessary for saving them from being made cannon fodder and wresting them from the evil grip of Japanese fascism, and for winning them over to the side of the revolution en masse.

The anti-Japanese forces in Japan proper, together with the anti-Japanese patriotic forces in Korea and abroad, were considered formidable, in that they could join the KPRA in the final operations to destroy the Japanese imperialists.

The names of the eras of the successive emperors of Japan make an impression that they were willing to offer themselves to others. Meiji, Taisho and Showa are all nice-sounding. However, in the era of Showa, Japan turned its neighboring countries into slaughter-houses of humanity and appeared as an international human butcher, inflicting misery and disaster upon hundreds of millions of people. Emperor Meiji, whose name literally means "clean politics", instigated his warriors to swallow up Korea, the East and if possible even the world. It was in the Meiji era that they extorted many concessions through wars against China and Russia. In this period they swallowed up our country by force of arms. In the era of Taisho, Japan committed a host of evils.

Down through history, the Japanese imperialists stopped at nothing to bleed the Koreans white. From the moment they were taken away to Japan, Koreans were bated as beasts. No other country equaled Japan in treating human as dogs, pigs and cattle. Koreans went to Japan not because they wanted to but because they press-ganged by Japanese soldiers and policemen. Some were dragged out of bed in the middle of the night. These victims of Japan's forced-labor policy were dragooned and bound to make sure they did not escape.

The Japanese in Korea used to say that they considered Koreans "the same as Japanese". But these were no more than honeyed words. If that was true, why did the Japanese treat the Koreans who were taken to Japan like cattle? In literary works which describe old Japan you may come across the word *takobeya*, which means an "octopus room" or "octopus house". Octopuses live in cracks in rocks. The Korean construction workers in Hokkaido called their lodgings *takobeya*, and likened them to narrow jars for growing bean sprouts. It was dangerous for them to call them "prisons", so they called them "octopus rooms" or "octopus houses".

The shacks where Koreans lodged in Japan were also called "peninsula rooms", which meant rooms where the people from the peninsula lived. These were worse than takobeya. They were locked at night, and guard dogs made sure the Korean workers stayed inside. When the workers spoke Korean, they were mercilessly pricked with something like a bamboo knife or beaten with pickaxe handles. Those who tried to run away were dragged around with strings through their noses. Worse still, Japanese contractors and employers did not hesitate to torture Korean workers with knives and hot lead. Some were even beaten to death and their corpses thrown into rivers or cement mixers. In these circumstances, the Koreans, with a strong sense of national pride, could not bear such maltreatment and insults. Koreans are tenderhearted and simple, but they are full of courage.

The nearly two million Koreans who were conscripted for labor in Japan were all prepared to rise up and fall upon the Japanese when the anti-Japanese guerrillas pushed into Korea. It was not only the workers who had such a secret dream; the more than 10,000 Korean students in Japan had the same dream.

It always cut me to the quick to hear about the miserable plight of the Koreans in Japan. As for the Koreans living in Manchuria, it can be said that they were more or less under our protection. The Koreans in Japan, however, had no protection. That was why we showed more sympathy for them.

Still, sympathy could not save them. Anybody can sympathize with fellow human beings, but organization is the greatest present that can be bestowed upon the exploited and oppressed masses by the communists. Organization alone was able to save the people from their wretched plight.

There were many organizations formed by the Koreans in Japan? communist, nationalist, "enlightenment", students' and so on. The students played an important role in the anti-Japanese movement in Japan. They formed the Association of Korean Students in Tokyo and drafted a declaration of independence on the eve of the March First Popular Uprising. A copy of the declaration was smuggled into the homeland and had a strong impact on the independence campaigners. When Japan annexed Korea by force of arms, a considerable number of Korean students in Tokyo and Kyoto returned home en masse in protest. This fact is enough to show how strong the spirit of resistance of the Korean students was. The student movement that developed along nationalist lines opposed the enemy only by passive means such as petitions and demonstrations. Yet it exercised a considerable influence upon our compatriots.

Park Ryol, a noted anarchist, was at one time a student in Japan. He was sentenced to penal servitude for life on a charge of conspiring to murder the Emperor of Japan. He was imprisoned for over 20 years, and only released after liberation. Many of those who founded the Korean Communist Party in 1925 had studied in Japan. When Marxism spread to Japan they formed various ideological groups and organizations, and buckled down to studying and disseminating this new trend of thought. Already in the early 1930s, the communist groups formed by Koreans in Japan numbered more than 30, with thousands of members. An organization of Korean communists existed as a branch of the Japanese Communist Party.

Influenced by the new trend of thought, the labor movement also developed among the Koreans in Japan.

There was a Korean business group named the Tong-A Union in Osaka. In addition, Koreans formed many religious organizations in Japan, where there was also a branch of the Singan Association.

As you can see, there was a wide network of organizations among the Koreans in Japan. Needless to say, these organizations differed from each other in their doctrines, opinions and modes of activity. One organization confined its activities to benevolent work. However, we believed that each of them could serve as part of the groundwork on which to build up strong forces for national resistance. It was no problem to encourage the purely educational groups to join the practical revolutionary struggle. Since all these organizations were against the Japanese, their political transformation depended on our efforts.

All these organizations of our compatriots who were drafted to work in Japan were as good as time bombs laid in the heart of the Japanese imperialists. We were entrusted with the mission of exploding these bombs.

So we paid special attention to Japan proper, where there were hundreds of thousands of Koreans working, most of whom were opposed to Japanese imperialism. To dispatch operatives to Japan was an urgent matter in view of the need to link the anti-Japanese Koreans' movement with the armed struggle against Japan, ensure unified leadership over the spontaneous and uncoordinated mass movement of the Koreans in all parts of Japan and develop this movement qualitatively in keeping with the requirements of the developing situation.

Operatives were sent to Japan mainly by the Pusan-Shimonoseki and Chongjin-Tsuruga ferry routes. Important political operatives who were to stay there for a long time took a long roundabout way via ports in third countries. Students could travel to and from Japan with relative ease. In fact, rich people would often send their children to Japan to study, and these students would take lots of luggage with them.

I gave Park Tal and Kim Jong Suk an assignment to look for promising students who could work as our operatives. Kim Jong Suk discovered that self-supporting students from Phungsan had their own organization in Tokyo. If we could transform this organization into a revolutionary one in the enemy's capital, we could open up a way to train Koreans as revolutionaries in the heart of Japan. It was in the Tokyo-Yokohama area, an industrial center with a dense population, that most of the Korean students and workers in Japan lived. Giving Kim Jong Suk copies of the Ten-Point Program of the ARF, I told her to make contact with the students from Phungsan and bring their organization in Tokyo under our influence.

Kim Jong Suk discussed this with Ju Pyong Pho. It is said that Ju Pyong Pho picked Lee In Mo to be dispatched to Japan. The students' organization was actually a friendship society of the self-supporting students from Phungsan in Tokyo. The members used to gather to discuss topical matters, including their problems, and exchange opinions on books of interest. It sometimes helped unemployed members to find jobs. It was purely a benevolent society, and its only political involvement consisted of denouncing the Japanese for claiming that "Korea and Japan are one," "Japanese and Koreans are of the same descent" and "Koreans are the same people as the Japanese."

In Tokyo Lee In Mo brought the influence of Mt. Paektu into this organization. The members of this friendship society were greatly influenced by the Ten-Point Program of the ARF and its Inaugural Declaration. The friendship society, which had simply writhed in agony without any definite goal or direction, was thus transformed into a patriotic anti-Japanese society.

In those days the Koreans studying in Japanese universities made every effort to give support to and join hands with us who were fighting on Mt. Paektu. A considerable number of anti-Japanese underground organizations were formed in high schools, middle schools and colleges. The nationalist group of Korean students in Kanazawa, which was detected by the Japanese police in the first half of 1944, was also a resistance organization formed by political operatives from our main force.

Lee Chol Su, a political operative of the KPRA, informed us of the activities of the Korean students who were studying at Kanazawa Middle School. When he was doing political work in the guise of a student in Chongjin on a special mission, he planted an operative among the students who were going to Kanazawa Middle School to study.

The operative who crossed to Kanazawa got the students from Korea together and formed an unnamed organization in the school. It was not named in order to evade possible suppression by the enemy. The ultimate objective of this organization was to rise in armed revolt at the decisive moment in active response to the People's Revolutionary Army's thrust into the homeland.

According to a Japanese police source, members of this organization intended to go to Mt. Paektu to join the independence movement. Mt. Paektu was the base where Kim Il Sung, "an independence campaigner hailing from northern Korea," had organized a guerrilla army and was fighting to win back the independence of Korea by training many excellent Korean compatriots.

There were many anti-Japanese resistance organizations in Japan, but only a few of them openly announced that they were determined to go to Mt. Paektu to join our struggle. Most of the resistance organizations were encouraged by the news of our struggle, and fought in high spirits to join our final offensive operations. But, taking into consideration Japanese police pressure, they did not openly disclose their objective of struggle. In Osaka there was a loyalty association which was composed of self-supporting students. There were many self-supporting students and workers from Cheju Island and Kyongsang Province.

The people of Cheju Island have a strong sense of independence, I heard. According to the officials of Chongryon, the young men from Cheju Island who were living in the slum quarter of Osaka and attending evening classes at a university all had a strong nationalistic spirit. Where there is a strong nationalistic spirit, there will be an organization, and many revolutionaries will be produced. Students from Cheju Island opened a fellowship night school with young workers from Cheju Island and formed an anti-Japanese friendship association. After they received the Ten-Point Program of the ARF from our operatives, they formed a new loyalty association with the members of the anti-Japanese friendship association and the students attending the evening course.

The program and fighting task of this association were admirable. To understand the character of this association, it is sufficient to examine its objective that of immediately returning to Korea at the outbreak of war between the Soviet Union and Japan to lead the young compatriots to oppose Japan and unfold the independence movement and resolutely rise up in concert with Kim Il Sung's all-out campaign against Japan.

When the association was suppressed by the Japanese imperialists, those involved returned to Seoul and continued their revolutionary activities together with our operatives in the homeland. After liberation they devoted themselves to the struggle for the country's reunification in south Korea and Japan. They were even in touch with the guerrillas on Cheju Island.

Anti-Japanese underground organizations of Korean students were also formed in seminaries in Japan. A typical example was the nationalist group of the Korean students of the central seminary in Kobe. What was remarkable about their struggle was that they nurtured national consciousness, and the spirit of independence and patriotism, praising me who was fighting on Mt. Paektu as a worthy independence campaigner. The friendship association of Korean students organized at Okayama High School No. 6 was reorganized into a body subordinate to the ARF by Min Tok Won, who was studying at a university in Tokyo at that time.

Min Tok Won said that the restoration of Korea was the supreme task of the Korean compatriots, that the ARE appealed to all the patriotic forces of the nation to unite in the great war to liberate the motherland and that the students should enlighten and awaken the downtrodden Korean compatriots who had been dragged to Japan and unite them around the anti-Japanese organization so that they could rise up as soon as confusion was created in the interior of Japan and win independence. In those days operatives gave wide publicity to that strategy.

I heard that he assigned to Ryo Un Chang, Kim Jae Ho and other organization members the tasks they had to carry out during vacations. The organization members went to their native places on vacations and conducted enlightenment work among their families, relatives, friends and fellow students.

Enlightenment work at that time laid emphasis on giving publicity to the fighting achievements of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. In addition, they explained the Ten-Point Program of the ARF, and urged their listeners to rise up in the great war for national liberation if they truly wanted the independence of Korea. In this way they formed groups of near relatives and intimate friends who understood each other and extended their organizations.

There are many interesting anecdotes connected with Okayama High School No. 6. One interesting fact is that the organization members there advised their younger brothers and the friends of their younger brothers to go to Kim Il Sung's unit, when they were going to join the Children's Air Corps, deceived by the propaganda of the Japanese. In response to their appeal, several young men left for Manchuria in search of us, but failed to do so. Some members of the Okayama branch of the ARE devoted themselves to the country's reunification after liberation, and others waged guerrilla struggles with Lee Hyon Sang on

Mt. Jiri. There were many anti-Japanese resistance organizations among the workers in those places where Koreans were concentrated in the industrial centers like the Tokyo-Yokohama area, the Osaka-Kobe area, Hokkaido, Niigata, and so on.

What is remarkable among the organizations in the Tokyo-Yokohama area was the United Association that was formed in Tokyo. It was an anti-Japanese organization made up mainly of workers and some self-supporting students. The organization denied the orthodoxy of the Emperor of Japan, opposed factionalism and highly praised the activities of the Korean patriots and the struggle of the KPRA. The organization gave wide publicity to us among the workers and self-supporting students.

An official Japanese source reported about the information service rendered by the organization members as follows:

"Kim Il Sung ... in northern Manchuria is our fellow countryman who has such great influence that even the Japanese army is very worried. He sometimes moves into Korea and it is truly worth respecting that he never hits the houses of the Korean compatriots but attacks the Japanese and their houses." (Monthly Report by the Special Political Police, p. 202, Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, March Showa 17 (1942).)

The strategy of the organization was to receive military training, availing themselves of the volunteer system of the enemy and level their guns at the Japanese imperialists when the opportunity arose. The organization asserted that Korea's independence could only be achieved through the communist movement.

The following decision made by a workers' organization member in Tokyo clearly shows how ardently the Korean workers in the Tokyo-Yokohama area revered the great leader and how high their anti-Japanese spirit was.

"1. Kim Il Sung has organized the Korean Independence Corps in Manchukuo and is fighting. He will be the President of Korea in the future. We shall follow him. "2. It is useless to serve in the Japanese army as conscripts and die in battle for Japan. We shall go to Kim Il Sung and work for Korea." (Monthly Report by the Special Political Police, p. 75, Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, March Showa 19 (1944).)

In the 1920s, the General Federation of Korean Trade Unions in Japan was organized in the Tokyo-Yokohama area. The federation was disbanded long ago, but the labor movement, though insignificant, continued its tradition. When the Mt. Paektu wind blew into the area, the existing organizations were reorganized on revolutionary lines and new ones were formed. We sent many operatives to Hokkaido. Among the operatives dispatched to the area there was a man who worked under the assumed name of Kim Thae Hyon. His destination was Hokkaido, but he did not go directly there. He went to the construction site of the military base in the Kuril Islands and formed secret organizations, giving wide publicity to the Ten-Point Program of the ARF.

In the course of this he was arrested. However, he escaped on the way to the prison and went underground. He was in hiding for some time and then went to Hokkaido to start his work. He rallied around anti-Japanese organizations the Korean workers who had been forced to work in coal mines, mines, airports and at hydroelectric power station sites. I heard that his political work was a success.

He said to the workers: "Do you know what is meant by mother-land? Because you are deprived of your motherland, you are forced to cross the sea and here in Hokkaido you undergo indescribable hard-ships. All the people in the motherland are fighting at the cost of blood to win back the country. In the forests of Mt. Paektu many people have taken up arms and are fighting against the Japanese army at the cost of their lives. We can live only when we have our motherland. We must fight together with Kim Il Sung's army and liberate the country as soon as possible. To this end, we must form organizations and unite the people around us." Then he explained, item by item, the Ten-Point Program of the ARF. He formed organization with those who supported the program.

The workers who were won over in this way stood in the forefront of strikes in several backbreaking workplaces in Hokkaido. The miners revolt in the Yubari coal mine was organized by this operative.

The book *Forcible Drafting of Koreans, Records of Forced Labor* published in Japan gives a relatively detailed account of the real state of the organizations and their anti-Japanese and anti-war struggles conducted in Hokkaido, southern Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands and other parts of Japan. This book was edited by the Commission of Investigation into the Forcible Drafting of Koreans. Fujishima Udai, the vice-chairman of the commission, is a famous critic. He visited our country on several occasions. He was the first Japanese to visit the revolutionary battle sites in our country.

The book describes how our operative who infiltrated one of the construction sites in Hokkaido gave publicity to the activities of the KPRA among the Korean workers and inspired them to join the anti-Japanese struggle. He often organized sabotage of the production of war supplies and instigated the Koreans to run away. The runaways set fire to other work sites.

In those days the Japanese imperialists, with their defeat near at hand, desperately sped up the production of munitions under the slogan "Produce, supply and win!" The communists and anti-war forces in Japan fought under the slogan "Cannot produce, cannot supply and cannot win!"

It greatly facilitated the defeat of Japan and the liberation of Korea that our operatives slowed down munitions production, enlisting anti-Japanese forces to this end. I heard that our operative who infiltrated Sapporo in Hokkaido formed an underground organization among the Korean workers drafted by force to the construction site of the military base there. He gradually expanded the organization and even hastened the preparations for an armed revolt.

Our operatives were also active in schools at different levels, including the university in Hokkaido. Under their influence, Japanese workers and progressive youth and students also joined in the anti-imperialist and anti-war struggle. The Osaka-Kobe area, a major industrial center in Japan, was also greatly

influenced by our operatives.

What was striking among the organizations in this area was the Special Youth Concord Training Force Association, which was formed by the Korean workers drafted into a factory in Hyogo Prefecture. The operative who infiltrated there was educated and trained by our political worker. His name is recorded as Ko Yong Sok in a secret Japanese document. It seems to be an alias, since I don't remember such a name.

Following is a report from a Japanese government office concerning the incident of the Special Youth Concord Training Force Association: "On the roundup and investigation of the Special Youth Concord Training Force Association, a Korean nationalist group in Amagasaki:

"A leader Pyong Gyu (27 years old) who had been gradually awakened to national consciousness, met by chance Ko Yong Sok who was under the command of Kim Il Sung independence movement of Korea in Manchuria. Ko told him that a Japanese-Soviet War would break out before long, that Koreans were to rise up in response to it, that Kim Il Sung in Manchuria was to thrust into Korea in August Showa 20 (1945) and that he had been secretly dispatched by Kim Il Sung, entrusted with the mission of uniting the Korean youth and securing grain for preparatory work. Ko added that he hoped that the young men of Korea would play an active role since they were about to greet the moment of Korea's independence. instigated by Ko, Pyong Gyu sneaked into Japan as an immigrant worker to visit places where many young Korean men worked in order to form a large organization through collective living and rise up in response to Kim Il Sung group's thrust into Korea. He moved to the Amagasaki factory of Otani Heavy Industries at the end of March Showa 19 (1944), brought to national awareness an immigrant Korean worker, his colleague, and promoted unity. He is known to be speeding up his plot to rally workers." (Monthly Report concerning Korea, June Showa 20 (1945)).

When we were at the training base in the Soviet Far East region, we dispatched many political workers to the homeland, Manchuria and Japan. They successfully prepared national resistance forces to join in the final offensive of the KPRA. Among those political workers were people such as Kim Chang Guk, who had been dispatched by us, others who were sent by the homeland organization under our guidance after receiving our directives, and special scouts who were connected with a detachment of the IAF. In any case, all the political operatives played an active part in thoroughly preparing all the anti-Japanese forces in Japan, in keeping with our plan of national resistance.

The Kim Il Sung Corps formed a powerful anti-Japanese force at the Niigata Ironworks and slowed down the production of major munitions, thus weakening Japan's war capability. It also succeeded in helping dozens of new draftees to escape en masse. The young Koreans working in Kyoto set an objective of helping to achieve the independence of Korea with Mt. Paektu as their base in the future, and formed anti-Japanese organizations in several factories.

Indeed, our organizations struck roots in all parts of Japan, from Hokkaido in the north to Kyushu in the south, wherever Koreans were living, and among university students, seminarians, coal miners and labor draftees.



The following vividly describes how panic-stricken the Japanese police were at the infiltration of Japan by the KPRA political operatives and special scouts. A liner that plied between northern Korea and Japan needed additional seamen. Usually applicants were rare, but on this occasion there were 47 to 48 applicants in each port. These men seemed to be relatively educated and were fluent in Japanese. Suspicious, the ship's captain refrained from employing them. He explained his reasons as follows:

"According to information, they were all strongly imbued with nationalism. Knowing that crossing to Japan is not easy, they applied to become seamen, which would make it rather easy for them to sail to Japan. When the ship called at Japanese ports, they intended to slip out of the ship and into Tokyo, Osaka and other large cities. It seems they planned to agitate among Koreans in Japan, awaken them to national consciousness and recruit them for seditious actions when the situation at home and abroad permitted. It is necessary therefore to take strict precautions against Koreans sailing from Manchuria and the movements of suspicious Korean sailors." (Monthly Report by the Special Political Police, p. 77, Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, August Showa 16 (1941).)

It can be said that Japan was sitting on the edge of a volcano on the verge of eruption, because of the activities of the resistance organizations of Koreans, who had formed a continuous network all over Japan. This was the result of positive struggle on the part of our political operatives and small groups.

Among sober-minded Koreans there was no one naive enough to think that the future of the nation could be decided at the negotiation table of world powers. The unanimous conviction of our people that an armed struggle was the only way to save the country and nation made it possible to rally all the patriotic forces of Korea around the People's Revolutionary Army.

The Koreans turned to Mt. Paektu for no other reason. Because our revolutionary army was there, they always talked about Mt. Paektu. In ancient times Mt. Paektu was loved by the nation as an ancestral mountain, but from the time when the Korean communists started the struggle against the Japanese there it was loved by the nation as the sacred mountain of revolution.

It is of great significance indeed that we rapidly developed an armed struggle and firmly built up a Juche-oriented revolutionary force with it as the main axis. As the whole course of the anti-Japanese revolution shows, an armed struggle is vital to the national liberation struggle in colonies. A powerful armed struggle can quickly awaken the people to political awareness and easily mobilize the broad masses to join the war resistance against imperialist aggressors.

The pride of our nation that had been damaged by the loss of its sovereignty soared up as a result of our armed struggle on Mt. Paektu. This revolutionary pride was incomparably more worthy than the simple national pride Koreans had cherished previously. That is why we can say that our people's genuine pride and love for the motherland originated on Mt. Paektu. Under the influence of the armed struggle against Japan, the national resistance organizations built up in Japan enhanced the consciousness of national independence through practical struggle in various forms and made contributions to hastening the defeat of the Japanese imperialists.

But for such a history, the Chongryon movement could not have developed as we see today. Chongryon flourishes because it stands on a solid foundation

## 24.7. The Final Campaign

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The preparations for the final campaign to defeat Japanese imperialism and liberate our motherland were promoted full steam after victory over Nazi Germany. In February 1945 a closed summit conference of three countries, the Soviet Union, the USA and Great Britain, was held in Yalta. By that time the Soviet forces had taken Budapest, the capital of Hungary, and were making preparations for the final assault on Berlin. The defeat of Germany was only a matter of time.

A major item on the agenda discussed at the Yalta Conference was Soviet participation in the war against Japan after the defeat of Germany. The Soviet Union promised that it would participate in the war against Japan two or three months after victory over Germany. This decision was a great encouragement to the oppressed nations in the East under the rule of Japanese imperialism and to the revolutionaries in this part of the world. We sped up preparations for meeting the approaching great event of national liberation on our own initiative.



*Photo: The Soviet 88th Special Forces officers: Kim Il Sung is 2nd from right, front row.*

Not long after the Soviet forces started their final offensive on Berlin, the Headquarters of the Far East Front Forces informed us of the defeat of Germany. The officers and men of the Soviet army in the IAF (International Allied Forces) held a congratulatory party all night that day.

It seemed that they were emptying the stores and dispensaries of liquor. The Soviet people were heavy drinkers. The Soviets, Koreans and Chinese danced and sang in the joy of victory. We all regarded the victory of the Soviet Union as our own. Italy's defeat was followed by Germany's defeat, and it was clear that this would soon be followed by the collapse of Japan.

The fascist forces that had once been rampant in the world were now tumbling one after the other to the grave in both the East and the West. Now it was Japan's turn to take the baton.

We had to make preparations for expediting Japan's defeat and win the country's liberation. After the

party to celebrate victory over Germany, the Korean commanding personnel in the IAF gathered and discussed for hours the operations for the liberation of the country. It was not a formal meeting, but its atmosphere was very sincere and solemn. Full of passion, everyone was keen to destroy the Japanese imperialists and win back the country. We were full of enthusiasm to cross the Tuman there and then and make a thrust into the homeland. The focal point of discussion was the question of liberating the country by our own efforts and of national resistance.

They said to the effect that we must all maintain the Juche-orientated stand that we must liberate the country by our own efforts; to this end, the political and military capabilities of the KPRA must be increased to the maximum and the resistance organizations in the homeland prepared to the full, so that when the KPRA launched the campaign to liberate the country, the entire nation would rise in revolt in response to the campaign; and we must strengthen our military ties with the Soviet and Chinese forces and make preparations for cooperative operations in the context of the overall operations of the Soviet Union against Japan.

Afterwards I had a consultation with the Headquarters of the Soviet Far East Front Forces on several occasions about our military and political cooperation with the Soviet Union. Sometimes I went there with Zhou Bao-zhong or Zhang Shou-jian, and at other times with Kim Chaek or Choe Yong Gon.

To cope with a possible invasion by Japan, the Soviet Union had made careful preparations of its own for its campaign against Japan, before and after the defeat of Germany.

Around Juche 32 (1943) when the Soviet Union was fighting a full-scale war against Germany, the Soviet leadership took measures for strengthening the section of the General Staff in charge of the Far East, and reorganized the Far East forces for wartime operations. Stalin replaced the commanders of the Far East Front and armies with generals who had rich experience in the war against Germany. Front Commander Apanasenko was sent to the Voronezh Front south of Moscow as deputy commander and Purkayev, commander of the Kalinin Front, was appointed commander of the Far East Front.

In 1944 when the Soviet forces were actively engaged in military operations in Eastern Europe, Stalin ordered reinforcements to be sent rapidly to the Far East region so as to increase the forces there to the maximum. After the defeat of Germany, the Soviet Union began to make a final review of its plans of operations against Japan.

On our part, we also formulated the directions of operations and concrete plans for actions of the KPRA. Needless to say, the plans envisaged cooperation with the Soviet forces. The high-ranking commanding personnel of the Soviet Union were expecting a great deal from the activities of the KPRA and the NAJAA. All the units of the IAF increased the intensity of their training several-fold in anticipation of the forthcoming campaign against Japan. The military training in these days paid attention to making all the national units of the IAF keep in step in the joint campaign while sustaining their own characteristics. For the joint campaign to prove effective, it was important to define the mission of the national units in the campaign, and ensure cooperation between different arms and services. The IAF channeled its due

efforts into solving these problems in training.

The units of the KPRA and the NAJAA also made tireless efforts to perfect the tactics of guerrilla warfare created and practiced in the years of anti-Japanese war and to find out the methods of employing these tactics effectively in large-scale regular-army operations. While promoting training in all forms simultaneously, we put emphasis on training for reconnaissance, engineering, wireless operation and airborne training skills badly needed for the campaign to liberate the country. We also made a full study of the latest experiences of the Soviet forces in the war against Germany, and the level of our assimilation of the experiences was high.

In the early days of the JAF the Soviet teachers at our training base had mostly been participants in the Civil War. But in the days when we were making final preparations for the campaign against Japan most of the teachers were veterans of the Soviet-German War. As they had been tempered in modern warfare for some years, their lessons were fresh. In order to get the resistance organizations in the homeland ready, we dispatched operatives to many parts of the homeland, including the Paektusan secret camp and Mt. Kanbaek. In cooperation with the political workers who had already been guiding the organizations, they stepped up preparations for the final campaign.

Around this time I also went to the homeland to direct the activities of the units in the homeland in relation to the impending operations, and at the same time devoted much time to coordinating our operational plans with the overall preparations of the Soviet Union for its operations against Japan.

In the summer of 1945 the Soviet Union organized the General Headquarters of the Soviet Far East Forces, with Vasilievsky as the commander-in-chief, and put three large front armies under its command. The Zabaikal Front Army was commanded by Malinovsky, the 1st Far East Front Army by Meretskov, and the 2nd Far East Front Army by Purkayev, former Far East Front commander.

The theatre of operations of the 1st Far East Front Army covered Korea and the northeast area of China south of Harbin, and that of the 2nd Far East Front Army was the northeast area of China west of Khabarovsk. The IAF were originally scheduled to operate under the 2nd Far East Front Army, but the units of the KPRA mostly kept liaison with the 1st Far East Front Army. After the General Headquarters of the Soviet Far East Forces were formed, I dealt mostly with Meretskov and Stykov, commander and military commissar of the 1st Far East Front Army, respectively. I was on intimate terms also with Chistyakov, commander of the 25th Army, and Lebezev, one of its commanders. With the beginning of the campaign against Japan, they were to push into Korea.

The General Headquarters of the Soviet Far East Forces were situated in Khabarovsk. Frequenting the city, I became acquainted with Vasilievsky and Malinovsky. In the summer of 1945 the General Headquarters frequently convened meetings for the joint operations.

Vasilievsky explained in detail the operational plans of the General Headquarters. He said that they planned to encircle the main force of the Kwangtung Army and destroy it piecemeal. We consistently

maintained our original operational plan for the liberation of Korea. We had planned to move the units of the KPRA that had assembled in the area of Mt. Kanbaek by prearranged routes to different provinces to liberate them, and airlift the units that remained at the training base in the Soviet Far East region to Pyongyang and other areas to occupy the secret bases that had been built and launch military operations in full swing. In addition, the small units and political workers of the KPRA active in the homeland were to expand resistance organizations on a large scale and rouse the people to national resistance so that all the people would fight in response to the offensive of the KPRA all over the country.

I still think this operational plan was absolutely correct, because it could ensure a quick liberation in the military and political situation of our country in those days. The airlifted paratroopers in cooperation with the national resistance forces in all provinces would strike the enemy from all quarters without difficulty.

The Soviet forces were to attack the fortified zones along the coast after bombing and bombardment, and the infantry units were to push in waves across the frontier with armored vehicles in the van. These actions were promised by the Soviet Union. With the final campaign impending, we dispatched many small units and groups to the homeland.

We also gave all the guerrilla units, people's armed corps and resistance organizations assignments to abolish the colonial ruling machinery after the defeat of Japanese imperialism, protect the people's lives and property, and set up Party organizations and the organs of people's power. Of the commanding personnel of the Soviet forces in the Far East, I met Meretskov most frequently.

The general, with a little bald head, was in his late forties. In view of his past record, I thought it was not fortuitous that Stalin had appointed him a front commander in the Maritime region. Having served as an officer in a unit in the Far East, he had become the commander of the Leningrad Military District. Then he commanded the 7th Army that fought in the main thrust in the war against Finland. He had once been Chief of General Staff of the Soviet army, and before coming to the Far East he had commanded the Karelian Front northwest of Moscow.

Seeing me, he shook my hands passionately as if he were meeting an old friend of his, saying he was glad to see me. Offering me a seat, he said, "In the war against Japanese imperialism, the Korean comrades are our seniors. Your role in the campaign against Japan is very important. We expect a great deal from your activities."

After acquainting himself briefly with the activities of the Korean Contingent in the IAF, he asked me to explain in detail the military and political situation in Korea. He and his colleagues showed great interest in the deployment of the military forces and Japan's method of administering Korea, the Korean people's struggle against Japan, the distribution of revolutionary organizations and the activities of the armed corps associated with the secret bases.

One day on the eve of the campaign, I went to Moscow with the commanding officers of the JAF for a meeting convened by the General Staff of the Soviet army. Meretskov, Stykov and other senior officers

of different front headquarters related to the campaign against Japan were already there. It was there that I met Commander-in-Chief Vasilievsky again. They all expressed their support for our plan of operations to liberate Korea by airborne operations. At that time the units of the NAJAA were given a mission to fly into major cities in Manchuria to open the routes for the advancing Soviet ground forces.

In Moscow I met Zhukov. In those days he was commander of the Soviet occupation force in Germany and Soviet representative on the allied control commission for Germany. I didn't know why he was in Moscow, but the meeting with him was very impressive. This famous veteran general was quite magnanimous and open-minded. The Soviet people accorded cordial hospitality to us, going far beyond diplomatic convention.

During our sojourn in Moscow we visited the Lenin Mausoleum, the History Museum and the famous battle sites related to the defense of Moscow. We again enjoyed the film, Chapayev. I did not know why, but even after the meeting the Soviet people showed us around Moscow without being in any hurry to send us back to the Far East. After several days they introduced us to Zhdanov, Member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Stykov was already there.

Saying that he was meeting us, the envoys from the east, on behalf of Stalin, he highly praised the anti-Japanese armed struggle we had conducted. He had heard much about Kim Il Sung, the Korean guerrilla leader, from Stalin and Stykov, and he was glad to see me much younger than he had heard, he said. According to him, Stalin was also showing exceptional interest in our activities.

Our talk with Zhdanov began with the question of the present military and political situation. During the talk I felt he wanted to hear my opinion on how to develop Korea after liberation into a democratic, independent state. In the middle of the talk he suddenly asked me how many years it would take for the Korean people to build a sovereign state after the liberation of their country. I replied it would take two or three years at most. He seemed happy to hear this. He even rubbed his palms. At the same time, it was evident he was surprised at my answer.

At that time I guessed why he was so interested in our building of an independent and sovereign state after liberation and why he looked dubious about my answer. This was because Roosevelt had proposed trusteeship when discussing the postwar Korean question at the Yalta Conference. Roosevelt consistently maintained that the small nations in Asia to be liberated from colonial rule should be educated in democracy under the patronage of big powers.

In the spring of 1943, in talks in Washington with the US Secretary of State and the British Foreign Minister, Roosevelt claimed that Korea and the Indo-Chinese nations must be placed under the trusteeship of big powers. He said that about 40 years would be needed as a transitional period for Koreans to win full independence. It seems he did not have a high opinion of the Korean nation.

I stressed that in the course of the lengthy anti-Japanese armed struggle and national liberation struggle

our people had been awakened to political consciousness and tempered greatly, that in the course of this a steadfast leading hard core and broad sections of the patriotic forces that could build a state by their own efforts had been prepared, and that we had acquired rich fighting experience, boundless creativity, seasoned organizing ability and a strong capability to mobilize the people.

Listening carefully to my explanation, Zhdanov asked in what form his country could give assistance to the Korean people in their struggle to build their country after liberation. I said, "Your country fought a four-year war with Germany and it will fight another big war with Japan. So how can you help us? Your help will, as a matter of fact, be welcome, but we are going to build the country by ourselves to the best of our ability. Though difficult, it will be beneficial for the future. In our country worship of great powers has existed historically as the root cause of national ruin. We're determined to prevent this malady from doing harm to the building of our new country. What we expect from you is your political support. We hope that in future the Soviet Union will actively support our country in the international arena, and make efforts to ensure that the Korean issue is settled in the interests of the Korean people and in accordance with their wishes." Zhdanov was satisfied with my answer.

He said, "Some days ago I met a man from an Eastern European country. As soon as he saw me, he told me that the economy of his country was basically backward and the difficulties it faces are manifold owing to the devastation of the war, and that the Soviet Union should help his country as a big brother. What a contrast between his attitude and yours! I wonder if this is the difference between the East and the West, the difference between the country where the sun rises and the country where the sun sets?" His last words were of course a joke.

How could there be any difference between a sun-rising country and a sun-setting country? If any, the difference was that the leaders of the Eastern European countries believed in the Soviet Union more than in the strength of their own people. Most of these countries were liberated by the Soviet army, so they built socialism after the Soviet fashion, relying utterly on that country, and aping everything the Soviet people did and said. Their worship of the Soviet Union was so extreme that it was said that when it was raining in Moscow, they also raised their umbrellas. One of the reasons why socialism went to ruin in Eastern Europe was precisely the worship of the great power.

Zhdanov said he would report to Stalin the result of his interview with me. Later I met him on several occasions, deepening our friendship. Apparently Meretskov also told Stalin a lot about me. I still remember meeting Meretskov in Lushun. I went there immediately after the liberation of Korea and met him there. While talking this and that with me, he said he would soon be going to Moscow to see Stalin and asked me if I had anything to request of Stalin. I raised the question of abolishing the currency notes issued by the Soviet army headquarters and issuing our own national currency, the matter of nationalizing industries, the need for Soviet assistance in our work of reorganizing the KPRA into a modern regular army, and some other problems.

In subsequent days, Meretskov helped us in our work in every way. When he was in command of the military district of the Maritime region, he often visited Pyongyang, and each time he would visit my



house before visiting the Soviet army headquarters. Once he came to Pyongyang with Malinovsky. The commander of the Soviet forces in Korea tried to guide them to the hotel used exclusively by foreigners. Saying they had come to visit me and would ask my wife to cook them dumplings, they declined his offer, and came straight to my house.

They did not care whether I was at home or not. They were quite magnanimous and unpretentious. But Kim Jong Suk was embarrassed as she had to receive the guests without any prior notice. Malinovsky told her that they had informed me when they were leaving for Pyongyang, and it seemed I was very busy as I had failed to come to the airport and I was not at home. He said they would help themselves to food without waiting for the busy man. He then asked Kim Jong Suk to bring Korean noodles and "Korean bread".

After the interview with Zhdanov I returned to the Far East region with Stykov. My friendship with Stykov, established in the Far East region, continued in later years. He exerted great efforts for the settlement of the Korean issue. As head of the Soviet delegation to the Joint USSR-US Commission organized by the decision of the Moscow conference of three foreign ministers, he conducted energetic diplomatic activities for the reunification and independent development of Korea. On returning from Moscow, I summoned the officers of the KPRA and briefed them on my activities in Moscow.

Under the agreement it had made with its allies, the Soviet Union declared war against Japan on August 9, 1945, and entered into hostilities with the Japanese army. On the same day, I ordered the KPRA to start the general offensive for liberating the motherland.

I saw to it that the KPRA units, before launching the final operations, surprised several points of strategic importance in the fortified zones in the border area including Tho-ri, Unggi County, and Nanbieli and Dongxingzhen, Hunchun County, creating confusion in the enemy defense system and striking the enemy troops and weapons in the fortified zones. In their joint operations with us, the 1st Far East Front Army headquarters was most intent on the choice of objectives to which they could deal the most effective blow, the choice of the link in the whole chain of fortified border areas, that, when struck, would shake the overall defense system of the Japanese army. I decided to solve this problem by our efforts.

By 1945 the Japanese army had built many concrete pillboxes in the areas bordering Manchuria, the Soviet Union and Mongolia. The four fortified zones built in Korea were bases intended to spearhead an attack on the Soviet Union. Massed in the fortified zones that had been built up for 10 years along the Korean-Soviet, Korean-Manchurian and Soviet-Manchurian borders were large forces of three services, including the Kwangtung Army and the Japanese army in Korea. The enemy boasted that these fortified zones formed an "impregnable defense line".

All these fortresses had been built underground and kept secret. To prevent the secret leaking out, the Japanese imperialists killed the people who had been mobilized to construct the fortresses. These fortresses were the greatest obstacles to the campaign against Japan. The Soviet officers considered it a

major problem to destroy the Kwangtung Army behind the line of these fortifications, but I considered that the most difficult problem was to break through the line. So I thought it necessary to probe the fortified zones at a few points.

When I suggested reconnaissance in force before starting the campaign, the high-ranking officers of the 1st Far East Front Army were dubious. I insisted that, in order to make a breakthrough for the campaign, we had to strike a few targets of military importance so as to expose at once the defense system the enemy had reinforced in secret and the troops and weapons under cover.

Thus, one unit of the KPRA stormed Tho-ri at a corner of the fortifications on the Tuman River in heavy rain on the eve of the campaign. Tho-ri was situated at a vantage point between the Kyonghung fortified zone and the Unggi-Rajin fortified zone. Our occupation of Tho-ri would compel the enemy to retreat from a wide area around it and also would threaten the Kyonghung fortified zone. Our men set fire to the police station there, and liberated the village. It was the first village the revolutionary army liberated in its final operations for liberating the whole country. The enemy dispatched reinforcements, but when they reached Ungsang Pass, they saw the police station in flames and retreated in fear.

A Japanese publication carries the following account of the KPRA unit's raid on Tho-ri: "At 11. 50 pm on August 8 a group of 80 Koreans, with Soviet soldiers, crossed the Tuman in speedboats and raided Tho-ri. This village is within hailing distance of Soviet territory. The police station was the first to be attacked.... "Around 3 am on the 9th ... trucks were sent there, but it was too late ... and the trucks turned back at Ungsang Pass." (Records of the Conclusion of War in Korea, p.29.)

The breakthrough made by the audacious actions of the detachment, an advance party, of the KPRA carried out in cooperation with the Soviet forces was decisive in our effort to carry out the operational plans for concluding the war against Japan at lightning speed. The KPRA units which had been occupying offensive positions around the Kanbaeksan secret camp for the final operation advanced as planned, strengthening their ranks; the units on the Tuman River broke through the enemy fortresses on the frontier with one fell swoop, liberated Kyongwon and Kyonghung, and made a thrust into Unggi, liberating wide areas of the homeland. Some units, acting as an advance party of the landing force, landed at Unggi in close cooperation with the ground force and, exploiting this success, continued to advance to the area of Chongjin.

Other units, having taken Jinchang, Dongning, Muling and Mudanjiang, pursued the enemy troops and gave fatal blows to the Kwangtung Army before pressing on towards the Tuman River. The small units and political workers from the KPRA who had been active in the homeland roused paramilitary corps, armed resistance organizations and broad sections of the people to armed revolt. They harassed the enemy in the rear by boldly attacking the Japanese imperialist aggressor troops, gendarmerie and police establishments, in strong support of the advancing KPRA units.

Han Chang Bong from Taoquanli fought outstandingly when attacking the fortress at Kyonghung. As a member of the advance party of the IAF, he crossed the Tuman before anybody else. Having crossed the

river, the advance party, with the help of the local revolutionary organizations, destroyed the enemy forts and pillboxes and liberated Wonjong. In the operation for breaking through the fortifications on the Tuman River, the Battle of Mt. Mayu in Hunyung is a famous one.

The enemy had bragged that the fortifications around Mts. Mayu and Wolmyong were impregnable. Having blown up the bridge at Hunyung, the enemy entrenched themselves on the heights where pillboxes had been built and prepared for a do-or-die battle. Park Kwang Son and the scouts of the KPRA, disguised as Japanese, crossed the Tuman in the dead of night and appeared at the back of Mt. Mayu to reconnoiter the enemy's movements in detail. Two enemy battalions were defending the mountain. The scouts transmitted the enemy situation to the unit and fought in the van of the unit that made a forced crossing of the Tuman. The people's armed corps in the area of the mountain blew up the enemy's powder magazines and ammunition dumps, rendering a great contribution to the victory of the overall battle.

After raiding Tho-ri, O Paek Ryong's advance party performed fine exploits in the Battle of Manhyang Pass. The pass was an important inland gateway, from which the enemy was able to keep the Unggi-Rajin fortress safe. When the unit's advance was frustrated at the pass, O Paek Ryong volunteered to destroy the enemy's pillboxes and gun emplacements on the pass with his advance party. Climbing the pass on all fours with his men, he blew up all the pillboxes and ensured the unit's advance. The Soviet officers and men, with their thumbs up, said the Korean guerrillas were the best.

One of our men fell in action the day before the country's liberation. He was Kim Pong Sok, the orderly I treasured the most. He had performed many liaison missions for me. Although he was an orderly, he performed political work efficiently, to the surprise of many people. Everybody would be surprised if they knew that in the late 1930s he, along with Yun Pyong Do, had gone on an assignment for me to Longjing, a base of the enemy "punitive" forces, entered a middle school and worked among the young people and students there. It was also Kim Pong Sok who had gone to Seoul as an escort for Park In Jin and attended a commemorative ceremony of Chondoist believers, exerting a revolutionary influence on the upper echelons of that religion.

He fell in action on his way back after conveying an order from me to O Paek Ryong, who was participating in the operations for liberating the country. I had dispatched Kim Pong Sok to communicate to O Paek Ryong my detailed instructions for the joint operations with the Soviet army. Straight after he had performed his mission, Kim Pong Sok had turned back. On his way back he had popped into a house for a meal, but the owner informed the police. Kim fought with the pursuing policemen bravely before dying a heroic death. It was August 14, 1945. I was unable to find his dead body. I was told that the visitors to the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery would halt in front of his bust, deeply regretful for his death on the eve of the country's liberation.

Rajin fell thanks to the Rajin People's Armed Corps. The naval force of the Soviet Pacific Fleet in charge of the operation for landing at Rajin thought that the operation would be difficult, for it was a large fortified area the enemy had built up with much effort. Enemy warships were at anchor all the time, and

there was an anti-aircraft gun emplacement on a height near the town.

When the Soviet force landed at the city, it had already been liberated. As the Soviet force opened fire from warships and planes on the city, the Japanese army entrenched there first thought it was a clash like the Zhanggufeng incident; they were resolved to defend the city at any cost. At this time a small unit of the people's armed corps stole its way into the city at night, fired upon the headquarters of the fortress, gendarmerie station and police station, and set fire to the munitions depot of the garrison. In the meantime, the main force of the armed corps, that had been waiting, entered the city and attacked the enemy from all sides.

Here is the memoir of a Soviet officer who participated in the battle to liberate Rajin. "As we approached the city we could hear the crackle of machine-guns and the roar artillery fire. Korean peasants who had rushed to the outskirts of the city waved their hands, shouting 'Hurrah!' They told us Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army had been fighting against the Japanese army for two days. The small plazas and narrow streets were crowded with the enemy's military trucks and loaded carts.

"We realized that the Korean guerrillas had cut off the retreat of the Japanese soldiers, so that they could not escape from the city. Pinned down by the guerrillas and us, the Japanese samurais threw down their arms and began to surrender. We saw about 100 armed men rushing towards us from the outskirts of the city. 'We're soldiers of Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army,' said their commander to the colonel of the tank unit." (Notes on Korea, I. Urzhmelashuwili.)

The people's armed corps under various names took part in the battles to destroy the Japanese imperialists in nearly all parts of the Korean provinces. In North Hamgyong Province the people's armed corps organized in the area of Kyonghung and Unggi fought well from the first day of the campaign, in cooperation with the allied forces of Korea and the Soviet Union. The armed corps in Chongjin, Kilju and Songjin annihilated enemy stragglers, and before August 15, the day of country's liberation, put factories under armed control and raided the police establishments.

The Kkachibong Armed Corps organized by Choe Il played a great role in the final operation. Choe Il had been dispatched to the Hoeryong area in the summer of 1941. O Paek Ryong's group guided him and assigned him to the area where he would work. He had formed an armed corps with charcoal-burners, evaders of military service and the labor draft, and progressive young people, and was in command of the corps operating from Kkachi Hill in Hoeryong. On the formation of the corps, they had read out their pledge and each of them had sworn an oath. The corps had tentative regulations and rules of conduct.

Choe Il had been in touch with Park Chang Bom, our political worker who had been conducting activities relying on the temporary secret base on Mt. Kom, Rokya-ri, Kyonghung County. The Kkachibong Armed Corps started combat actions before the beginning of the decisive battle. And when there were engagements in the northern border area, they attacked the retreating enemy soldiers in Wonjong, Chonghak and Mt. Mayu, and blew up enemy powder magazines and an oil depot. Without waiting for the advance of the Soviet forces, they liberated Hoeryong by their own efforts. The enemy troops they

destroyed in the area of Kkachi Hill were quite numerous. They captured planes, anti-aircraft guns and quantities of clothing and equipment.

The resistance organizations in Ryanggang and South Hamgyong Provinces destroyed many police stations and other organs of enemy rule before the arrival of the Soviet forces. The resistance organizations in Cholwon and Poptong in Kangwon Province, and in Yomju and Sakju in North Phyongan Province also fought well.

The resistance organizations in Sinuiju, from the day after the order for the general offensive was issued, attacked local police substations and border guard posts, and occupied the provincial police department and provincial office building. They also disarmed enemy stragglers hiding at the airfield, and handed them over to the headquarters of the Soviet forces that arrived there in the latter half of August. In South Phyongan Province and Pyongyang a large resistance unit centering on the Fatherland Liberation Corps raided an arsenal, occupied the provincial and city office buildings and arrested the defeated enemy soldiers.

The resistance organizations in Hwanghae Province also attacked and contained enemy troops in various locations before the surrender of Japanese imperialism. What I feel to be regretful whenever I recollect the days of the final campaign is that the main force of the KPRA that had made preparations for the operations for liberating the country for several years at the training base in the Soviet Union failed to carry out operations as had been planned originally.

While commanding our units engaged with the Japanese forces in the northern border area, I was putting finishing touches to the preparations for an airlift to Korea in command of the airborne troops. I partially reorganized the troops in keeping with the situation at the front and had them supplied with new weapons, ammunition and equipment. However, our airborne troops, who went to the airfield by truck, had to come back, because Japan had surrendered so soon. When Japan's surrender became known to us, we found it difficult to believe for some time. It was beyond our imagination that Japan, the powerful enemy which had been so arrogant, so brutal and so tenacious, hauled down its flag within a week of the war.

But her surrender was a stark reality beyond all doubt. Japan's defeat was a wish our forerunners had aspired to even on their deathbeds and the culmination of the resistance our people had put up perseveringly at the cost of blood for many decades while suffering terrible hardships and sacrifices. It opened a bright avenue of revival for our country and nation.

Some people judge Japan's early surrender to be a product of a conspiracy between the United States and Japan; whatever the inside story, we would have liberated the whole territory of the country if Japan had offered resistance for a few months.

Here is material that deals with the situation created by Japan's sudden surrender: "When Japan was gradually following the road of defeat and the Soviet Union was making preparations for attacking Japan

with the weaponry of justice, General Kim Il Sung planned to destroy the Kwangtung Army by dispatching his elite troops again to Manchuria.

"He deployed his army at all vantage points in Manchuria, and 20 planes were standing ready. This was a part of the plan to rise up in cooperation with the Korean officers and men in the Japanese army who had been mostly drafted. On the eve of executing this epoch-making plan, Japan surrendered and, to the regret of the would-be insurgents, the plan miscarried and was abandoned. Had this plan been set up a little earlier or had Japan surrendered a little later, General Kim Il Sung, by giving full play to his protean strategy and tactics, would have entered Korea in state amid thunderous cheers accompanied by the whirling sound of airplane propellers or by the boom of guns. Not only for General Kim Il Sung but for all the Korean nation this can be called a matter of regret that can never be soothed for thousands of years." (On Kim Il Sung, an article carried in *Munhwa Joson*, a magazine published in Tokyo, Japan, May Showa 22 (1947).)

I heard that the whole country shed tears of joy on the day Japan's surrender was announced. I was also told dances were held all day long in front of the Ryongwang and Ulmil Pavilions in Pyongyang. The cheers of joy of the nation shook the whole country, the nation that had put an end to the long, long dark night and stifling slavery 40 years after the loss of its sovereignty and 36 years after the annexation of its territory. Even after August 15, 1945, the day when the Japanese Emperor announced the surrender, the Japanese forces continued to offer resistance. That was a product of a conspiracy by the two imperialist powers - the United States and Japan - to prevent Korea from being communized after the war and place an obstacle in the way of the independence of Korea.

On August 16, 1945, the Government-General in Korea and the headquarters of the Korean military district issued the "Outline for Controlling Political Movements" and gave subordinate units in different parts of the country an order to suppress the liberation struggle of the Korean people. Claiming that the Japanese forces in Korea were still in existence, they dared to warn people not to act rashly, as they would resort to arms without hesitation if the Koreans launched any independence movement, taking advantage of Japan's unconditional surrender.

This meant that combat actions did not end in Korea after Japan's declaration of unconditional surrender. As the Government-General and the Japanese army in Korea were disregarding the declaration of surrender, the resistance forces in Korea showed no mercy in destroying with arms the stragglers of the Japanese army that were putting up resistance and the ruling establishments of the enemy. The resistance organizations and armed corps in Pyongyang and South Pyongan Province wiped out the remnants of the Japanese army and disarmed them before the arrival of the Soviet forces. They then formed Party organizations and local autonomous organs. Popular self-government organs were set up down to the lowest echelon; they assumed the reins of provincial administration and directly dealt with civil administration.

According to available information, the resistance organizations and armed corps in Korea, excluding those in North and South Hamgyong Provinces, raided and destroyed nearly 1,000 organs of rule of the

enemy in a week in mid-August.

In this way the liberation of Korea was won through the struggle of the KPRA, which had struck powerful military blows against Japanese imperialism for 15 years and shaken it to its very foundations, and the general mobilization of the resistance forces involving various strata across the country. The Soviet operations against Japan were able to be concluded in such a short span of time because the long-drawn-out resistance by the army and the people of Korea preceded them.

Korea's liberation was the great result of the struggle of the forces of our people and the KPRA themselves in the favorable circumstances created by the Soviet forces' destruction of the Japanese Kwangtung Army. In accordance with the operational plans for the final offensive of the KPRA, the resistance organizations and armed corps we had organized in the homeland in the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s destroyed the aggressor troops and colonial ruling machinery of Japanese imperialism in various parts of the country and liberated their motherland.

Introduced here are materials that clarify that the liberation of Korea was achieved by the force of the Koreans themselves.

Already before August 15, 1945, an American diplomatic document pointed out, "The Korean communist army (Kim Il Sung's army) may sweep over the Korean peninsula at any time." A university professor of the United States wrote, "Manchuria (Northeast China) is a main theatre of the Pacific War, and resistance by General Kim Il Sung proved a great factor that frustrated the subsequent military expansion of Japan."

On the role the KPRA played in defeating Japanese imperialism and liberating Korea, a book published in the Soviet Union reads, "Korea continued the struggle against the oppressors by its own efforts for 40 years, i.e., from 1905. Until August 1945 guerrilla units were active in Korea, and they rendered positive assistance to the Soviet forces in their campaign against Japan." (R. Malinovsky, *The Kwangtung Army Is Defeated*, Kor. ed., p. 311.) After the defeat of Japan, General Takenato, commander of the Pyongyang garrison of the Japanese army, confessed at his meeting with General Chistyakov, commander of the Soviet 25th Army, that Japan had stationed seven divisions of two corps and a great number of gendarmes and police in Korea in order mainly to repulse the struggle of the Korean guerrillas as well as to get ready for war with the Soviet Union.

Our people have a history of struggle against Japan spanning hundreds of years. Already in the late 16th century, they fought the seven-year-long Imjin Patriotic War against hundreds of thousands of Japanese aggressor forces.

In modern times, the history of anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean nation can be said to cover a period of more than 70 years. When the Japanese ship Unyo invaded our country in 1875, the Korean people put up armed resistance. Even though the ruling circles trembled at the strength of the Japanese aggressor forces, the army and the people resolutely fought against them.

In later years, they fought tenaciously for many decades to drive out the foreign forces through violence and nonviolence and through legal, illegal and various other methods such as the movement to "defend justice and wipe out evils", the Righteous Volunteers movement, enlightenment movement and Independence Army movement.

As Mt. Paektu, an ancestral mountain, commands all the mountains in Korea, so the anti-Japanese armed struggle we started and developed in the forests of Mt. Paektu formed the mainstream of our people's struggle for national liberation and social progress. The liberation of Korea was the sum total of the anti-Japanese armed struggle spanning 20 years and at the same time the conclusion of the heroic nationwide resistance the broad anti-Japanese patriotic forces at home and abroad carried out for many decades at the cost of sweat and blood, and with great sacrifices.



## 24.8. The Triumphal Return

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In August 1945, Korea was aflame with the joy of liberation. In the wave of excitement that enveloped the whole land of Korea, the people were waiting impatiently for the triumphal return of the national hero General Kim Il Sung. The ancient city of Pyongyang, where the leader of the nation was born, was astir even at night waiting for the arrival of General Kim Il Sung, who left his home in snowstorm in 1925. When would he come back, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow? The four hundred thousand Pyongyangites were all waiting for him.

In Seoul, Yo Un Hyong, Ho Hon, Hong Myong Hui and other leading figures of the national liberation struggle organized the preparatory committee to welcome General Kim Il Sung. Every day the Seoul railway station plaza was crowded with tens of thousands of people who were waiting for him. The hearts of thirty million people were throbbing in expectation of the moment of General Kim Il Sung's triumphal return home.

At the news of Japan's unconditional surrender, the KPRA men at the training base were seized with excitement, preparing to return home. I also wished to return home as soon as possible, for I had lived in foreign lands going through storm and stress for 20 years. But we had to put off our return for some time, repressing the yearning for our motherland and native place. We knew how eagerly the people in the homeland were waiting for the triumphant return of the KPRA.

However, we did not hurry our departure. We wanted to make better preparations before going to the homeland. We needed to prepare for the building of a new country. Now that we had carried out the strategic task of national liberation, we had to draw up a schedule to hasten the building of a new country.

On September 2, 1945, on board the USS Missouri, which was at anchor in Tokyo Bay, an international ceremony was held to legally confirm the unconditional surrender of Japan. That day, on behalf of the Japanese government and military authorities, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu and Chief of Staff of the Japanese army Umez signed the instrument of surrender. When he was Japanese Minister to China, Shigemitsu lost one leg in a grenade attack by Martyr Yun Pong Gil. Umez, too, was a notorious Japanese militarist. He was the Commander of the Kwangtung Army from the autumn of 1939 to the summer of 1944. Approximately a dozen persons were in command of the Kwangtung Army in succession, and Umez was the last one. Under his command, the enemy launched a large "punitive" operation against the KPRA under the high-sounding name of "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area".

With Japan's surrender, the Second World War, which had thrown mankind into immeasurable miseries and agony, resulted in the victory of the anti-fascist forces. When our sworn enemy Umez signed the instrument of surrender and drank the bitter cup of defeat, we were preparing to return home as the

heroes who had triumphed in the anti-Japanese revolution and made a new history of national liberation. The end of the Second World War opened the prospect for different countries in Europe, the cradle of communism, and in Asia, the forefront of the national liberation struggle, to build a new society on a democratic basis. The situation in the motherland was good.

Immediately after liberation, people's committees were organized in many parts of our country. Party organizations and mass organizations were formed everywhere centering on the revolutionaries who had been involved in the homeland Party organizations and the resistance organization members. Literary men and artists at home and abroad gathered in Pyongyang, Seoul and other major cities, cherishing a new hope for building national culture. Workers formed armed guards and protected factories, enterprises, coal and other mines, ports and railways of their own accord. Our people's enthusiasm for national salvation, which had been displayed in national resistance, was converted into enthusiasm for nation-building with the liberation.

From the viewpoint of both the immediate task of the Korean revolution and its ultimate objective, the situation was very optimistic. However, we could not relax in the least. Though the Japanese imperialists had been defeated, the reactionaries did not give up their offensive against the revolution. Even after the Japanese Emperor had declared an unconditional surrender, the remnants of the defeated Japanese army continued their resistance.

Pro-Japanese elements, traitors to the nation and the representatives of the exploiting class were hatching a plot underground to disturb the building of a new country. Traitors to the revolution, heterogeneous elements and men of political ambition concealed their true colors and infiltrated Party organizations and people's government organs. When we were in the Soviet Far East region, we heard the news that the US army would be stationed in Korea south of the 38th parallel. This meant that the troops of two big powers would be stationed in our country at the same time. It was a bad omen that the armies of two countries would be stationed in our country, which was not a defeated nation, no matter what excuse they might make or how they might justify it.

During the peasant war of 1894, Japan and China dispatched their armies to Korea. But the Korean people did not benefit at all from them. The dispatch of the two armies culminated in the Sino-Japanese War that devastated our country.

The stationing of the Soviet and US armies might turned our country into an arena of confrontation between socialism and capitalism, and our national force was liable to be split into left and right, patriots and traitors to the nation. If factional strife prevailed and factions conspired with foreign forces it would end up in the ruin of the country. In these circumstances, we had to strengthen the motive force of our revolution in every way in order to defend the independence of our nation and speed up the building of a new country.

By the motive force of our revolution I mean the force of our own people. Since the first day we set out on the road of revolution, we made every effort to educate, organize and mobilize the people who were to

undertake the anti-Japanese revolution. Millions of people in the ranks of resistance who took part in the final battle for national liberation were not people who turned out spontaneously to the battlefield but the organized masses whose forces we had built up for many years.

We never hesitated to walk a hundred miles to win over a man for the revolution. We became human bombs and plunged even into the heart of the fire to protect the people. The whole process of the anti-Japanese revolution was a history of love and trust with which we held up the people as the makers of history, awakened them to political awareness and organized them to stand in the forefront of the liberation war. It was also a history of struggle and creation, in which the people demonstrated themselves as the dignified makers of history, shedding their blood and sweat.

These people and the fighters of the People's Revolutionary Army were the motive force of our revolution that would build a new country. In the crucible of the anti-Japanese revolution we found a valuable truth that when we believe in the strength of the people and fight relying on them, enjoying their love and support, we can overcome any trial whatever and emerge victorious in any adversity. After liberation, some people said that liberating the country was difficult, but building a society after liberation would not be very difficult. But I considered that nation-building was indeed a difficult and complicated undertaking.

Just as our people had carried out the anti-Japanese revolution by their own struggle, so they had to build a new country by their own efforts. We resolved to build the Party, state and armed forces, and also the national economy, education and culture, and develop science and technology by relying on our people's strength. In order to rouse the people to build a new country, we needed the staff of the revolution and state power which would educate, organize and mobilize them, as well as an army which could protect the building of a new society with arms.

With this in mind, I convened a meeting of military and political cadres of the KPRA at the training base on August 20, 1945 and set forth the three major tasks of building the Party, the state and the armed forces new strategic tasks for strengthening the motive force of our revolution. We discussed the specific ways and methods for carrying out these tasks, and made necessary arrangements. We formed small teams for implementing these tasks and designated the places where they would be sent. We decided to dispatch Kang Kon, Park Rak Kwon, Choe Kwang, Im Chol, Kim Man Ik and Kong Jong Su to Northeast China.

Before leaving for the homeland, we gave small-team members a short course for several days. The short course dealt with the content and method of work to be done at their destinations, local customs and various other matters. Kim Chaek, An Kil and I gave the lectures.

After the short course, my comrades wanted to leave for the homeland at once. At that time they all yearned for the homeland like children. When we were leaving for the homeland we left the women soldiers with babies behind at the training base, planning to bring them home later.

When returning home, the KPRA units took different routes, because the Japanese imperialists had surrendered suddenly when each of them was fighting in different areas in accordance with the plans of joint operation with the Soviet army.

The unit which was waiting at the training base for parachute operations to be carried out in different places in Korea had a plan to come back to the homeland by way of Khabarovsk, Mudanjiang, Wangqing and Tumen. But an unexpected incident made us give up the plan on the way and change the route, so we had to return home by ship. The remnants of the defeated Kwangtung Army had blown up a railway tunnel south of Mudanjiang, and destroyed a bridge and the runway of the Mudanjiang airfield. We were not in a position to use motor vehicles, trains or airplanes. We went as far as Mudanjiang and then returned to the Soviet Far East region. In Vladivostok we boarded a warship and left for the homeland.

A colonel of the 1st Far East Front Headquarters accompanied me as an escort. The captain assured me that the ship would arrive in Wonsan Port within a day and a night even at medium speed. When we left Vladivostok the sea was rough. Waves as large as apartment blocks rose along both sides of the ship and broke over the deck. It was an amazing sight. Most of us were strangers to the sea and suffered a lot from seasickness. Our party slept one night on the ship. The next day the sea was calm.

It is still fresh in my memory that my heart throbbed strangely when I gazed at the boundless ocean over the side of the ship. I remembered the day when I was crossing the Yalu River at the age of 13. It seemed to me that the Yalu and innumerable other rivers of the homeland frozen by the sorrow of the ruined nation were being melted by the hot wind of liberation into this vast expanse of water.

As I was returning home after 20 years, leaving my blood relations, friends and comrades buried in a foreign land, I was overcome with mixed emotions of joy and sorrow, which were beyond words. We arrived at Wonsan on September 19, 1945. The members of the headquarters of a Soviet army unit stationed in Wonsan greeted us at the port.

Among the Koreans who came to the port that day, I remember Han Il Mu, who was an officer in the Soviet army. Later, he worked as the Chairman of the Kangwon Provincial Party Committee. Because the Soviet army had kept our coming a secret, there was no crowd of people at the port to greet us.

Ho Hon, Hong Myong Hui, Ryo Un Hyong and other renowned figures in the homeland who were taking the lead in waiting for our return later learned that there had been no welcome upon our landing at Wonsan. They said with regret that we should have announced our return in advance, lest the people should feel ashamed of not having greeted us. Lee Ju Ha from the Wonsan City Party Committee, too, expressed a similar regret. Ho Hon said that if the date of our return had been known to the public in advance, the majority of Seoul citizens, to say nothing of the people who were waiting for us every day at the Seoul railway station, would have thronged to Wonsan on foot or by train.

However, we did not wish for such a grand welcome. Our fighters never expected recompense for the sweat and blood they had shed on the battlefield and gallows during the many years of struggle for

national liberation. At that time we were determined to go among the people quietly on our return without spreading the news of our arrival and lay the foundation for building the Party, state and army. I intended to offer the greetings of our return to the people in the homeland after laying this foundation.

Through our talks with Kangwon provincial Party officials after our arrival at Wonsan, I felt keenly once more that we should go among the people as soon as possible. On the very day we landed at Wonsan I had talks with many people. I had talks with Party officials on the Wonsan City Party Committee, and in the Tongyang Hotel with the representatives of trade unions and local civic-minded persons. I spent much time talking with Lee Ju Ha.

After these talks I reached the conclusion that none of the parties and organizations in the homeland had shown the people a correct line for nation-building. Some officials of the Wonsan City Party Committee admired the Soviet model. When the path Korea was to take became the topic of conversation, they asserted that we should carry out socialist revolution at once. This idea was reflected in the motto hanging on the wall of the city Party committee headquarters: "Proletariat, unite under the banner of communism!" I asked them if they were trying to build a new country only by the efforts of the working class. They replied that they were people fighting for the communist revolution, so they trusted only the working class.

Their idea was quite similar to that of the earlier communists whom I had met frequently in the latter half of the 1920s. I felt depressed when I heard such assertions again in the liberated homeland 20 years later. I could not find any trace of progress or sincere efforts to keep pace with the trend of the new era in their political ideas and doctrines.

I told the officials of the Wonsan City Party Committee: "The motto 'Proletariat, unite under the banner of communism!' does not conform with the reality of our country whose immediate task is the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, so it must be changed to the motto, 'Unite under the banner of democracy!'"

In order to build a democratic society which guarantees freedom and rights for the people in the liberated homeland, we must rally not only the working class and peasants but also all patriotic people from all walks of life who are interested in the building of a new society, behind the united front. We should mobilize such nationwide efforts to build a prosperous, independent state." I talked with them before and after dinner. They kept me there for a long time, asking questions continually.

Kim Ik Hyon, who accompanied me to the city Party committee together with So Chol, came to me and said that it was midnight. He asked me if I was going to sit up all night working for the liberated homeland as I had done in the mountains. I told Kim Ik Hyon that he should remember that this was a new line of departure, even though the country had been liberated.

A talk with the officials of the Wonsan City Party Committee was the first opportunity I had on my return to the homeland to outline the nation-building policy in line with the Ten-Point Programme of the

ARF. That day I made public my view that our country should be a democratic people's republic.

The interviews with Lee Ju Ha and other Party workers and influential people in Wonsan convinced me that it was absolutely correct that we had defined immediately after the August 15 liberation the building of the Party, state and army as the tasks of nation-building and had decided to dispatch the operatives to their destinations on our arrival in the homeland.

In Wonsan, we sent without delay some of the small teams who were to work in North and South Hamgyong Provinces to their destinations by northward train. The same day, the comrades who were to work in the Choiwon area left for their destination by southward train.

I myself did not feel at ease, as I was sending them away on further missions without giving them a single day's respite from the exhausting struggle they had continued through atrocious conditions and hardships for many years, dedicating all their youth to the revolution.

Moreover, the day we landed at Wonsan was the eve of the Harvest Moon Festival. I wanted to allow them to relax and enjoy the festival before departure, but the pressing situation at home did not permit it. The team which left for North and South Hamgyong Provinces spent the Harvest Moon day on the train. The train was crowded with passengers who were going to visit their ancestors' graves, I was told.

Kim Chaek, An Kil, Choe Chun Guk, Ryu Kyong Su and Jo Jong Chol were among the team. They were very sorry to say good-bye to me. I also felt sorry to see Choe Chun Guk and Jo Jong Chol, who had received serious wounds in the war against the Japanese, limping up the carriage steps, helping each other, and waving to me. How many battlegrounds and thorny bushes they had trekked through with those legs that had undergone operations without getting even a drop of anesthetic! They naturally had the right to relieve their fatigue accumulated on the anti-Japanese battlefields, enjoying privilege as wounded soldiers for a few years in the liberated homeland.

However, they left for their destinations in the north with smiles on their faces, having no time to relieve their fatigue. We had to cross many new peaks and passes to build a prosperous independent state. On that path they had to shed a lot of blood and sweat. The great war against the Japanese had been an untrodden path, and so was the building of a new country. Had it not been an untrodden path, a thorny path, replete with difficulties and trials, we would not have made such haste.

I urged Kim Chaek to pay a visit to his hometown when he had the time. I said the same to Choe Chun Guk, Ryu Kyong Sn, Jo Jong Chol and Lee Ul Sol. They were all from North or South Hamgyong Provinces. But they never visited their native places till they were called back to Pyongyang, not because they did not love their hometowns, but because they had a strong sense of mission and responsibility. You comrades composed a song about the fork in the road to Mangyongdae, saying that when I was going to the Kangson Steel Works I did not drop in at my old home. In fact, all the anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans worked hard to lay the foundation of the Party, state and army, without visiting their native homes after their return to the homeland.

Our veterans thought that they had no right to do so before carrying out the orders and instructions of their commander. In this way, we went among the people from the day we set foot again in the homeland. Our fighters had not a moment to untie their shoelaces fastened on Mt. Paektu before leaving for the new front, one after another. Everyone regarded his or her workplace as a new theatre of operations. We can say that our triumphal return was rather a strategic movement to open a new chapter in the revolution than merely a homecoming.

On September 20, 1945, I left Wonsan by train for Pyongyang, together with my comrades who were to work in the west coast area. The representative of the Soviet army headquarters in north Korea came down as far as Puraesan station from Pyongyang to meet us. He grasped my hands warmly, congratulating me on my return home.

My company arrived in Pyongyang on the morning of September 22. The women guerrillas who had been left at the training base came to the homeland via Sonbong, North Hamgyong Province, towards the end of November that year. As soon as she arrived in Chongjin, Kim Jong Suk reported their arrival to me by phone. With the help of An Kil, Choe Chun Guk, Park Yong Sun and others who were working in Chongjin, the women guerrillas worked hard, doing political work among the masses to carry out the tasks of building the Party, state and army.

While staying in Chongjin, Kim Jong Suk toured the Chongjin Iron Works, the Komusan Cement Factory, the Puryong Metallurgical Works, and many other factories and enterprises as well as educational and cultural institutions, and conducted political work among people of all walks of life. She met many people, including workers, peasants, office workers, housewives, senior officials of the Party, government and working people's organizations, and even middle school pupils.

I was told that the citizens of Chongjin warmly welcomed Kim Jong Suk at that time. The newspaper Saegil Sinmun highlighted her revolutionary activities under the title Half of the Career of Mrs. Kim. Her experience in the northern city was so impressive that she talked only about Chongjin for some time after her return to Pyongyang. She talked frequently about how she had had a photo taken with secondary schoolchildren and about the warm hospitality accorded to her and her group by the people of the Rajin noodle house who gave a luncheon in their honor. Young Kim Jong Il, too, returned home with the women guerrillas.

On the day I entered Pyongyang, together with my comrades-in-arms, I set about carrying out the tasks of building the Party, state and army. That was one of the busiest days after liberation.

In the homeland, too, I worked mainly among the people, among the masses. While visiting factories, rural communities and streets to meet people on the one hand, on the other I met various visitors from at home and abroad in my office and lodgings, sharing bed and board with my comrades as I had done on Mt. Paektu.

Whenever they saw me, my comrades advised me to visit my grandparents at home saying that it was my

moral obligation to do so. As they were unable to persuade me, Lim Chun Chu visited Mangyongdae in secret, acting as if he had dropped in by chance, and inquired after my family members. I later heard from him about my family in detail. I did not know how the secret leaked out, but towards the end of September a rumor spread all over the city that I was in Pyongyang. Hearing it, Uncle Hyong Rok went to the South Pyongan Provincial Party Committee and asked them to help him to see me.

Lim Chun Chu asked my uncle to tell him all that he knew about me. Hyong Rok replied, "The real name of my nephew is Kim Sung Ju. In his boyhood in Mangyongdae he was also called Jung Son. His face dimples when he smiles." That evening Lim brought Uncle Hyong Rok to my lodgings.

When he met me, he said, "How much hardship you've gone through!" and then he was choked with tears. Apparently he felt a lump in his throat remembering the days when he was pining for his blood relatives who had been left in an alien land as dead souls, experiencing all kinds of bitterness for 20 years. It is hard to describe the trouble he suffered. "Until you liberated the country and came back, I looked after our home, so I failed to visit the grave of my brother and his wife. Why did they have to die so young?" He gazed into my face. "Your handsome face has become weather-beaten. The wind must be very rough on Mt. Paektu." He looked sad.

But my uncle's face was more ravaged than mine. While looking at him, who was twice as old as he had been 20 years before, tears formed in my eyes. His face was full of wrinkles, and I thought of how many trials every wrinkle represented. "If Mt. Paektu were near, I would have made even straw sandals to support your army, but I couldn't give you any help."

"You looked after our home, Uncle," I replied, moved by his humble words. Uncle Hyong Rok and I shared our experiences all through the night. The next day I sent him back to Mangyongdae. I asked him to keep our meeting to himself, and he agreed. However, he told my grandfather secretly that Sung Ju was in Pyongyang.

My grandfather said with joy: "That's what ought to be. Our Sung Ju cannot change even if Mt. Paektu changes. Some people say that Kim Il Sung is from Jolla Province and others say that he is from Hamgyong Province. Can there be so many Kim Il Sungs in Korea?" After visiting the Kangson Steel Works on October 9 and founding the Communist Party of North Korea, I gave my first address to the people in the homeland at the Pyongyang City mass rally to welcome me.

The fact is that I had never intended to meet the people at a grand welcoming rally. But the important persons in the homeland and my comrades-in-arms insisted on holding such a grand ceremony.

On the day when I first revealed my real name to the public at a meeting, instead of my assumed name, Kim Yong Hwan, someone proposed to hold a national mass rally to welcome my triumphal return. The whole meeting hailed the proposal. Preparations for the welcoming ceremony had been under way behind the scenes, under the sponsorship of the South Pyongan Provincial Party Committee and People's Political Committee. On the eve of the ceremony, a pine arch and makeshift stage were erected



in the public playground at the foot of Moran Hill.



*Lee Wha Rang: Photo: Kim Il Sung at the October 14 mass rally welcoming his home-coming. The Soviet adviser standing next to Kim, Col. Ignatiev, was killed during the Korean War. On a mass rally held on March 1, 1946, a south Korean death squad, Baik-yi-dang connected to US CIC, attempted to assassinate Kim.*

I had told Kim Yong Bom not to arrange a grand ceremony. But the people of the South Pyongan Provincial Party Committee were so stubborn, that they put up posters in every street and lane announcing that we had entered Pyongyang and I would meet the people in the public stadium on October 14.

About noon on October 14, 1945 I went by car to the Pyongyang public

playground, the venue of the ceremony. I was amazed at the sight of the surging crowds filling the squares and streets. The playground, too, was already full of people. There were even people in the trees around the playground, and the Choesung Pavilion and the Ulmil Pavilion were covered with people. Going through the waves of welcome I raised my hand in acknowledgement of the cheering crowds.

General Chistyakov, commander of the Soviet 25th Army, and Major General Rebezev were present at the mass rally. Many people made speeches that day. Jo Man Sik took the floor. I still remember a passage of his speech which triggered laughter among the audience. He said in a merry voice that at the news of liberation he pinched himself to see if he was not dreaming and he felt pain. He even showed how he had pinched his arm.

When I mounted the platform the shout "Long live the independence of Korea!" and the cheers of the crowd reached a climax. As I listened to their cheers, I felt the fatigue that had accumulated for 20 years melting away. The cheers of the people became a hot wind and warmed my body and mind. Standing on the platform amidst the enthusiastic cheers of more than 100,000 people, I felt happiness that defied description by any flowery language. If anyone asked me about the happiest moment in my life, I would reply that it was that moment. It was happiness emanating from the pride that I had fought for the people as a son of the people, from the feeling that the people loved and trusted me and from the fact that I was in the embrace of the people.

It may be said that the cheers of the people resounding in the Pyongyang public playground on October 14, 1945 were the acknowledgement of and reward for the arduous struggle we had waged for the first half of our lifetimes for our country and fellow countrymen. I accepted this reward as the people's love for and trust in me. As I always say, no pleasure can be greater than that of enjoying the love and support of the people.

I have regarded the love and support of the people as the absolute standard that measures the value of existence of a revolutionary and the happiness he can enjoy. Apart from the love and support of the people, a revolutionary has nothing.

Bourgeois politicians try to lure the people with money, but we obtained trust from the people at the cost of our blood and sweat. I was moved by the people's trust in me and I considered it the greatest pleasure I could enjoy in my life.

The gist of my speech that day was great national unity. I appealed to the whole nation to build a prosperous independent state in Korea, united as one those with strength dedicating strength, those with knowledge devoting knowledge and those with money offering money.

The crowd expressed their support with thunderous applause and cheers. The Pyongyang Minbo, a newspaper of those days, wrote about the sight of the Pyongyang public playground on that day under the title Cheers of 400,000 People Shake Korea, A Lovely Land.

"Pyongyang has a long history of 4,000 years and a large population of 400,000. Has it ever had such a large meeting as this? Has it ever held such an important meeting? "What gave historic significance to this meeting and turned it into a storm of emotion, was that General Kim Il Sung, the great patriot of Korea and a hero whom Pyongyang produced, was present in person there, and extended joyful and warm greetings and words of encouragement to the people.... as soon as General Kim Il Sung appeared on the platform, the hero whom the Korean people hold in high respect and have been looking forward to seeing, a storm of enthusiastic cheers arose, and most of the audience were deeply moved to silent tears..., as he touched the hearts of the masses with steely force their thunderous cheers seemed to voice their determination to fight to the death together with this man."

We can say that the mass rally was the start of a great march of our people towards building a new

country. That day at the meeting place I met my aunt, Hyon Yang Sin, and my maternal uncle, Kang Yong Sok, when the ceremony was over. When I look back upon the moment when I met my aunt after descending from the platform, tears still well up in my eyes.

I did not know how the old woman forced her way through the jostling crowds, but she was in my car shedding tears. I was told later that Ju To Il had seen her squeezing her way with gritted teeth towards the platform and brought her to the car. She grasped my hands and said with deep emotion: "Nephew, how many years has it been?" "Aunt, you have had so much trouble looking after a large family alone!" I said in greeting.

"You suffered more in the mountains. Living in a comfortable room in all seasons, as I do, is no suffering. I was anxious while coming to the playground. Though your uncle said you had come, what if you had turned out to be Kim Il Sung from Jolla Province? How glad I was to find you, my nephew, on the platform!" She said in excitement and in tears at the same time.

Watching our reunion, my comrades-in-arms were also moved to tears. "Aunt, why are you crying when the whole city is laughing and dancing with delight?" "You remind me of your father and mother. If they were alive and could have heard your speech today, how happy they would be!" "Auntie, from today you shall take the place of my mother."

When I said this, she threw herself into my arms and burst into tears. I knew well that she was crying at the thought of my mother. My mother and aunt were more intimate than real sisters. My aunt married into my family at the age of 15. She did not feel at home in so poor a family at first, but she became fond of our family through basking in my mother's love.

My mother had loved my aunt very much. They had worked together in the fields, too. At break times my mother would often let her snatch a wink of sleep with her head on her own lap because my aunt always felt tired from want of sleep. And when she fell asleep, my mother combed her hair calmly. Since she began her life in our family enjoying such affection, my aunt could not forget my mother. She regretted very much that she had failed to go to Antu to pray for the soul of my mother when she died.

"Even a hundred aunts cannot replace your mother. It seems that her soul has come flying to this playground and is staying with us." She dried her tears with the sleeves of her jacket. Laughing and crying by turns she told about her quarrel with her husband: "That tricky old man came to the city and met you, nephew, without my knowledge. He kept it to himself until yesterday. So I protested, 'Old man, is Kim Il Sung only your nephew, and not mine?' He replied absurdly that an arm bends inwardly, not outwardly."

In the afternoon, I went to Mangyongdae with my uncle and aunt. We did not take the road which we use nowadays, but drove to the ferry on the Sunhwa River and went to Mangyongdae by boat. Along the muddy lane to the landing place were stepping stones to be used when getting on board. This was where I used to catch crabs with my trousers rolled up to my knees in my childhood.

The sound of a washerwoman's club and the smell of young pine trees on Mangyong Hill which greeted me that day are still fresh in my memory. That sound was so melodious and that smell was so fragrant. When a cow mooed on the Kalmaeji Plain, I felt a lump in my throat at the sight of my native place, something which I experienced for the first time in many years.

I was now 33 years old, though it seemed only yesterday that in my boyhood I used to remain awake all night thinking of my father in prison. It was just like the people in the old days said: Pitiless time was flying by. The 40 years it took to win back the lost country and the 20 years it took me to regain my native home seemed too long.

That the sovereignty of a nation lost in a moment could only be recovered in a thousand years was an important lesson I had learned during the 20 years of the revolution against the Japanese. I mean that it is easy to lose a country, but difficult to win it back. It is a grim reality of the world that it takes decades or even centuries to restore a country which was lost in an instant.

It is well known that India won its independence from England after 200 years of colonial enslavement. The Philippines and Indonesia won their independence after 300 years, Algeria after 130 years, Sri Lanka after 150 years and Vietnam after nearly 100 years. How expensive the cost of national ruin is!

That is why I frequently tell the young people that a ruined nation is as good as dead, that if they do not want to be a stateless people, they must go all out to defend the country, and that in order not to end up as slaves they must make the country more prosperous and collect even one more piece of rubble to build the defenses higher.

Of the scenes of the day when I was visiting my old home one is particularly fresh in my memory. A child of only two or three years old waved to our group. There was nothing special about this scene, but it had an impact on my heart. I felt as if I were seeing the symbol of a new Korea in the appearance of the child, who was waving his hands free from care in his cozy native village, in the center of a peaceful world.

When I was entering the yard of my old home behind my aunt, my heart beat wildly. The yard which had looked as wide as a city square 20 years before seemed no bigger than the palm of my hand at that time. However, as I thought that it was the terminus of 20 years of an arduous, long-drawn-out march, I felt as if I had landed after crossing a great ocean. As I caught sight of the familiar eaves of my old home, I had hallucinations that my father and mother who used to sing Lullaby to me and breathe upon my frozen hands, my parents who were buried in their graves like fallen blossoms, revived in old images, were running towards me shouting "Sung Ju" and embracing me in their broad arms. I could not step inside easily.

My grandfather came out into the courtyard barefoot and hugged me. "My eldest grandson has come home.... let me look! ... let me look...." He kept repeating these words in tears. My grandmother, too, burst into tears, saying, "Why have you come alone? Where have you left your father and mother?"

I offered to my grandfather and grandmother some wine I had brought from Pyongyang, saying, "Grandfather, grandmother, I am so sorry that I neglected my filial duty until I passed the age of 30."

"Not at all. You accomplished the cause of independence which your father left unfinished. Nothing could be a greater filial service than that. If you take good care of the country and people, you will be fulfilling your duty to your parents," my grandfather replied and emptied his cup light-heartedly. With a smile on his face he said that the wine tasted good that day. But his hands trembled a little. Grandmother, too, emptied her cup without difficulty.

However, I was sorry for not having fulfilled my duty to the grandparents. The thought that I had troubled them too much sank deep into my mind. I was grateful to my grandfather when he said that taking care of the country and people was the greatest filial service. That day all the people of Nam-ri gathered in my house. At the news of my return home, the people came in groups from Tudan-ri and Chuja Island. My childhood friends, too, called on me one after another with bundles of food.

A simple family party turned into a grand banquet. Many people sang and danced in honor of my return. Old man Choe who had owed much to our family from the days of my great-grandfather Kim Ung U danced to the tune of Kkugniri. Aunt, too, sang Lullaby my father had composed.

That night I slept in my home for the first time in 20 years. At that time the under-floor beating was under repair and the door was not yet fitted. We covered the half-dry floor with wheat and rice straw and spread a straw-mat over it to sleep on.

My grandfather urged me to sleep in the house of a neighbor. But I said, "We did not enjoy any comforts in the mountains. We slept in the open, regarding the sky as our roof and the grass and trees as our coverlet. Why should I sleep at the neighbor's now that I have come to my own home? I will sleep in my house."

My grandfather agreed, and with a beaming smile said that it would indeed be awkward if I slept at a neighbor's house instead of in my own home, after 20 years' absence. Grandmother spread a cotton quilt on the straw-mat, a quilt that had been made of the cotton yarn she herself had spun so long ago.

At midnight, she put her arm under my pillow and asked calmly, "Did you get married in the mountains? Did your wife, too, fight in the mountains?"

"Yes, she was a guerrilla."

"Does your son take after you?"

"People say so."

"That's good."

She asked many other things. Afraid that the weight of my head would hurt her arm, I asked her if my head was heavy. She replied that it was not heavy, and thrust her arm further under my neck. When she did this for her grandson of over thirty, as she had done in my boyhood, her love warmed my heart.

"You had better move the graves of your father and mother from Manchuria to the liberated homeland," she said. That was the last topic she brought up that night. It was her natural concern. I fully understood how much she wanted to bring home the remains of her children who were buried in an alien land.

"Grandmother," I said, "moving the graves of my parents is important, but I would like first to seek out some people to whom I owe much. Mr. Hwang and old man Kim on the Kaduk Pass from Jonju who helped my father escape at the Yonphori Inn. Also an old man called Jo who saved me from the jaws of death when I had a bad chill. I must find them first and then transfer the graves of my parents."



*Photo: Kim Jung Il, Kim Il Sung and wife - the three Mt. Baiktu generals.*

"That's a good idea. If you do that, your father buried in Yangdicun will be delighted." I told my grandmother through the night about my benefactors, comrades-in-arms and friends who helped me in the days in Jirin and Jiandao, and on Mt. Paektu. I shed silent tears recalling my father and mother, Uncle Hyong Gwon and my younger brother Chol Ju, who were lying in graves far away from home. Grandmother, too, sobbed quietly. Then she stopped crying and comforted me, caressing my arms. "Your father and mother are gone, but Jong Suk has come into our family. And Jong Il was born to carry on the family line."

Looking back upon our traces on Mt. Paektu and the snow-covered plains of Manchuria, I imagined the faces of my comrades-in-arms who were not able to come back with me. I thought about the people to whom I owed much, recalled my childhood and planned the future of the country. That night at Mangyongdae, which I spent in the liberated homeland after 20 years' absence, was a peaceful night indeed. Two months after the end of the Second World War and the liberation of the country, the 30 million Korean people were still intoxicated with the joy of liberation.

None of these people, however, imagined that the liberation of the country would end in a territorial division and national split, resulting in a great national disaster lasting over half a century.

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